

**“I THOUGHT
IT COULD
NEVER
HAPPEN
TO BOYS”**

Sexual Abuse & Exploitation of Boys in Cambodia
An exploratory study – January 2008

HAGAR



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Alastair Hilton,

16 January 2008.

FOREWORD

Occasionally research is published which transforms the dialogue within the social sector because it changes our world view and obliges us to respond with urgency. In this publication, "I thought it could never happen to boys," Alastair Hilton and his research team from Social Services Cambodia have started the dialogue for change.

Our attention to the needs of girls is well deserved. But we have been largely silent and unresponsive to the needs of boys as both victims and survivors of sexual abuse. The evidence has often been there if we chose to pay attention to it. Culturally we are more inclined to see girls as victims. Shame and ignorance have hidden the extent of the problem of sexual abuse of boys and we lack the skills and resources to respond. While we expanded and improved the quality of care to girls, the abuse of boys has largely been ignored and neglected.

Boys matter and our silence stops with this publication. The organizations supporting this research are all committed to directing resources and programs toward boys as victims and survivors of sexual abuse. SSC will provide much needed training so that boys can finally get the care they need. World Vision will contribute to advocacy and prevention and Hagar will provide recovery options for boys.

May the research contained within this report propel us to respond appropriately to the urgent needs of sexually abused boys and may others join us in protecting all Cambodia's children.

Sincerely

TALMAGE PAYNE

CEO

HAGAR

INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in Cambodia. Until now, there has been no specific research exploring this issue. The existence of this study does not assume or imply that recognition, resources, services and protection for girls and women are adequate—for that is clearly not the case. It is hoped, however, that by recognising and highlighting issues for males, this study may expand our understanding of the culture of sexual abuse and rape and contribute positively to the well-being of all victims and survivors of sexual abuse, whatever their identity.

On a global scale, in the early 20th century, any form of child sexual abuse was considered a very rare occurrence. In the 1950s and 1960s, in what are now referred to as “developed” countries, small numbers of case studies reported incest involving fathers and their daughters. More often than not, the writers blamed the mothers and daughters rather than the fathers. In the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of the women’s movement, more light was shed on the sexual abuse of women and children, although the focus was primarily and perhaps understandably, on girls.¹

In the 1980s some prevalence studies increasingly considered experiences of men and boys. Study rates varied greatly, though when men were included, they generally suggested that the numbers of males abused (3–31 percent) were about half those of women (6–62%). Men’s experiences of child sexual abuse were often described as being less traumatic than females’ and were not always identified as abusive, particularly if the perpetrator was a woman.²

In the last 20 years, growing numbers of men and boys have broken their silence and sought help. Also in this period, a rising number of texts, books and articles by clinicians, researchers and activists suggested that previous research was misleading. Read these texts, and similar words and phrases leap from the pages. They describe the sexual abuse and rape of males as “the last taboo”³ and tell of secrecy, silence and shame, bound together by paralysing fear.⁴ Accounts of violent abuse, blame, isolation, devastating effects, prejudice and denial are shared.⁵ The authors write of victims who are too ashamed to talk and a society not prepared to listen.⁶

Progress has been made, but in many countries it remains difficult for male victims and survivors of any age to access the support they need. Services are scattered, often maintained by small groups of committed volunteers, with little funding available. Many professionals report feeling deskilled and as isolated as the boys and men they are attempting to support.

The methodology for this research is essentially exploratory and qualitative. Safety and ethical concerns were guiding principles throughout the study. A model for the project was developed that was inclusive, involving a Khmer team of researchers throughout the process—what some may call a “capacity-building model”, building on strengths and

1 Faller, K.C., cited in Mendel, M.P. (1995)

2 *ibid.*

3 McMullen, R (1990)

4 Lew, M. (1990)

5 Mendel, M.P. (1995)

6 Mezey, G. & King, M. (1992)

existing skills. It is hoped that this will leave a group of individuals well placed to pursue work in this field in the future.

Another important aim was to make the completed study to be as accessible as possible by writing in plain English rather than in academic language likely to exclude the majority. A substantial bibliography and resource section is included to further inform the reader. It is also hoped that Hagar and World Vision will eventually translate the whole document into Khmer. A significant goal of the study is for readers to make practical use of the material and apply it in their work. Critical social research not only wants to show what is happening but is also concerned with doing something about it.⁷

We set out to listen to boys and young men in an effort to gain a deeper insight into their experiences, the context in which boys are abused, how it affects them and what boys say they need to help. Discovery of risk and vulnerability factors or signs of safety may help us to understand how boys can be protected more effectively. We also hoped to gain an appreciation of how Cambodian culture and notions of masculinity impact upon this phenomenon. Consideration of differences and similarities between boys and girls, and those between Cambodia and other countries, may be helpful in suggesting the way forward.

This study also sought the views and perspectives of carers, human rights workers, counsellors, psychologists and social workers. Child protection officers, lawyers, project coordinators and directors of NGOs were also encouraged to contribute. We hoped to scratch below the surface to understand the perspectives, feelings, knowledge and actions of those charged with boys' care and to identify the needs of helpers and supporters. We anticipated identifying important areas for further research and wanted to learn more about appropriate and safe methodologies for exploring sexual abuse in Cambodia. By generating information about sexual abuse of boys, we sought to break down fears and reduce feelings of isolation and powerlessness in others, acting as a catalyst for positive change.

Some of the boys' stories contain graphic accounts of what happened to them. We set out to reflect their experiences as accurately as possible. We have neither diluted nor sensationalised them. There is no need to do that, for they speak for themselves. Contained within these pages are the voices and truths of dozens of boys and young men. It is hoped that this study will go some way to sharing and honouring their stories, leading to a greater understanding and recognition of their needs. The title of the study is taken from the words of one young man who took part. It has taken courage for all of the boys and young men to share their truth and will perhaps need that from the reader to read and listen with an open mind and heart. Be prepared to hear and believe the unbelievable and embrace these voices of truth.

⁷ Harvey, L. (1993).

ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

APPLE – Action Pour Les Enfants

COSECAM – Coalition to Address the Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia

ECPAT – End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

IOM – International Organisation for Migration

NGO – Non-government organisation

SCA – Save the Children Australia

SSC – Social Services of Cambodia

TOR – Terms of Reference

UNTAC – United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Barang – commonly used to describe a foreigner

Chbab Srey/Chbab Proh – social codes of behaviour that women (srey) and men (proh) are taught from a young age

Godfather – used to describe the relationship that some abusers develop with families and children to whom they provide monetary or material assistance.

Hudt – a measurement, from the tip of the fingers to the elbow

Five hudt chest – a term used to describe a “real man” who is strong and doesn’t cry

Kteuy – men who dress up and/or act like women (similar to the Thai word ‘katoey’ and often used in a derogatory and/or discriminatory sense by others)

Men who have sex with men (MSM) – is used as a behavioural term to refer to biological males who have sex with other biological males

Plert plern – used as a derogatory term, to describe a person who is materialistic. Boys who have been sexually abused in exchange for money are often accused of being *plert plern* rather than seen as victims of sexual abuse or exploitation

Sak klay – short-haired MSM

Sak veng – transgender or long-haired MSM

STI – sexually transmitted infection

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This report presents research about the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and young men in Cambodia. A team and capacity-building model was developed and research carried out in three provinces, Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Battambang, from April to June 2007, using primarily qualitative techniques, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In total, 40 boys and young men had the opportunity to share their views and experiences. In addition, the research team met with more than 100 staff from a range of NGOs and service providers, including social workers, counsellors, carers, managers, team leaders, directors and lawyers. Prior to this study, there had not been any other specific research focusing on the sexual abuse of boys in Cambodia.

Research Outcomes

Official statistics reveal very little about the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys. Predominant beliefs among many adults interviewed are that foreigners and/or gay men are primarily responsible for the abuse and that it is a relatively recent problem. However, this study does not support that view, revealing that significant numbers of boys are sexually abused by Cambodian and foreign adults in a variety of settings. Boys are also abused by other children, adolescents and in some cases women.

More is known about the sexual abuse of boys by foreign men in urban and tourist locales due to current child protection initiatives focusing on such incidents and coverage of court cases involving foreigners by media that rarely feature stories relating to Khmer perpetrators of abuse against boys. The majority of the few resources and tools available for staff working in this area also depict perpetrators as foreign.

Other influential beliefs operate to keep the issue concealed or to minimise the seriousness with which it is viewed. Some are related to underlying cultural beliefs, notions of masculine identity and ideas of what constitutes sex and sexual abuse. They include but are not restricted to the views that abuse of boys is against Khmer culture and is therefore an imported problem; that it rarely occurs and is not that serious when it does; that it is not abuse or harmful if money is exchanged; that it is impossible for a boy and a man to have sex; and that it is abuse only if the boy ejaculates.

Similarly, while many adult participants acknowledged that abuse may have serious implications, the issue is generally characterised by the denial of victim status and severity. Boys are expected to be able to protect themselves and/or overcome it very quickly, while the importance placed upon virginity and honour in relation to girls and women ensures that boys who are victims suffer in comparison. They are not perceived to have virginity and honour to lose, and therefore their experiences are often not considered to be harmful or taken seriously.

The vast majority of local contemporary academic discourse also contributes to what may be described as the “feminisation of victimisation”, creating the impression that boys are invulnerable, rarely abused, less seriously affected when they are and/or more likely to be abusers of others than victims.

Boys' experiences

Access to the majority of the boys and young men interviewed was gained through NGOs supporting street-based children or residential children's centres. Many of them had been abused by foreign men. However, a significant number had been sexually

abused by Khmer adults or other children or adolescents. Abusers included neighbours, family members and other known adults in a position of trust.

Several abuse risk factors emerged from this sample. They included exposure to poverty; separation and/or divorce or death of a parent and/or siblings and domestic violence. In some cases boys described leaving home to live on the streets at a young age to avoid violence and/or earn money for their families. Most had spent little time in school. Others described home lives in which alcohol or drug misuse was common. This is not to suggest that boys from more prosperous backgrounds are not abused, or that all children from poor backgrounds are abused; however, the sample was skewed by the nature of the work carried out by many of the supporting organisations. The study did not discover organised sexual exploitation similar to that experienced by girls, but that does not mean it does not occur.

A high proportion of the boys also experienced bullying and violence at the hands of older boys and gangs. They indicated that they had very little knowledge of sexual issues prior to abuse, and the majority did not realise that developing friendships with adults would lead to sexual abuse.

Once it was known that boys had been abused, they often became the target of discrimination, mocking and jokes from people in the community, resulting in further isolation and marginalisation. This isolation and a combination of other factors, including lack of support or alternatives for income, continuing poverty and the effectiveness of grooming strategies, result in some boys becoming more vulnerable, thus entering a lifestyle where many become sexually abused and exploited on a regular basis. In these cases, they are often not viewed as victims but as consenting.

The boys were forced and/or coerced to engage in a range of sexually abusive behaviours including oral and anal sex. The vast majority of perpetrators do not use condoms, and most participants shared accounts of serious injuries to the anus, including cuts and tears, the majority of which go untreated. The boys talked of a range of long- and short-term problems and difficulties caused by their experiences, similar in nature to those reported in other global literature and research. They include significant feelings of shame and loss of honour (contradicting the beliefs of many adult participants), fear of the repercussions of disclosing or being discovered, confusion relating to sex, sexuality and gender, self-blame, feelings of isolation, a range of mental health problems, nightmares, wanting to commit suicide and use of drugs in an effort to forget and mask their pain. In many respects, the abuse turns their lives upside down, while their experiences confound many of those around them.

In the course of the study we met several older boys and young men who had experienced abuse as children, many of whom felt as vulnerable as they did when they were first abused. Accounts of long-term physical, emotional and psychological problems indicate the need for a range of services for males of all ages.

The common practice of male children under the age of three years having their genitals touched or kissed by carers was discussed with participants. It is often viewed by adults as a traditional way of showing affection. As boys become older, it is not uncommon for adults to grab a boy's genitals or pull his trousers down in front of others as a joke. Opinions among adults and staff in this study were mixed, significant numbers considering it harmless up to a certain age and others as likely to cause problems later in life. Significantly, of the boys who responded, virtually all said that they did not like or want this form of attention, that it embarrasses them and makes them very angry.

The team met with several older boys and young men who identified as “men who have sex with men” (MSM) and who talked of being sexually abused as children. They also shared accounts of sexual abuse and rape as adults in extremely violent scenarios that can only be described as “gang rape”.

The participants were asked what kinds of support and help they needed. Several key themes emerged. Many responses focused on basic needs such as physical and emotional safety, confidentiality, to be accepted and not judged and to receive empathy and respect. The need for protection, affection, love and a sense of belonging were also expressed. Many also suggested that they needed help with education and work; others wanted society to take the protection of boys seriously and recognise that they too are vulnerable to abuse and feel great shame and loss of honour.

Many boys also stated what they did not want from supporters and carers, either in their homes or in institutions. They want helpers and supporters to be gentle rather than shout or be violent when they do something wrong. When asked what messages they wanted to share with others—parents, staff and government—key themes were the need to be believed, help to protect boys and a plea to stop mocking them and recognise that they too are vulnerable and have pain as a result of sexual abuse.

Staff and Carers

Clear differences in awareness emerged when comparing urban and tourist sites with the rural locale. Very few adults in Battambang initially expressed any awareness or knowledge of the sexual abuse of boys, despite evidence that they had and are currently working with boys who are victims and survivors. Lack of information and communication on this issue within and between referring organisations suggests a lack of recognition that is unlikely to be restricted to that province. The stated goals of some NGOs also appear to prevent them from considering this as an issue of concern.

While awareness within urban sites was generally higher, there is little evidence across a range of service providers of sharing of information about the sexual abuse of males and few indications of effective, coordinated and collaborative responses either within or between organisations. In many respects, sexually abused boys are an invisible population. Some literature and resources exist, but they invariably focus on foreign perpetrators of abuse, excluding the possibility of abuse by others.

Pockets of awareness and good practice do exist, and a few institutionally based services provide counselling for boys. However, staff with knowledge are often isolated from each other and rarely receive the training, ongoing support and clinical supervision to be able to develop effective and long-term support strategies. Significant numbers of staff expressed frustration and helplessness, while in some settings there is a significant lack of “connection” with and understanding of boys. They are frequently viewed from a deficit perspective—as having behavioural problems or being otherwise lacking—and their needs as victims and survivors are not recognised or understood.

Expressed needs for support and training included basic information about sexual abuse of boys, through to the development of specialist skills for supporting boys following abuse. In all sites, a significant number of participants identified the need for help in developing “male friendly” approaches for engaging boys and specific tools and ideas for helping them build relationships. Other important needs were supportive supervision and opportunities to meet others doing similar work.

Significant organisational barriers to progress in this area identified by participants related to lack of cooperation between NGOs, particularly where they are seeking funding from

similar sources; in other cases a lack of cooperation and trust was noted between some secular and faith-based organisations. Others noted that donors also need educating about boys' needs and that their approaches can limit creativity. Power differentials between NGOs and donors and reluctance to face up to the reality of sexual abuse within institutions were also cited as significant issues.

Recommendations

The needs of boys and young men need to be addressed by donors, government, international and local NGOs and communities as a matter of urgency. While the resource implications are potentially significant, the potential long-term human and financial costs of inaction are far greater. Lasting multi-agency and donor cooperation and commitment to respond to these needs are vital and should be an addition to existing resources rather than result in a cutting back in other areas.

The need to raise awareness within wider communities, organisations and government is paramount to build a firm foundation for change. Every effort should be made to utilise existing networks and successful strategies.

A range of easily accessible service responses, based on a long-term strategy, needs to be implemented. They should embrace child-centred and human rights approaches but also respond to the needs expressed by the boys in the study: safety and protection, empathy, empowerment and choice, also recognising the need for acceptance, respect and belonging. The meaningful involvement of boys, families and communities needs to be at the centre of coordinated development efforts.

Ideally, service provision needs to be built on foundations that reflect the diversity of boys' experiences, including more commonly recognised sexual exploitation by adults but also the relatively hidden and specific issue of sexual abuse within families and communities and by other children and young people. Principles of early intervention and holistic short- and long-term initiatives are needed, including a commitment to the development of specialist skills and creative and innovative services that are "male friendly" and accessible.

Interventions for boys have to meet needs for prevention and protection, recovery and support and advocacy. The meaningful involvement and development of existing services are vital components alongside the creation of new programmes. They include:

Existing providers working with boys need to enhance staff and management attitudes, awareness and skills in responding; broaden programmes and/or add specialist staff to address specific needs; develop specialist or expand existing training to address sexual abuse, child protection and prevention, ensuring that appropriate support options are available for boys. The development of meaningful and ongoing support, care and supervision of staff should be considered a vital component of future initiatives rather than an optional luxury.

New programmes need to be developed, including: easily accessed generic drop-in centres and safe spaces which are available 24 hours; easy access to sensitive and appropriate medical, legal, counselling and peer support; provision of help line and online resources; assertive outreach programmes with named support workers linked to new and existing services; generic day programmes to complement existing services; realistic opportunities for boys to develop more routes and alternatives out of sexual exploitation; possibilities to engage with a range of activities including education, sport, drama, art therapy and outward bound retreats. There is also a need to develop specialist

teams to increase therapeutic support linked to development of training, supervision, action research and evaluation, including work with families and communities.

Where possible, children are better placed within their families of origin, and efforts should be made to ensure that specialist support is offered for families to improve child protection and develop their capacity for supporting boys following abuse. If it is not possible for a child to remain at home, then options within extended family should be explored. If that is not available, specialist community-based foster care schemes should be provided to meet their needs. Intensive support should be made available separately for boys and carers.

In some cases and as a last resort, specialist residential accommodation could be provided in small homes or by specialist carers to respond to crisis, with access to sensitive medical provision. Such placements should be short term but flexible, with the eventual goal of placement through family or community options or specialist fostering.

Where they do not exist, attention should be given to developing support and forums to develop awareness and community-led initiatives to raise awareness of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys; this includes effective use of media.

A range of support options also need to be developed to meet the needs of older boys, young men and adult males currently beyond the reach of existing programmes. These include counselling, group work, supported housing, education and employment.

Boys and young and adult men who do not identify as heterosexual are also isolated from support in relation to childhood sexual abuse and/or abuse and rape as adults. Following further and specific research, existing services supporting MSM need to develop skills and specific support services.

Urgently required are NGO and library resources in relation to the sexual abuse of males, which should also be provided online. The development of forums for staff to gain support and drive the development of future initiatives, building networks with regional and international specialists in this area, should be encouraged.

Opportunities should be developed for male survivors who have experienced abuse to meet on a regular basis to gain mutual support and feed into the development of all of the above.

Recommendations for Future Research

A clear and urgent need exists for more research into this area, leading to greater understanding about the nature and prevalence of the sexual abuse of boys throughout Cambodia. This should inform the continued development of a range of sensitive and effective services. Studies that identify successful preventive and helpful interventions and factors promoting resilience and coping skills are also required.

There is an urgent need for research to explore the influences and dynamics present in sexual abuse. This should include sexual abuse by adults but importantly explore the harmful sexual behaviours, sexual abuse and rape of children by other children and adolescents, which have been identified as significant problems in Cambodia. This would lead to the development of strategies for protection, prevention and treatment of offenders.

Training and development

Few organisations or individuals are currently able to meet the need for specialist knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to sexual abuse of boys. Addressing this will be a long process requiring commitment of time and resources from donors, directors and

managers as well as all staff. While SSC has a long history in the development of high quality social work and counselling courses, this should be addressed by all concerned and will require a collaborative approach to be effective.

Staff in all field sites identified significant training and support needs, ranging from basic awareness of sexual abuse of boys through to development of specific skills and counselling techniques. There is also a clear requirement for effective approaches and tools that help develop confidence in relation to engaging with males. Efforts to provide meaningful support and effective clinical supervision of staff that promote self-care should be considered a vital component of future initiatives.

សេក្តីសង្ខេប

សេក្តីសង្ខេបទូទៅ

របាយការណ៍នេះបង្ហាញអំពីការស្រាវជ្រាវស្តីអំពី ការរំលោភបំពាន និងការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស និងបុរសជំទង់នៅកម្ពុជា ។ ក្រុមការងារបានប្រើវិធីសាស្ត្រនៃការស្វែងរកព័ត៌មានពីសមាជិកក្រុមត្រូវបានបង្កើតឡើង ហើយការងារនេះក៏បានជួយកសាងនូវសមត្ថភាពរបស់ ពួកផងដែរ ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវត្រូវបានធ្វើឡើងនៅបីខេត្ត-ក្រុង គឺ ក្រុងភ្នំពេញ ក្រុងព្រះសីហនុ និង ខេត្តបាត់ដំបង ដែលចាប់ផ្តើមតាំងពី ខែមេសា រហូតដល់ ខែមិថុនា ឆ្នាំ ២០០៧ ដោយយក បច្ចេកទេសស្រាវជ្រាវ បែបគុណភាពជាចំបង គួបផ្សំជាមួយនឹងការប្រើ កិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍ដោយប្រើសំនួរបិទ-បើក រួមទាំងការបង្កើត ក្រុមពិភាក្សា (Focus Group) ។ សរុបទៅ មានក្មេងប្រុស និង បុរសជំទង់ចំនួន៤០នាក់ ដែលមានឱកាស ចែករំលែកនូវទស្សនៈ និងបទពិសោធន៍របស់ពួកគេ ។ ហើយក្រុមស្រាវជ្រាវបានជួបជាមួយ នឹងបុគ្គលិកជាង ១០០នាក់ ដែលមកពីអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល និង ភ្នាក់ងារផ្តល់សេវានានា មានដូចជា បុគ្គលិកសង្គមកិច្ច អ្នកពិគ្រោះបញ្ហា អ្នកថែរក្សា អ្នកគ្រប់គ្រង អ្នកដឹកនាំក្រុម នាយក/នាយិកា និងមេធាវី ។ មុនពេលការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះត្រូវបានធ្វើឡើង គឺមិនធ្លាប់មានការស្រាវជ្រាវជាក់លាក់ណាមួយឡើយ ដែលធ្វើការស្រាវជ្រាវផ្តោតលើ ការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុសនៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ។

លទ្ធផលនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ

ស្ថិតិផ្លូវការជាច្រើន បានបង្ហាញនូវព័ត៌មានតិចតួចបំផុតអំពី ការរំលោភបំពាន និង ការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស ។ ក្នុងចំណោមមនុស្សពេញវ័យជាច្រើនរូប ដែលបានទទួលកិច្ចសម្ភាសន៍ពីក្រុមការងារយើងខ្ញុំភាគច្រើន មានជំនឿថា មានតែជនបរទេស និង/ឬ បុរសខ្ចីយ(gay men)តែប៉ុណ្ណោះដែលជាអ្នកសមនឹងទទួលខុសត្រូវសំខាន់បំផុតចំពោះ ការរំលោភបំពានលើក្មេងប្រុស ហើយវាជាបញ្ហាថ្មីមួយដែលកំពុងកើតមានឡើងនាពេលបច្ចុប្បន្ន ។ ទោះជាយ៉ាងណាក៏ដោយ ក៏ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះមិនគាំទ្រទស្សនៈ ខាងលើនោះដែរ ផ្ទុយទៅវិញវាបង្ហាញថា ក្មេងប្រុសមួយចំនួនធំបានរងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ ពីសំណាក់មនុស្សពេញវ័យ ដែលជាជនជាតិ កម្ពុជា និង ជនបរទេស ទៅតាម

ទឹកនឹងផ្សេងៗគ្នាជាច្រើន ។ លើសពីនេះទៅទៀតក្មេងប្រុសក៏ត្រូវរងនូវការរំលោភបំពាន ពីក្រុមមនុស្ស មួយចំនួនផ្សេងទៀតដូចជា ពួកក្មេងៗដូចគ្នា ក្មេងជំទង់ និង ស្រី តាមករណីមួយចំនួន ។

អំពីរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុសដែលជាទង្វើរបស់បុរសជនជាតិបរទេសនៅក្នុងតំបន់ជាយក្រុង និង តំបន់ទេសចរណ៍ ត្រូវបានគេដឹងច្រើនជាង ទង្វើដែលប្រព្រឹត្តដោយជនជាតិខ្មែរ ។ នេះគឺដោយសារមាន បណ្តើមគំនិតនៃការការពារកុមារនាពលបច្ចុប្បន្ន ដែលកំពុងផ្តោតលើហេតុការណ៍នេះ ព្រមទាំងការ គ្របដណ្តប់លើករណីតុលាការ ពីសំណាក់បណ្តាញផ្សាយព័ត៌មាន ដែលកំរើកឡើងអំពីរឿងរ៉ាវដែលទាក់ទង នឹងអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តអំពើរំលោភលើក្មេងប្រុសជាជនជាតិខ្មែរ ។ ភាគច្រើននៃធនធាន និងឧបករណ៍ ដែលមាន ស្រាប់បន្តិចបន្តួចសំរាប់បុគ្គលិកដែលធ្វើការខាងផ្នែកនេះ ក៏បានបង្ហាញថាអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តជាជនបរទេសដែរ ។

ជំនឿដ៏មានឥទ្ធិពលផ្សេងទៀត បាននាំអោយបញ្ហានេះបិទក្នុងភាពលាក់កំបាំង រឺធ្វើអោយភាពធ្ងន់ធ្ងរបស់ វាបិទក្នុងកំរិតអប្បបរមា ដោយយោង ទៅតាមទស្សនៈនោះ ។ ជំនឿខ្លះទាក់ទងនឹង ជំនឿវប្បធម៌ដែល មិនមានភាពជាក់ស្តែង ជំនឿអំពីអត្តសញ្ញាណបុរសភេទ និង គំនិតអំពីអ្វី ដែលបង្កអោយមានភេទ និង ការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទ ។ ជំនឿទាំងនោះបូកបញ្ចូល ប៉ុន្តែមិនត្រូវបានដាក់ដែនកំណត់ចំពោះទស្សនៈដែលថា ការរំលោភលើក្មេងប្រុសប្រឆាំងនឹងវប្បធម៌ខ្មែរ

ហើយដូច្នេះវាជាបញ្ហាដែលត្រូវបាននាំចូលដោយប្រភពខាងក្រៅប្រទេស, ដែលកំរើកមាន ហើយបើទោះ ជាវាកើតឡើងក៏មិនធ្ងន់ធ្ងរដូចកំរិតបច្ចុប្បន្ននេះដែរ, ដែលវាមិនមែនជាការរំលោភ រឺបង្កទុក្ខទោសឡើយ ប្រសិនបើ មានការដោះដូរជា លុយកាក់, ដែលវាមិនអាចទៅរួចទេដែលថាក្មេងប្រុសរួមភេទជាមួយបុរស, ហើយដែលវាជាការរំលោភតែក្នុងករណី ដែលក្មេងប្រុសនោះចេញទឹកអសុចិ ។

ស្រដៀងគ្នានេះដែរ នៅពេលដែលអ្នកចូលរួមដែលជាមនុស្សពេញវ័យជាច្រើនទទួលស្គាល់ថា ការរំលោភ ផ្លូវភេទអាចមានផលប៉ះពាល់ធ្ងន់ធ្ងរ នៅថ្ងៃអនាគត បញ្ហានេះត្រូវបានសំគាល់ជាទូទៅដោយការបដិសេធ អំពីស្ថានភាពរបស់ជនរងគ្រោះ និងភាពធ្ងន់ធ្ងរ ។ គេរំពឹងថាក្មេងប្រុស អាចការពារខ្លួនរបស់ពួកគេបាន និង/រឺ ដោះស្រាយបញ្ហានេះបានឆាប់រហ័ស ខណៈពេលដែលភាពសំខាន់នៃព្រហ្មចារិយ៍ និងកិតិយស ដែល ទាក់ទងនឹងក្មេងស្រី និងស្រីបញ្ជាក់ថាក្មេងប្រុសដែលជាជនរងគ្រោះទទួលរងទុក្ខទោសក្នុងកំរិតមួយ មិនចាញ់ក្មេងស្រី និងស្រីឡើយ ។ គេយល់ថា ក្មេងប្រុសគ្មានព្រហ្មចារិយ៍ រឺកិតិយសអ្វីដែលត្រូវ

បាត់បង់ឡើយ ដូច្នេះហើយបទពិសោធន៍នៃការទទួលរងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ របស់ពួកគេ មិនត្រូវបានគេចាត់ទុកថាជាការអោយទុក្ខទោស រឺត្រូវបានគេយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ឡើយ ។

កិច្ចពិភាក្សាក្នុងតំបន់ជាផ្លូវការដ៏ច្រើនលើសលុបនាគ្រានោះក៏បានលើកឡើងនូវអ្វីដែលគេហៅថា “មានតែស្រីទេទើបអាចជាជនរងគ្រោះ” (feminisation of victimisation) ដែលកំពុងបង្កអោយមានចំណាប់អារម្មណ៍ថា ក្មេងប្រុសមិនមែនជាជនរងគ្រោះទេ ក្មេងប្រុសកំរិតត្រូវគេរំលោភបំពានណាស់ ក្មេងប្រុសទទួលផលប៉ះពាល់មិនសូវធ្ងន់ធ្ងរឡើយ នៅពេលពួកគេទទួលរងការរំលោភបំពាន និង/រឺ ក្មេងប្រុសទំនងជាអ្នករំលោភបំពានគេ ជាជាងជនរងគ្រោះ ។

បទពិសោធន៍របស់ក្មេងប្រុស

ការធ្វើបទសម្ភាសន៍ជាមួយក្មេងប្រុស និងបុរសវ័យក្មេងភាគច្រើនអាចធ្វើទៅបានតាមរយៈអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាលដែលកំពុងគាំទ្រកុមារអនាថា រឺតាមរយៈមជ្ឈមណ្ឌលដែលជាទីជំរករបស់កុមារ ។ ក្នុងចំណោមពួកគេជាច្រើនធ្លាប់ទទួលរងការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទដោយបុរសជនជាតិបរទេស ។ ទោះជាយ៉ាងណាក៏ដោយ មានក្មេងប្រុសមួយចំនួនធំទទួលរងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទដោយមនុស្សពេញវ័យជាជនជាតិកម្ពុជា រឺដោយក្មេងដ៏ទៃ រឺក្មេងជំទង់ ។ អ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តិអំពើរំលោភបំពានដែលជាជនជាតិខ្មែររួមមាន អ្នកជិតខាង សមាជិកគ្រួសារ រឺក៏មនុស្សពេញវ័យផ្សេងទៀតដែលជនរងគ្រោះស្គាល់ និង ទុកចិត្ត ។

កត្តាដែលប្រឈមនឹងការរំលោភជាច្រើនលេចឡើងចេញពីគំរូនេះ ។ កត្តាទាំងនោះរួមមាន ស្ថានភាពក្រីក្រ ការបែកបាក់ និង/រឺ លែងលះ រឺ មរណៈភាពនៃឪពុកម្តាយ និង/រឺ បងប្អូនបង្កើត និងអំពើហិង្សាក្នុងគ្រួសារ ។ ក្នុងករណីខ្លះ ក្មេងប្រុសបាននិយាយថាពួកគេចាកចេញពីផ្ទះ ទៅរស់នៅតាមចិញ្ចើមថ្នល់ ដើម្បីភាសខ្លួនអោយផុតពីអំពើហិង្សា និង/រឺ ដើម្បីរកប្រាក់អោយគ្រួសាររបស់ពួកគេ ។ ពួកគេភាគច្រើនបាន ចំណាយពេលតែបន្តិចបន្តួចប៉ុណ្ណោះក្នុងការសិក្សា ។ ក្មេងប្រុសផ្សេងទៀតបានរៀបរាប់ថា ពួកគេរស់នៅក្នុងគ្រួសារដែលចាត់ទុក ការប្រើប្រាស់គ្រឿងស្រវឹង និងផ្តាំព្យួរក្នុងរបៀបដ៏ខុសឆ្គងជារឿងធម្មតា ។ វាមិនមានន័យថា ក្មេងប្រុសដែលមានប្រវត្តិមកពីគ្រួសារមាន ទ្រព្យសម្បត្តិ

មិនទទួលបានការរំលោភនោះទេ រីក៏កុមារដែលមកពីគ្រួសារក្រីក្រសុទ្ធតែទទួលបានការរំលោភនោះដែរ យ៉ាងណាមិញ គំរូនៃការងារនោះ ត្រូវបានអង្គការគាំទ្រជាច្រើនយកទៅអនុវត្តក្នុងលក្ខណៈផ្សេង ។ ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះមិន ស្វែងយល់ឃើញថា ការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទដែលមានការរៀបចំទុក មានភាព ស្រដៀងគ្នាទៅនឹងអ្វីដែលក្មេងស្រីទទួលបានឡើយ ប៉ុន្តែវាមិនមានន័យថា គ្មានរឿងបែបនេះកើតឡើង នោះទេ ។ ក្មេងប្រុសមួយចំនួនធំក៏បានទទួលបានការគំរាមកំហែង និងអំពើហិង្សាប្រព្រឹត្តដោយ ក្មេងប្រុសដទៃ ដែលលមានអយុច្ច័យជាង និងក្រុមក្មេងពាលផងដែរ ។ ពួកគេបានបង្ហាញ ថាពួកគេមានចំណេះដឹង តិចតួចបំផុតអំពីបញ្ហាផ្លូវភេទ មុនពេលទទួលបានការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទ ហើយពួក គេភាគច្រើនមិនបានយល់ថា ការសាងទំនាក់ទំនងជាមួយមនុស្ស ពេញវ័យអាចនាំពួកគេអោយ ទទួល បានការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទឡើយ ។

នៅពេលដែលមនុស្សទូទៅ បានដឹងថាក្មេងប្រុសណាម្នាក់ធ្លាប់ត្រូវបានគេរំលោភផ្លូវភេទ ក្មេងប្រុសនោះ តែងតែត្រូវបានគេរើសអើង ចំអក និងលេងសើចដោយមនុស្សក្នុងសហគមន៍របស់ពួកគេ ដែលបង្ក អោយមានភាពឯកកោ និង ភាពគ្មានតំលៃនៅក្នុងសង្គមកាន់តែខ្លាំងឡើង ថែមទៀត ។ ភាពឯកកោនេះ ជឿជាមួយនឹងកត្តាផ្សេងៗទៀត រួមទាំងកង្វះនៃការគាំទ្រ វិធីរើសសំរាប់ប្រាក់ចំណូល ការអូសបន្លាយនៃ ភាពក្រីក្រ និង ប្រសិទ្ធភាពនៃវិធីសាស្ត្រល្អឯលោម បានបណ្តាលអោយក្មេងប្រុសមួយចំនួនកាន់តែមាន សភាពងាយរងគ្រោះថែមទៀត ដូច្នេះហើយពួកគេបានស្ថិត ក្នុងជីវិតមួយ ដែលមានក្មេងប្រុសជា ច្រើនទទួលបានការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទ និងការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ច ដោយផ្អែកលើ មូលដ្ឋានដ៏ទៀងទាត់មួយ ។ ផ្អែកតាមករណីទាំងនេះ ពុំមានអ្នកណានិយមចាត់ទុកពួកគេថាជាជនរងគ្រោះដោយសារការរំលោភបំពាន ឡើយ តែគេចាត់ទុកថាជាការយល់ព្រមរបស់ពួកគេទៅវិញ ។

ក្មេងប្រុសត្រូវគេបង្ខំ និង/ឬ គំរាមអោយទទួលបាននូវអាកប្បកិរិយារំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទតាមរូបភាពជាច្រើន រួមទាំងការរួមភេទតាមមាត់ និងតាមរន្ធកូន ។ ភាគច្រើននៃអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្ត មិនប្រើប្រាស់ស្រោមអនាម័យ ឡើយ ហើយក្មេងប្រុសភាគច្រើនរងរបួសរន្ធកូនយ៉ាងធ្ងន់ធ្ងរ រួមទាំងស្នាមដាច់ និងរំហែក ហើយពួក គេភាគច្រើនពុំទទួលបានការព្យាបាលឡើយ ។ ក្មេងប្រុសទាំងនោះបាននិយាយអំពី បញ្ហា និងការ លំបាកដែលមានរយៈពេលវែង និងខ្លីជាច្រើន ដែលបន្សល់ទុកដោយបទពិសោធន៍របស់ពួកគេ ដែលវា ស្រដៀងគ្នាដោយលក្ខណៈធម្មជាតិ ទៅនឹងព័ត៌មាន ដែលបានរាយការណ៍ជាលាយលក្ខណ៍រួមរៀង និងដោយ ការស្រាវជ្រាវផ្សេងៗទៀតនៅលើពិភពលោក ។ បញ្ហា និង ការលំបាក ទាំងនោះរួមមាន អារម្មណ៍

នៃភាពអៀនខ្មាស់ និងការបាត់បង់កិត្តិយស (ផ្ទុយនឹងជំនឿរបស់អ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តដែលជាមនុស្សពេញវ័យ ជាច្រើន) ការភ័យខ្លាចចំពោះផលប៉ះពាល់នៃការបែកធ្លាយពត៌មាន រឺត្រូវបានសាធារណជនដឹង ភាព ប្រកួតប្រជែងអំពីរឿងផ្លូវភេទ បញ្ហាផ្លូវភេទ និងភេទ បន្ទោសខ្លួនឯង អារម្មណ៍ឯកកោ បញ្ហា សុខភាពផ្លូវចិត្តជាច្រើន សុបិនអាក្រក់ ចង់ធ្វើអត្តឃាត និងប្រើថ្នាំញៀន ដើម្បីបំភ្លេច និងបិទបាំង ការឈឺចាប់របស់របស់ពួកគេ ។ តាមន័យនេះ ការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទនោះ ធ្វើអោយជីវិតរបស់ពួកគេ ក្រឡាប់ចាក់ ខណៈពេលដែល បទពិសោធន៍របស់ពួកគេធ្វើអោយមនុស្សនៅជុំវិញខ្លួនពួកគេមាន ភាពច្របូកច្របល់ ។

នៅក្នុងការសិក្សានេះផងដែរ យើងបានជួបជាមួយក្មេងប្រុសដែលមានអាយុច្រើន និងបុរសវ័យក្មេង ដែលធ្លាប់ទទួលរងការរំលោភកាលពីនៅ កុមារភាព ពួកគេជាច្រើនអ្នក មានអារម្មណ៍ថាទទួល រងគ្រោះស្មើនឹងអ្វីដែលពួកគេបានទទួលជាលើកដំបូង ។ របាយការណ៍ស្តីអំពីបញ្ហា ផ្លូវកាយ ផ្លូវអារម្មណ៍ និងផ្លូវចិត្តរយៈពេលវែង បង្ហាញពីកំរូវការសេវាជាច្រើនសំរាប់មនុស្សប្រុសគ្រប់វ័យ ។

ការប្រព្រឹត្តដែលជាលក្ខណធម្មតារបស់អ្នកថែរក្សាទៅលើក្មេងប្រុសអាយុក្រោម បីឆ្នាំ ដោយប៉ះពាល់ រឺច្រើនប្រដាប់ភេទរបស់វា ត្រូវបាន ពិភាក្សាជាមួយអ្នកចូលរួមក្នុងទង្វើនេះ ។ មនុស្សពេញ វ័យតែងតែយល់ថាទង្វើទាំងនេះគឺជាលក្ខណទំនាមទំលាប់នៃការបង្ហាញនូវភ្នំស្រលាញ់ ។ នៅពេលដែល ក្មេងប្រុសមានអាយុច្រើនជាងនេះបន្តិច វាជារឿងធម្មតាដែលមនុស្សពេញវ័យចាប់ប្រដាប់ភេទរបស់ក្មេង ប្រុស រឺទាញ សម្រាតខោរបស់វានៅចំពោះមុខអ្នកដទៃដើម្បីលេងសើច ។ គំនិតក្នុងចំណោមមនុស្ស ពេញវ័យ និង បុគ្គលិកនៅក្នុងការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ ត្រូវបានលាយបញ្ចូលគ្នា ហើយមួយចំនួនធំយល់ ថាទង្វើទាំងនេះមិនបង្កគ្រោះថ្នាក់អ្វីឡើយ ប្រសិនបើក្មេងមិនទាន់ដល់អាយុទេនោះ ហើយអ្នកផ្សេងទៀត យល់ថាវាអាចបង្កបញ្ហាទៅថ្ងៃក្រោយ ។ ជាពិសេស ក្មេងប្រុសដែលអាចឆ្លើយតបបាន ពួកគេស្មើ តែទាំងអស់ បាននិយាយថា ពួកគេមិនចូលចិត្ត រឺចង់បាន ការថ្នាក់ថ្នមដោយវិធីនេះឡើយ ព្រោះវា ធ្វើអោយពួកគេមានការខ្លះអៀន និងធ្វើពួកគេមាន កំហឹងយ៉ាងខ្លាំង ។

ក្រុមស្រាវជ្រាវបានជួបជាមួយក្មេងប្រុស ដែលមានអាយុច្រើន និង បុរសវ័យក្មេងជាច្រើននាក់ ដែលត្រូវ បានសំគាល់ថាជា "បុរសដែលរួមភេទជាមួយបុរស" (MSM) ហើយដែលនិយាយថាពួកគេធ្លាប់ត្រូវបាន

ទទួលរងការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទកាលពីនៅកុមារភាព ។ ពួកគេក៏បានចែករំលែកនូវព័ត៌មានអំពីការបំពានផ្លូវភេទ និងការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទក្នុងពេលដែលពួកគេជានុស្សពេញវ័យ ក្រោមរូបភាពដ៏យោឃាបំផុត ដែលអាចប្រើពាក្យសំរាប់ពិពណ៌នាបានត្រឹមតែ "ការរំលោភសេពសន្ថវៈជាក្រុម" (បូក) ។

ជនរងគ្រោះត្រូវបានសួរអំពីប្រភេទនៃតំរូវការ និងជំនួយដែលពួកគេត្រូវការ ។ រឿងសំខាន់ៗបានលេចឡើង ។ ការឆ្លើយតបជាច្រើនបាន ផ្ដោតលើតំរូវការមូលដ្ឋានដូចជា សុវត្ថិភាពខាងផ្លូវកាយ និងផ្លូវអារម្មណ៍ ការលាក់ការសំងាត់ ត្រូវបានសង្គមទទួលយក និងមិនត្រូវបាន វិនិច្ឆ័យ ព្រមទាំងទទួលបាននូវការយល់ចិត្ត និងការគោរព ។ ពួកគេក៏បានបង្ហាញអំពីតំរូវការការពារ ការស្រលាញ់ និងអារម្មណ៍នៃ ភាពជាសមាជិកក្នុងក្រុម ។ ជនរងគ្រោះជាច្រើនក៏បានបញ្ចេញនូវសំណូមពរថា ពួកគេត្រូវការជំនួយផ្នែកសិក្សាអប់រំ និងការងារ រីឯអ្នកខ្លះ ទៀតមានបំណងអោយសង្គមជួយការពារក្មេងប្រុសដោយយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ និងទទួលស្គាល់ថាពួកគេក៏ជាជនងាយរងគ្រោះដោយការរំលោភ ផ្លូវភេទ និងមានអារម្មណ៍អាម៉ាស់បំផុតចំពោះការបាត់បង់កិត្តិយស ។

ក្មេងប្រុសជាច្រើនក៏បាននិយាយផងដែរអំពីអ្វីដែលពួកគេមិនចង់បានពីអ្នកគាំទ្រ និងអ្នកថែរក្សាបីបាច់ ទាំងនៅផ្ទះ និងនៅគ្រឹះស្ថានអប់រំនានា។ ពួកគេចង់អោយអ្នកផ្តល់ជំនួយ និងអ្នកគាំទ្រទាំងឡាយសំដែងភាពទន់ភ្លន់ ជាជាងស្រែកគំហឹក រឺប្រើអំពើហិង្សាដាក់ពួកគេ នៅពេលពួកគេ ធ្វើខុស ។ នៅពេលត្រូវបានសួរអំពីសារដែលពួកគេចង់ចែករំលែកដល់អ្នកដទៃទៀត ដូចជាឪពុកម្តាយ បុគ្គលិកអង្គការ និងរដ្ឋាភិបាល ចំលើយរបស់ពួកគេបញ្ជាក់អំពី ខ្លឹមសារសំខាន់មួយចំនួនដូចជា តំរូវការនៃការចង់អោយអ្នកដទៃជឿជាក់ ជំនួយក្នុងការការពារក្មេងប្រុស និងការអង្វរករសុំអោយឈប់មានការសើចចំអកពួកគេ ហើយទទួលស្គាល់ថាពួកគេក៏ជាជនងាយរងគ្រោះ និងទទួលបានការឈឺចាប់ផងដែរដោយសារការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ ។

បុគ្គលិក និងអ្នកថែទាំបីបាច់

មានភាពខុសគ្នាយ៉ាងច្បាស់នៃការយល់ដឹងដែលលេចចេញមកនៅពេលប្រៀបធៀបតំបន់ជាយក្រុង និងតំបន់ទេសចរណ៍ ជាមួយនឹងតំបន់ ជនបទ ។ មានមនុស្សពេញវ័យតិចតួចណាស់នៅក្នុងខេត្តបាត់ដំបង

ដែលបានបង្ហាញអំពីការយល់ដឹងអំពីការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស ទោះជាមានភស្តុតាងបញ្ជាក់ ថាពួកគេបាន និងកំពុងធ្វើការជាមួយក្មេងប្រុសដែលជាជនរងគ្រោះ និងជនរួចជីវិតពីអំពើនេះក៏ដោយ ។ កង្វះខាតនៃព័ត៌មាន និងការប្រាស្រ័យទាក់ទងគ្នាសំរាប់បញ្ហានេះ ក្នុងរង្វង់ និងរវាងអង្គការដែលត្រូវ បញ្ជូននានា នាំអោយមានកង្វះខាត នៃការទទួលស្គាល់ថា វាមិនទំនងក្នុងការដាក់ដែនកំណត់ដល់ខេត្ត មួយនេះ ។ គោលដៅដែលត្រូវបានថ្លែងដោយអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល មួយចំនួន ក៏ទំនងជាបញ្ចៀស ពួកគេ មិនអោយយល់ថាបញ្ហានេះជាបញ្ហាដែលគួរអោយព្រួយបារម្ភ ។

ខណៈដែលការយល់ដឹងក្នុងរង្វង់តំបន់ជាយក្រុងមានលក្ខណៈខ្ពស់ជាទូទៅ មានភស្តុតាងតិចតួចណាស់ អំពី ការចែករំលែកព័ត៌មានអំពី ការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើមនុស្សប្រុស ក្នុងចំណោមអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋា ភិបាលជាច្រើន ហើយមានការបង្ហាញតិចតួចណាស់ដែរអំពី ការឆ្លើយតប ដែលប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព ដែលមានការសម្របសម្រួល និងការសហការគ្នា ទាំងក្នុងរង្វង់ និងរវាងអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល នានា ។ ក្នុងន័យនេះ ក្មេងប្រុសដែលត្រូវបានរំលោភគឺជាមនុស្សដែលមិនត្រូវបានគេអើពើ ។ មានសំណេរ និងធនធានមួយចំនួន ប៉ុន្តែ ធនធានទាំងនោះតែងតែផ្តោតលើអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តដែលជាជនជាតិបរទេស ដោយមិនបានរាប់បញ្ចូលនូវអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្តផ្សេងទៀតដែលអាចមាននោះទេ ។

ពិតជាមានការយល់ដឹង និងមានការអនុវត្តបានល្អជាច្រើន ព្រមទាំងសេវានានាឈរលើច្បាប់របស់ គ្រីស្ទាន ដែលផ្តល់នូវការពិគ្រោះបញ្ហា សំរាប់ក្មេងប្រុស ។ យ៉ាងណាមិញ បុគ្គលិកដែលមានចំណេះដឹង តែងតែបិទនៅឆ្ងាយពីគ្នា ហើយកំរទទួលបាននូវការបណ្តុះបណ្តាល ការគាំទ្រ ដែលប្រកបដោយនិរន្តរភាព និង ជំនួបត្រួតពិនិត្យបែបវេជ្ជសាស្ត្រ ដើម្បីអាចបង្កើតនូវយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រក្នុងការគាំទ្រ ដែលមានរយៈពេល វែង និង ប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព ។ បុគ្គលិកមួយចំនួនធំបានបង្ហាញនូវការស្ទាក់ស្ទើរ និងអារម្មណ៍ នៃភាពគ្មានទីពឹងរបស់ខ្លួន ខណៈដែលនៅក្នុងកន្លែងខ្លះ មានកង្វះខាតដ៏ធំនៃ "ការភ្ជាប់ទំនាក់ទំនង " ជាមួយនឹងការយល់អំពីក្មេងប្រុស ។ ជាញឹកញយ ពួកគេត្រូវបានយល់ឃើញដោយគំនិតដ៏ខុសឆ្គង ដោយសារពួកគេមានបញ្ហាអាកប្បកិរិយា រឺមានលក្ខណៈខ្វះខាតដោយប្រការផ្សេង ហើយតំរូវការរបស់ ពួកគេដែលជាជនរងគ្រោះ និង ជនរួចជីវិតពីអំពើរំលោភ មិនត្រូវបានគេទទួលស្គាល់ រឺ យល់ឡើយ ។

តំរូវការការគាំទ្រ និង ការបណ្តុះបណ្តាលដែលមានបូកបញ្ចូលនូវព័ត៌មានមូលដ្ឋានអំពីការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស តាមរយៈ ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍នូវជំនាញពិសេសសំរាប់គាំទ្រដល់ក្មេងប្រុសដែលទទួលរងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ ។ នៅគ្រប់ទីកន្លែងទាំងអស់ អ្នកចូលរួមក្នុង ទង្វើនេះមួយចំនួនធំទទួលស្គាល់នូវតំរូវការជំនួយក្នុងការបង្កើតអោយមាននូវវិធីសាស្ត្រ "ការទាក់ទាញបែបមនុស្សប្រុស" សំរាប់ផ្សារភ្ជាប់ទំនាក់ទំនង ក្មេងប្រុសទៅនឹងឧបករណ៍ និង គំនិតជាក់លាក់ណាមួយ ដើម្បីជួយពួកគេក្នុងការសាងសង់នូវទំនាក់ទំនង ។ តំរូវការដ៏មានសារសំខាន់ផ្សេងទៀតគឺ ជំនួបត្រួតពិនិត្យដែលមានលក្ខណៈគាំទ្រ និង ឱកាសក្នុងការជួបជាមួយអ្នកដទៃដើម្បីធ្វើកិច្ចការ ដែលស្រដៀងគ្នា ។

ឧបសគ្គដែលមានលក្ខណៈរៀបចំជាច្រើនចំពោះដំណើរការនៃវិស័យនេះ ដែលត្រូវបានសំគាល់ដោយអ្នកចូលរួមអនុវត្តន៍ ទាក់ទងនឹងកង្វះខាត ក្នុងការសហការគ្នារវាងអង្គការទាំងឡាយ ជាពិសេសអង្គការដែលស្វែងរកជំនួយពីប្រភពដែលស្រដៀងគ្នា ។ ករណីផ្សេងទៀតគឺ កង្វះខាត ការសហការ និង ជំនឿទុកចិត្ត ត្រូវបានកត់សំគាល់ថា កើតមានរវាងអង្គការដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធ និងមិនពាក់ព័ន្ធសាសនា និង អង្គការដែលឈរលើភាពស្មោះត្រង់នានា ។ អ្នកចូលរួមក្នុងសកម្មភាពទប់ស្កាត់នេះផ្សេងទៀត ក៏បានកត់សំគាល់ឃើញផងដែរថា អ្នកផ្តល់ជំនួយក៏ត្រូវការការសិក្សាអំពីតំរូវការរបស់ ក្មេងប្រុស ហើយចាំបាច់សាស្ត្ររបស់ពួកគេអាចកំនត់នូវព្រំដែននៃប្រឌិតញាណ ។ ភាពខុសគ្នានៃអំណាចរវាងអង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល និង ម្ចាស់ជំនួយ ព្រមទាំងភាពខ្វះឆន្ទៈក្នុងការប្រឈមមុខនឹងការពិតនៃការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ ក្នុងចំណោមស្ថាប័ននានា ក៏ត្រូវបានចាត់ទុកថា ជាបញ្ហាសំខាន់ផងដែរ ។

យោបល់

តំរូវការរបស់ក្មេងប្រុស និងបុរសវ័យក្មេង គួរតែត្រូវបានយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ និងឆ្លើយតបដោយម្ចាស់ជំនួយរាជរដ្ឋាភិបាល អង្គការក្នុងស្រុក និងអន្តរជាតិ ព្រមទាំងសហគមន៍ ដោយសារវាជាបញ្ហាដែលត្រូវដោះស្រាយជាបន្ទាន់ ។ ខណៈដែលការយកចិត្តទុកដាក់លើ ធនធានមានភាពសំខាន់ ការចំណាយលើវិស្វកម្ម នៃផ្នែកធនធានមនុស្ស និងផ្នែកហិរញ្ញវត្ថុដែល អាចមានក្នុងរយៈពេលវែងមានសារសំខាន់លើសលុបជាងនេះទៅទៀត ។ សហប្រតិបត្តិការ និង ការអនុវត្តន៍ការងារ របស់ភ្នាក់ងារចំរុះដែលមានអាណតិយូរអង្វែង ក្នុងការឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងតំរូវការទាំងនេះ គឺជារឿងសំខាន់ ហើយ

វាគួរតែ ត្រូវបានបន្ថែមទៅនឹងធនធានដែលមានស្រាប់ ជាជាងកាត់បន្ថយការដោះស្រាយបញ្ហានេះ ហើយ ងាកទៅដោះស្រាយរឿងផ្សេង ។

តំរូវការនៃការលើកកម្ពស់ការយល់ដឹងក្នុងរង្វង់សហគមន៍ អង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល និង រាជរដ្ឋាភិបាល ដែលមានលក្ខណៈទូលំទូលាយ មានសារៈសំខាន់បំផុត ដើម្បីសាងសង់គ្រឹះដ៏រឹងមាំមួយសំរាប់ការផ្លាស់ប្តូរ ។ កិច្ចប្រឹងប្រែងទាំងអស់គួរតែត្រូវធ្វើឡើងដើម្បីប្រើប្រាស់នូវបណ្តាញ និង វិធីសាស្ត្រដើម្បីភាពជោគជ័យ ដែលមានស្រាប់ ។

ការឆ្លើយតបដោយប្រើសេវាដែលងាយរកបានមួយចំនួនធំ ដែលឈរលើវិធីសាស្ត្ររយៈពេលវែង គួរតែ ត្រូវបានអនុវត្ត ។ វិធីសាស្ត្រទាំងនោះ គួរតែត្រូវបានបូកបញ្ចូលនូវវិធីសាស្ត្រយកកុមារជាធំ និងផ្ដោត លើសិទ្ធិមនុស្ស ប៉ុន្តែក៏ត្រូវឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងតំរូវការដែលបានថ្លែងដោយក្មេងប្រុស ដែលត្រូវបានដក ស្រង់ក្នុងពេលធ្វើការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវផងដែរ តំរូវការទាំងនោះរួមមាន : សុវត្ថិភាព និង ការការពារ, ការយល់ចិត្ត, ការផ្តល់អំណាច និង ជំរើស, ការទទួលស្គាល់នូវតំរូវការក្នុងការទទួលយក, ការគោរព និង ភាពជាមាជិក ។ ការចូលរួមរបស់ក្មេងប្រុស, ក្រុមគ្រួសារ និង សហគមន៍ ដែលប្រកប ដោយអត្ថន័យ គួរតែត្រូវបានធ្វើឡើងក្រោមកិច្ចសហការគ្នាប្រឹងប្រែងដើម្បីអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ ។

ការប្តល់សេវាគួរតែត្រូវធ្វើឡើងក្នុងវិធីសាស្ត្រសមមួយ ដោយការស្ថាបនាដែលឆ្លុះបញ្ចាំងអំពីបទពិសោធន៍ ផ្សេងៗគ្នារបស់ក្មេងប្រុស រួមទាំងការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទដោយមនុស្សពេញវ័យ ដែលត្រូវបានគេយល់ ថាជារឿងសាមញ្ញ ហើយវាក៏ជាបញ្ហាការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទក្នុង រង្វង់គ្រួសារ និងសហគមន៍ និង ដោយក្មេងដទៃ និង មនុស្សវ័យក្មេង ដែលត្រូវបានលាក់កំបាំង និងមានភាពជាក់លាក់។ គោលការណ៍ នៃអន្តរាគមន៍ទាន់ពេល និង បណ្តើមគំនិតសំរាប់សកម្មភាពថ្មីៗដែលមានរយៈពេលខ្លី និងវែង ហើយ អាចអនុវត្តបានទាំងស្រុង គួរតែត្រូវបានបង្កើតឡើង រួមទាំងការប្រតិបត្តិលើការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ ជំនាញពិសេស និងសេវាដែលមានលក្ខណៈប្រឆាំង និងប្រើវិធីសាស្ត្រថ្មីគឺ "ការទាក់ទាញបែបមនុស្សប្រុស " និងទាំង ងាយស្រួលស្វែងរក ។

អន្តរាគមន៍សំរាប់ក្មេងប្រុសត្រូវតែធ្វើឡើង ដើម្បីអោយក្មេងប្រុសអាចទទួលបាននូវការទប់ស្កាត់ និងការ
ការពារ, ភាពជាសះស្បើយ, និងការ គាំទ្រ និងការតស៊ូមតិ ។ ការចូលរួម និងការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍
ដ៏មានអត្ថន័យចំពោះសេវាដែលមានស្រាប់ គឺជាកត្តាដ៏សំខាន់ ព្រមជាមួយនឹង ការបង្កើតនូវកម្មវិធីថ្មីៗ ។
កម្មវិធីទាំងនោះរួមមាន :

អ្នកផ្តល់សេវាដែលមានស្រាប់ ដែលកំពុងធ្វើការជាមួយក្មេងប្រុស គួរតែត្រូវពង្រឹងបន្ថែមនូវ តិរិយាបទ
របស់បុគ្គលិក និងការគ្រប់គ្រង, ការយល់ដឹង និង ជំនាញក្នុងការឆ្លើយតប, ព្រមទាំង ពង្រីកកម្មវិធី
និង/ឬ បន្ថែមនូវបុគ្គលិកជំនាញដើម្បីជាការយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ និងឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងតំរូវការជាក់លាក់
របស់ក្មេងប្រុស, បង្កើតអោយមាននូវអ្នកជំនាញ និងពង្រីកវគ្គបណ្តុះបណ្តាលដែលមានស្រាប់ដើម្បី
បង្ហាញអំពីការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ, ការការពារ និង ការទប់ស្កាត់អំពើរំលោភលើកុមារ, ធានា
អោយមាននូវជំរើសនៃការគាំទ្រ ដែលស័ក្តសមសំរាប់ក្មេងប្រុស ។ ការបង្កើតឡើងនូវការគាំទ្រ
ដែលប្រកបដោយអត្ថន័យ និងនិរន្តរភាព, ការថែរក្សា និងជំនួបត្រួតពិនិត្យជាមួយបុគ្គលិក គួរតែ
ត្រូវបានចាត់ទុកថាជាកត្តាសំខាន់សំរាប់ បណ្តើមគំនិតថ្មីនាពេលអនាគត ជាជាងការចំណាយលើអ្វី
ដែលមិនចាំបាច់ ។

កម្មវិធីថ្មីដែលគួរតែត្រូវបានអភិវឌ្ឍរួមមាន : មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសំរាប់មនុស្សទូទៅដែលងាយស្វែងរក និងក
ន្លែងសុវត្ថិភាព ដែលអតិថិជនអាចមក ទទួលសេវា ២៤ម៉ោង, សេវាផ្នែកពេទ្យ ផ្នែកផ្លូវច្បាប់
ផ្នែកពិគ្រោះបញ្ហា និងផ្នែកគាំទ្រក្នុងចំណោមមនុស្សស្រករគ្នា ដែលមានលក្ខណៈ សប្បុរសធម៌ ស័ក្តសម
និងងាយស្វែងរក, ការផ្តល់ធនធានជាបណ្តាញទូរស័ព្ទសំរាប់សុំជំនួយ និងបណ្តាញអ៊ិនធឺណិត, កម្មវិធី
ចុះតាម សហគមន៍ដែលមានការអះអាង ដោយមានបុគ្គលិកសង្គមកិច្ចជាអ្នកគាំទ្រ ដែលមានទំនាក់
ទំនងជាមួយសេវាថ្មីៗ និងសេវាដែលមានស្រាប់, កម្មវិធីពេលថ្ងៃសំរាប់មនុស្សទូទៅ ដើម្បីបំពេញបន្ថែម
ទៅនឹងសេវាដែលមានស្រាប់, ឱកាសដែលមានលក្ខណៈប្រាកដនិយមសំរាប់ក្មេងប្រុស ដើម្បីបង្កើតផ្លូវ
និងជំរើសបន្ថែមទៀតក្នុងការបញ្ចៀសការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទ, ឱកាសក្នុងការផ្សាភ្ជាប់ ទៅនឹងសកម្មភាព
ជាច្រើនរួមទាំង : ការអប់រំ កីឡា ការសំដែងល្ខោន វិធីព្យាបាលតាមបែបសិល្បៈ និង កម្មវិធី
ពិសេសមួយដែលមានឈ្មោះថា outward bound ។ ទន្ទឹមនឹងនេះដែរ ក្រុមអ្នកជំនាញក៏គួរ
តែត្រូវបាន បង្កើតឡើង ដើម្បីបង្កើននូវការគាំទ្រដែលមានលក្ខណៈព្យាបាល ហើយផ្សាភ្ជាប់ទៅនឹងការ

អភិវឌ្ឍន៍វគ្គបណ្តុះបណ្តាល, ជំនួបត្រួតពិនិត្យ, ការស្រាវជ្រាវ នៅតាមកន្លែងជាក់ស្តែង និងការវាយតម្លៃ រួមទាំងការងារជាមួយនឹងក្រុមគ្រួសារ និងសហគមន៍ ។

ប្រសិនបើអាចធ្វើបាន កុមារគួរតែត្រូវបានថែរក្សានៅក្នុងរង្វង់គ្រួសារដើមរបស់ពួកគេ ហើយកិច្ចប្រឹងប្រែង គួរត្រូវបានធ្វើឡើងដើម្បីធានាថា ការគាំទ្ររបស់អ្នកជំនាញ ត្រូវបានផ្តល់អោយដល់ក្រុមគ្រួសារ ក្នុង គោលបំណងពង្រឹងការការពារកុមារ និងបង្កើនសមត្ថភាពរបស់ពួកគេ ក្នុងការគាំទ្រក្មេងប្រុសដែលទទួល រងការរំលោភ ។ ប្រសិនបើវាមិនអាចធ្វើទៅបានក្នុងការរក្សាក្មេងប្រុសអោយនៅផ្ទះរបស់ពួកគេ ជំរើស មួយទៀតដែលគួរត្រូវបានស្វែងយល់គឺ គ្រួសារធំរបស់ពួកគេ ។ ប្រសិនបើវាមិនអាចទៅរួចទៀត គំរោង គាំពារកុមារផ្តោតលើ សហគមន៍ ដែលប្រកបដោយជំនាញ គួរតែត្រូវបានផ្តល់អោយកុមារតាម តំរូវការរបស់ពួកគេ ។ ការគាំទ្រដោយយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ គួរតែត្រូវ បានផ្តល់ដល់ក្មេងប្រុស និង អ្នកថែ ទាំពួកគេ ក្នុងលក្ខណៈដាច់ដោយឡែកពីគ្នា ។

នៅក្នុងករណីខ្លះ ហើយវាក៏ជាជំរើសចុងក្រោយ កន្លែងស្នាក់នៅសំរាប់ក្មេងរងគ្រោះគួរតែត្រូវបានផ្តល់ នៅក្នុងផ្ទះតូច រឺដោយអ្នកថែទាំ ដែលមានជំនាញ ដើម្បីឆ្លើយតបទៅនឹងវិបត្តិ ហើយអាច ទទួលបានសេវាសុខភាពដែលប្រកបដោយការយល់ចិត្ត ។ ការរក្សាទុកកុមារនៅក្នុង ទីកន្លែងបែបនេះ គួរធ្វើក្នុងរយៈពេលខ្លីប៉ុន្តែអោយមានលក្ខណៈបត់បែនតាមកាលៈទេសៈ ដោយមានគោលដៅចុងក្រោយនៃការស្នាក់នៅគឺ នៅក្នុងគ្រួសារ រឺ សហគមន៍ រឺនៅកន្លែងថែរក្សា ដែលមានជំនាញ ។

ប្រសិនបើកន្លែងទាំងនោះមិនមានសំរាប់ក្មេងប្រុសទេនោះ យើងទាំងអស់គ្នាគួរផ្តោតអារម្មណ៍លើការបង្កើតឡើងនូវ ការគាំទ្រ និង វេទិការ ប្រជុំ ដើម្បីអភិវឌ្ឍ ការយល់ដឹង និងបណ្តើមគំនិតដែលដឹកនាំដោយសហគមន៍ ក្នុងការលើកកម្ពស់ការយល់ដឹងអំពីការរំលោភ បំពាន និង ការកេងប្រវ័ញ្ចផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ទាំងនេះរួមទាំងការប្រើប្រព័ន្ធផ្សព្វផ្សាយ ប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព ។

ជំរើសនៃការគាំទ្រជាច្រើន ក៏គួរតែត្រូវបានអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ដើម្បីអោយក្មេងប្រុសដែលមានអាយុច្រើន, បុរសវ័យក្មេង, និងបុរសពេញវ័យ ដែលកំពុងបិតនៅក្រៅផែនការរដ្ឋនៃសេវារបស់កម្មវិធី អាចទទួលបាននូវតំរូវការរបស់ពួកគេ ។ ជំរើសទាំងនេះរួមមាន ការពិគ្រោះបញ្ចេញ ការងារជាក្រុម ការផ្តល់ទីជំរក ការសិក្សាអប់រំ និង ការផ្តល់ការងារធ្វើ ។

ក្មេងប្រុស បុរសវ័យក្មេង និងបុរសពេញវ័យ ដែលគេស្គាល់ថាជាមនុស្សដែលរួមភេទជាមួយមនុស្សផ្ទុយភេទ ក៏បិតនៅឆ្ងាយពីការគាំទ្រផងដែរ ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទកាលនៅកុមារភាព និង/ឬ ការរំលោភបំពាន និង ការរំលោភផ្លូវភេទ នៅពេលពេញវ័យ ។ តាមរយៈការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវបន្ត និងការស្រាវជ្រាវជាក់លាក់ សេវាមានស្រាប់ដែលកំពុងគាំទ្រ បុរសដែលរួមភេទជាមួយបុរស (MSM) គួរតែធ្វើការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ជំនាញ និងសេវាគាំទ្រណាមួយរបស់ពួកគេ ។

អ្វីដែលជាតំរូវការបន្ទាន់នោះគឺ អង្គការក្រៅរដ្ឋាភិបាល និងធនធានបណ្តាលយ័ ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើមនុស្សប្រុស ដែលគួរតែត្រូវបានផ្តល់តាមរយៈបណ្តាញអ៊ីនធឺណិត ។ ការបង្កើតឡើងនូវវេទិការប្រជុំ សំរាប់អោយបុគ្គលិកទទួលបាននូវការគាំទ្រ និង បង្កើតនូវបណ្តើមគំនិតសំរាប់ពេលអនាគត, និងការកសាងបណ្តាញទំនាក់ទំនងជាមួយអ្នកជំនាញមកពីខាងក្នុង និងក្រៅប្រទេស ដែលមានជំនាញខាងផ្នែកនេះ គួរតែត្រូវបានលើកទឹកចិត្ត ។

ឱកាសក្នុងការជួបគ្នាជាប្រចាំ ដើម្បីទទួលបានការគាំទ្រទៅវិញទៅមក ដើម្បីធ្វើការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ចំពោះបញ្ហាទាំងអស់ខាងលើ គួរតែត្រូវបានបង្កើត អោយមានសំរាប់ជនរងគ្រោះភេទប្រុស ដែលធ្លាប់ទទួលរងការរំលោភបំពាន ។

យោបល់សំរាប់ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនៅពេលអនាគត

ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវបន្តខាងផ្នែកនេះពិតជាតំរូវការយ៉ាងច្បាស់ និងបន្ទាន់ ដើម្បីនាំទៅរកការយល់ដឹងដែលមានលក្ខណៈទូលំទូលាយជាងនេះ អំពីធម្មជាតិ និងភាពញឹកញាប់នៃការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើ

ក្មេងប្រុសនៅទូទាំងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះគួរតែជាព័ត៌មានសំរាប់ ការបន្តបង្កើតនូវ សេវាជាច្រើនទៀតដែលប្រកបដោយលក្ខណៈយល់ចិត្ត និងប្រសិទ្ធភាព ។ ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវដែល សំគាល់នូវ អន្តរាគមន៍ ដែលប្រើសំរាប់ទប់ស្កាត់ និងមានប្រយោជន៍ ព្រមទាំងកត្តា ដែលជំរុញអោយមានការជាសះស្បើយឡើងវិញ និងជំនាញដោយស្រាយបញ្ហា ក៏គួរតែត្រូវបានធ្វើឡើង ។

មានតំរូវការបន្ទាន់មួយសំរាប់ការស្រាវជ្រាវដើម្បីស្វែងយល់អំពី ហេតុ និង ផល បង្ហាញនៅក្នុងការ រំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ ។ តំរូវការនេះ គួរតែត្រូវបានបូកបញ្ចូលទាំងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទដោយ មនុស្សពេញវ័យ ប៉ុន្តែជាការសំខាន់គួរស្វែងយល់អំពី អាកប្បកិរិយាផ្លូវភេទ ដែលអាចបង្កអោយ មានគ្រោះថ្នាក់ ការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទ និងការរំលោភសេពសន្ថវៈ លើកុមារដោយកុមារដ៏ទៃ និងក្មេងជំទង់ ដែលត្រូវបានគេសំគាល់ថាជាបញ្ហាដ៏សំខាន់នៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ នឹងនាំទៅរកការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍វិធីសាស្ត្រសំរាប់ការពារ ទប់ស្កាត់ និង វិធានការចំពោះអ្នកប្រព្រឹត្ត ។

ការបណ្តុះបណ្តាល និង ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍

បច្ចុប្បន្នមានអង្គការ និងបុគ្គលតិចតួចណាស់ដែលមានចំណេះដឹង ជំនាញ និងសមត្ថភាពពិសេស ទាក់ទងនឹងការរំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេង ប្រុស ។ ការយកចិត្តទុកដាក់ និងឆ្លើយតបចំពោះបញ្ហានេះ គឺជាដំណើរការដ៏យូរអង្វែងមួយ ដែលតំរូវអោយម្ចាស់ជំនួយ នាយក/នាយិការ និង អ្នកគ្រប់គ្រង ក៏ដូចជា បុគ្គលិកទាំងអស់ ផ្តល់ជាពេលវេលា និងធនធានផ្សេងៗ ។ ខណៈដែល សសក មានប្រវត្តិ ដ៏យូរអង្វែងក្នុងការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍វគ្គសិក្សាផ្នែក ការងារសង្គមកិច្ច និង ការបណ្តុះបណ្តាលប្រកបដោយ គុណភាពខ្ពស់ បញ្ហានេះគួរតែត្រូវបានបង្ហាញដោយអ្នកដែលមានការព្រួយបារម្ភទាំងអស់ ហើយនឹង តំរូវអោយមាននូវយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសហការដើម្បីអោយមានប្រសិទ្ធភាព ។

បុគ្គលិកគ្រប់ផ្នែកទាំងអស់បានទទួលស្គាល់ថាតំរូវការការបណ្តុះបណ្តាល និងការគាំទ្រមានសារសំខាន់ ដែលការបណ្តុះបណ្តាលនេះរួមមាន ការយល់ដឹងអំពីការ រំលោភបំពានផ្លូវភេទលើក្មេងប្រុស ការ អភិវឌ្ឍន៍ជំនាញជាក់លាក់ និង បច្ចេកទេសក្នុងការពិគ្រោះបញ្ហា ។ ទីមីនីងនេះដែរ ក៏មាន តំរូវការ យ៉ាងច្បាស់លាស់សំរាប់យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព

ព្រមទាំងឧបករណ៍ដែលជួយបង្កើតនូវជំនឿជាក់ ទាក់ទងទៅនឹងការ ពាក់ ព័ន្ធជាមួយបុរសភេទ ។ កិច្ចប្រឹងប្រែងក្នុងការផ្តល់នូវការគាំទ្រប្រកបដោយអត្ថន័យ និង ជំនួយត្រួតពិនិត្យផ្នែកវេជ្ជសាស្ត្រដែល ប្រកបដោយប្រសិទ្ធភាព របស់បុគ្គលិកដែលលើកកម្ពស់ការថែរក្សាខ្លួនឯង គួរតែត្រូវបានចាត់ទុកថាជា កត្តាសំខាន់សំរាប់បណ្តើមគំនិតនាពេលអនាគត ។

ភាសារំលោភបំពាន

ពាក្យពេចន៍ប្រើដោយជនរងគ្រោះក្នុងការពិពណ៌នាអំពីបទពិសោធន៍របស់ពួកគេត្រូវបានដាក់បញ្ចូលទៅក្នុង សទ្ទានុក្រមពាក្យ ។ ទោះជាយ៉ាងណា វាជាការសំខាន់ក្នុងការបញ្ជាក់អោយបានច្បាស់នូវចំនុចជាក់លាក់ ខ្លះៗ ។ នៅពេលពិពណ៌នាអំពីការរួមភេទតាមរន្ធគូទ, ការសិកបញ្ចូល លិង្គតាមរន្ធគូទរបស់ក្មេងប្រុស, រឺការរំលោភសេពសន្ថវៈលើភេទប្រុស ពាក្យដែលតែងតែត្រូវបានប្រើគឺ *បុក* រឺ *បុកគូទ* ។

នៅតំបន់ផ្សេងទៀត ពាក្យ *បុក* ក៏អាចត្រូវបានប្រើដើម្បីពិពណ៌នាវត្ថុពីរយ៉ាងដែលចេញមកក្នុងពេល ជាមួយគ្នាយ៉ាងលឿនដោយកំលាំង ឧទាហរណ៍ ឡានបុកគ្នា ។ *គូទ* សំដៅដល់ផ្នែកខាងក្រោម នៃកំប៉េះគូទ ។ ជួនកាលក្មេងប្រុសនិយាយពាក្យដែលមានន័យដូចពាក្យថា "គាត់**បុកគូទខ្ញុំ**" ។ ដូច្នេះ ហើយវាតែងតែត្រូវបានគេប្រើជា ពាក្យសាមញ្ញ ក្នុងការពិពណ៌នាអំពីសកម្មភាពផ្លូវភេទ (ជាពិសេស ត្រូវបានប្រើ ដោយក្មេងប្រុសខ្លះដើម្បីពិពណ៌នានូវពាក្យ "រួមភេទ") ដែលបង្ហាញនូវការប្រើចលនា រឺកំលាំងខ្លាំងៗ ។ បំណកប្រែដែលច្រើនគឺ "សិកបញ្ចូលលិង្គទៅក្នុងរន្ធគូទ" ខណៈដែលភាពគួរសម និងភាពត្រឹមត្រូវដែលបិតក្នុងគំនិតបែបជីវសាស្ត្រ មិនបានបង្ហាញអោយបានត្រឹមត្រូវនូវ ធម្មជាតិនៃទង្វើ ដូចដែលក្មេងប្រុសរៀបរាប់ ។ ដូច្នេះតាមរយៈអត្ថបទនេះ *បុក* ត្រូវបានប្រើដើម្បី បង្ហាញអំពីការ រួមភេទតាមរន្ធគូទ ការសិកបញ្ចូលលិង្គ និង/រឺ ការរំលោភសេពសន្ថវៈតាមរន្ធគូទ ប្រសិនបើមិនមាន ការប្រើពាក្យផ្សេងទៀត ។

ជាពិសេសនៅពេលពិភាក្សាពីបញ្ហានេះជាមួយ វិបុល គាត់បានពន្យល់ថា ពាក្យ *បុកគូទ* អាចបញ្ជាក់ ពីអត្ថន័យរបស់វាបានដោយរបៀបដែល គេបញ្ចេញសំឡេងរបស់វា ។ ទោះជាយ៉ាងណា ខ្ញុំគិតថាពាក្យ *បុក* ប្រើដោយក្មេងប្រុស គ្មានសំឡេង "ក" ទេ ប៉ុន្តែនៅពេលគេប្រើពាក្យ ពីរជាមួយគ្នា

វាហាក់ដូចជាមានសំលេង "ក"។ បើសរសេរតែ "បូ" អាចនាំអោយគេបញ្ឆោតសំលេងវាខុសគ្នាទាំងស្រុង ប្រៀបដូចជាពាក្យ ដែលមានសំលេងចួនគ្នានឹងពាក្យ "low" ដូច្នេះដែរ ។ ប្រសិនបើមានឱកាស សូម លោកអ្នកមើលអត្ថបទនេះ ហើយសូមផ្តល់ជាព័ត៌មាន អោយខ្ញុំបានដឹងថា តើវាត្រឹមត្រូវដូចដែល ខ្ញុំរៀបរាប់ រឺវាត្រូវធ្វើការកែប្រែយ៉ាងណានោះ ។

សូមអគុណ

CHAPTER ONE: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

The Research Team

From the outset, the consultant planned to develop a team approach and model of practice for the research that was inclusive and empowering, building the capacity of all concerned. Discussions prior to the project's start revealed that many local staff research experiences were limited to being used primarily for language skills. They reported minimal involvement and were not often included in research design, training, analysis or other stages. The consultant's commitment to and experience of strength-based practice in a variety of settings ensured that this project would be different. Taking into consideration the sensitivity of the subject matter and fact that no research of this type had taken place in Cambodia, it seemed clear that a new approach was required.

The initial challenge was to recruit and build a team with the necessary range of existing basic skills, coupled with openness to new learning and commitment to take on a significant challenge. It was expected that a study of this kind, exploring such a sensitive topic, would require a range of skills. Key criteria included previous research experience and work in a social welfare setting, along with intellectual ability, curiosity, analytical skills, interest in personal development and awareness of self. In addition, compassion and enthusiasm for social issues were considered vital.

The team was recruited through existing contacts and by placement of an advertisement in the *Cambodia Daily* newspaper. The five Cambodian researchers included two part-time members, employed by SSC as trainers, taking a six-month sabbatical from training duties. An administrative assistant and translator-interpreter completed the group, which is described below. Each of the team members contributed a short description of themselves.

Kong Sokhem is an experienced social worker-trainer who has worked at SSC for seven years. She is also an experienced researcher and has been involved in numerous research projects exploring issues of child labour, poverty, disability, immigration and older people.

Oung Syphat has worked with people with mental health problems since 1987, initially at refugee camps on the border with Thailand. Since 1994, he has worked at Hagar in a variety of roles supporting women and children.

Nong Socheat graduated from the Royal University of Phnom Penh in 2006 with a BA in psychology. She has worked as a social worker with children and families in the community. In 2006 she was a member of a research team for Save the Children Australia, publishing "Child Abuse: Prevention and Protection Strategies for Cambodia".

Sok Channy graduated from Norton University in 2003, majoring in marketing. For three years she has worked on a variety of research projects related to youth reproductive health, HIV and AIDS discrimination issues and poverty.

Seoung Sothearwat is employed as a social worker-trainer at SSC and has 10 years' experience working in a variety of settings with adults and children, including mental health and HIV and AIDS counselling. He previously worked as a research assistant for IOM and carried out research for a BA in project development and management.

Employed as translator-interpreter, **Long Vibol** has worked for SSC and with the team leader for two years, mostly in the social and mental health services programme. He has

experience of working with people with a range of psycho-social problems and has played an important role in the development of and delivery of supervision and training.

Teng Ponarry graduated from the National University of Management, Phnom Penh, in 2005, majoring in tourism, and was employed as administrative assistant and translator.

Alastair Hilton has more than 20 years' experience in the UK of social work with children and families and people with mental health and drug and alcohol misuse problems. For the last 14 years he has also taken a specific interest in the development of services for male victims and survivors of sexual abuse, providing services, training, support and consulting to numerous organisations. Team leader for this project, he has worked in Cambodia for two years for SSC at the social and mental health services project, providing training, supervision and support to social workers.

Research: A Capacity Building Approach

From the outset, the consultant saw developing a capacity-building model as vital to this project. The desire was to conduct the research in a manner that involved the team throughout, from research design to presentation of the final report. This would not only increase the likelihood of the data being better but would also improve the confidence and skills of the team, leaving behind a group of individuals well placed to develop this area of work.

Early discussions with the team revealed that some had previous experiences of research where involvement and opportunities to share ideas were minimal; training was often short, pre-arranged and not always directed to their needs; others remarked that they were not involved in research design or analysis and did not feel a sense of participation or ownership. One researcher commented that it had felt like "being used" rather than involved. A detailed description of the team building, awareness raising and training can be explored in Appendix 1. In many respects it is experimental, drawing on a range of theories and methodologies. It is hoped that it will prove useful to practitioners and researchers following in our footsteps.

Further Influences on Study Design

Social work practice involves with some of the most vulnerable, marginalised and under-researched groups in society. It is argued that the greater the social marginalisation, the greater the risk of exploitation through research.⁸ Ensuring that this did not occur was not left to chance and drew on several theoretical perspectives.

Social work and counselling values played a fundamental part in the study design and methodology. The study was further influenced by both the consultant's and some team members' experiences of working with sexually abused children and adults. These identified the need for confidentiality and active promotion of safety, honesty, trust, empathy and choice to be key elements of practice.

The focus on oppression, the plight of disadvantaged groups and the need to conduct research in as shared and democratic a way as possible with participants, characterised by respect and empathy, also finds its roots in feminist research practice. Demystification for and with the powerless creates the potential for change, while a lack of information and knowledge about certain groups can perpetuate their powerlessness.⁹ Information empowers and leads to change.

8 Durham, A. (2003)

9 Reinharz, S. (1992)

Anti-oppressive researchers develop questions formulated to explore social processes and experiences of oppression; the focus on strengths and coping, as opposed to deficits and weaknesses, was particularly relevant to the study. The avoidance of labelling and development of a sensitive methodology to create safety were primary goals. This perspective and the fact that sexual abuse is characterised by silence, secrecy and fear of telling influenced the development of tools and methods for participant communication, to enable boys to have a “voice” in a manner that was enabling and not stigmatising. Prior to the study, plans were also made to access the services a Vietnamese translator if necessary. During the training and preparation process, attention was also paid to potential negative bias and discrimination within the team.

In many respects the approach to the study was structured but also flexible and eclectic, drawing on a range of ideas, illustrating that the relationship between social work, research and practice is a close one, with a great deal appearing in common and being useful.

The Research Process, Including Ethical Safeguards

The research was initially influenced by the terms of reference, which provided an early guide to what the study was to include (Appendix 2). Essentially these required the team to employ qualitative methodologies to find out about the experiences of boys who have been sexually abused and exploited and to explore the current availability of services, developing ideas for “models of care”. Initiatives for SSC to develop appropriate training for staff, raising awareness of the problem of the sexual abuse of boys in Cambodia and identifying the needs for further research were all included. Each of these areas was developed and modified over the course of the project.

A key feature of qualitative research methods is that satisfactory explanations of social issues, particularly sensitive and hidden problems like sexual abuse, require substantial appreciation of the perspectives, culture and “world views” of those involved. Detailed investigations that “scratch below the surface” are needed before events can be adequately explained and interpreted.

Despite their popularity in Cambodia, surveys were unlikely to reveal the depth of information required about a sensitive and hidden topic such as sexual abuse; the lack of previous Cambodian research in this area or a visible population of abused boys ensured that an exploratory, flexible, creative, interpretive and, in many respects, experimental study design was required. The involvement of a team of Khmer staff throughout the process was likely to enhance this approach in many respects. Allan¹⁰ suggests:

Qualitative approaches can rightly be regarded as exploratory, using informants’ own understandings of events in analysing social settings. Rather than assume that world views are already known, there is acknowledgement that much has to be learnt before the right questions can be posed, let alone answers found.

It therefore became clear at an early stage that a range of methods of data collection would have to be employed cumulatively in order to achieve our goals, enabling the triangulation of data, to compensate for the biases of any particular method. Exploring the issue of sexual abuse in this manner would rely, where boys were concerned, on a retrospective sample. Exploring people’s own accounts of their experiences has been criticised for being incomplete or unreliable but we hoped this could be overcome by

10 Allan, G. (1991)

talking to “significant others” and comparison with other data where it existed. Harvey acknowledges:¹¹

Critical social research requires that empirical material is collected ...statistical material, anecdotes, directly observable behaviour, media content, interview responses ... whatever provides insight is useful.

The need to balance creativity with being systematic was very clear and also guided the design of the study, including development of interview schedules and methods of analysis in order for each and every instance and event to be scrutinised.

Ethical Concerns

The sensitivity and potential implications of this study were not lost on the team. The need for all research activities to be carried out with great care, following sound ethical considerations, was a guiding principle. This was considered in relation to the potential impact on all respondents, whether boys and young men, staff or carers. It would be a mistake to assume that boys were potentially the only respondents directly or indirectly affected by sexual abuse.

Rigorous literature searches, comparison of documents and previous social work experience helped with the development of both ethical and informed consent guidelines for research procedures (Appendices 3 and 4). Feedback, advice and support were provided from the local ethics review board facilitated by World Vision.

Ethical concerns were not restricted to direct interviews with respondents, however. The need for sensitivity and openness to the possibility of unexpected and recurring ethical dilemmas influenced every stage of the research. The potential for the issue to affect team members, referred to as “vicarious traumatising”, was also addressed in training, and support was offered throughout the process.

In some respects, research related to sensitive topics, because it sharpens ethical dilemmas, tends to reveal the limits of existing ethical theories.¹² Some might argue that to research the sexual abuse of boys may itself be unethical. Others consider that not researching the subject, denying the potential for providing insight and increased opportunities for support, to be so. The fact that sensitive topics pose complex issues and dilemmas does not imply that they shouldn’t be studied, as Sieber and Stanley¹³ argue:

Sensitive research addresses some of society’s most pressing social issues and policy questions. Although ignoring the ethical issues is not a responsible approach to science, shying away from controversial topics, just because they are controversial, is also an avoidance of responsibility.

Sieber¹⁴ also points out that ethics and politics are intertwined in sensitive research, especially when it is carried out in community settings. While sexual abuse of boys, for example, is a hidden topic, because it deals with the problems of real people, it is likely to provoke a wide range of responses from those who learn about it. She suggests that

11 Harvey, L. (1993)

12 Renzetti, C.M. and Lee, R.M. (1993)

13 Sieber, J.E. & Stanley, B. (1988)

14 Sieber, J.E. (1993)

those carrying out such research must design the study for maximum validity and minimum offensiveness and researchers must be prepared to negotiate with a range of gatekeepers. The success of the study was therefore likely to depend on a balance of cultural sensitivity, research design skills and the political sophistication with which the team presented their plans to others.

A further reason for the study to follow rigorous ethical standards is that research related to child sexual abuse can be highly influential and consequential. It has the potential to affect organisational and public policy, influence how professionals do their jobs and how victims and survivors of abuse are perceived and treated. The enormity of the task and the responsibility it bestowed were not lost on the team, and all efforts were taken to ensure that rigorous high standards were followed.

Pre-Research Activities

Once the team was assembled and learning needs clarified, there followed several weeks, from February to April 2007, in which ongoing training and development overlapped with a range of research-related activities. These were designed to prepare the team prior to entry into the field and included:

- **literature searches and reviews of relevant local, regional and international material, prior to and during the field research, and developing a library of useful resources;**
- **monitoring of media output related to boys, sexual abuse and related issues, which continued throughout the study;**
- **key informant meetings with individuals, groups and organisations informing the research design and development sampling;**
- **piloting of research-related questions in key informant meetings;**
- **negotiating with gatekeepers prior to entry into the field;**
- **planning and holding focus group discussions with staff of NGOs;**
- **establishment of a potential sample for participants—staff and boys.**

The training sessions from February to April included a range of subjects related to research and exploration of issues related to sexual abuse. The requirement for the researchers to have a depth of knowledge of the subject matter was considered an essential element, without which it would have been unethical to continue. The process and content are described in Appendix 1.

Carrying Out the Research

Key Informant Interviews

Prior to the research starting, 23 KI interviews and meetings were held. This group comprised individuals with experience of working in social welfare, including researchers, trainers, advisers and directors of NGOs known to work with sexually abused children. This enabled the team to identify individuals and organisations willing to take part in the

study, contributing to the development of samples, and identified key issues and questions, assisting the development of methodology. It also provided an opportunity for the team to pilot some questions for staff participants and develop confidence.

Alongside training and preparation, plans were made to enter the field in three sites from the beginning of April through to June 2007. Field research was disrupted by Khmer New Year holidays, so interviews were carried out in Phnom Penh on either side of the break in April. Time was spent in Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) in late April/early May and then in Battambang during the last two weeks of May. Organisations that were unavailable in Phnom Penh in April required flexibility, so further appointments in the capital were arranged for the first two weeks of June.

Sampling

The TOR identified that, where possible, the sample could and should be drawn from boys known to be victims or survivors of abuse and who were already in the care of, or had existing contact with, organisations. Given that this was the first study of its kind in Cambodia, the fact that sexual abuse is shrouded in secrecy and the lack of specific individual or group support services for sexually abused boys, a clinical sample did not exist. Finding a sample of boys and young men willing to spend time with researchers therefore was always likely to present challenges.

Our concern to follow strict ethical guidelines required the needs of children to be considered paramount (far above the need for data collection), and we were determined not to place any child at risk of harm or further exploitation of any kind. The commitment to informed consent required that a sample be developed over a period of time, by building relationships and utilising existing contacts, local knowledge and links made through key informant meetings.

The nature and public profile of some NGOs' work in human rights and child protection (APLE)¹⁵ suggested obvious starting points. Those working with homeless or street children and coalitions of organisations such as ECPAT and COSECAM were also approached. Existing referral pathways were followed up while word of mouth suggested other organisations most likely to be working with boys. Over the duration of the study, a sample of staff participants emerged that mirrored a cross-section of smaller and larger organisations, with a variety of origins and ethos in all three field sites.

By the end of the process, the team was satisfied that the staff sample also represented a mix of male and female staff with a wide range of responsibilities and seniority. To explore the experience of participants, interviews were arranged with as wide a range of individuals as possible: carers, counsellors, social workers, psychologists, Buddhist monks, team leaders, project coordinators and lawyers through to directors of local and international NGOs. Some organisations approached chose not to take part in the study or did not respond to attempts to contact them.

The original TOR from Hagar suggested that the age range for development of services, within that organisation at least, would be five to 14 years. However, a decision was taken at an early stage to include in the sample older boys and young and adult men who had been sexually abused as children. A few of the older boys and young adults were in contact with organisations supporting the needs of MSM. The contributions of these older boys were considered likely to be a rich source of information.

15 APLE has in recent years published several documents related to the sexual exploitation of street children and profiling victims and offenders. Details can be found in the literature review.

It was suggested by others on more than one occasion that a sample would not be difficult to generate and that boys would find it easy to talk, but our experiences were otherwise. We hoped to develop what some refer to as a “snowballing” sample throughout the study. We were entering the unknown in many respects, requiring a firm commitment to ethical concerns, patience and flexibility.

On a few occasions, decisions were made based on ethical concerns, not to follow up and include boys in the sample who had contact with specific projects. This occurred where it was considered that staff awareness and understanding of the boys’ needs was particularly low, where relationships were not sufficiently strong and/or a noticeable culture of “blame” appeared to exist regarding boys and sexual abuse. It was considered probable that boys needing follow-up support once the team had left the site would be most unlikely to receive it, possibly leaving them in a more vulnerable position.

We also learned a great deal about organisational cultures. The vast majority of organisations expressed great openness, warmth and interest in the research, giving us the freedom to talk with a variety of representatives. However, in a few cases, what can be described as “gatekeeping” resulted in senior staff choosing and controlling who was permitted to speak. The same organisations, while agreeing to take part in the research, also appeared reluctant to facilitate us meeting boys in their care. This was not unexpected given the sensitive nature of the subject and is considered a common feature of such research. We encouraged staff, carers or other adults chosen by the child to be present when meetings with boys took place, although we were mindful of the impact this could have. In one particularly memorable case, the facial expressions of staff in response to one boy’s answer about levels of support he had received from the project were considered unhelpful.

All participants, including staff and organisational representatives, were promised anonymity in relation to their responses. It was hoped that this would encourage honesty and greater depth of responses by easing worries and concerns about revealing lack of knowledge or fear of revealing mistakes.¹⁶ For the research to be useful, we not only needed to find out what participants said their organisations did, but what they do in reality.

Rigorous attempts were made to identify regional projects or organisations specialising in the care of sexually abused and exploited boys, but this was not successful. Enquiries met a lack of positive responses, suggesting that the issue is also not particularly well addressed in neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Casting the net further, contacts were made with an organisation supporting male survivors in Hong Kong. Several organisations in the UK specialising in the provision of support for male survivors were contacted, providing sources of useful comparative data that will be discussed later.

16 In relation to development work, O’Leary and Nee (2001), p. 111, identified the existence of organisational cultures characterised by the fear of revealing mistakes or perceived failures. They cite the Khmer proverb “You should not open your abdomen for the black crow to eat your intestines” and suggest that this kind of thinking reinforces the culture of conformity and silence—precisely what we were trying to avoid in our study. It is distinctly possible that, without guarantees of anonymity for staff, the quality, depth and honesty of responses would be adversely affected. No research occurs in a vacuum, and the possibility exists for the findings to be far reaching; many of the participants had never taken part in research before. A further consideration must be that it is also highly likely that a significant number of staff participants may also have experienced sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Therefore, sensitivity and safety, partially achieved through guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, were considered equally important for all.

The total number of interviews conducted over the duration of the study is as follows: Sihanoukville—25 staff from two organisations and nine boys. Battambang—29 staff from 10 organisations and one young man. Phnom Penh—49 staff representing 18 organisations and 30 boys and young men. In addition, 23 key informant meetings and interviews took place prior to or at early stages of the study. Five focus groups of staff representatives and a small number of telephone or email interviews added to the pool of data. In total, 40 boys or young men and almost 200 adults had the opportunity to share and take part in the research.

Methodology

The development of a suitable methodology and methods of data gathering were informed by a merging of theories, knowledge and experience related to qualitative research, sexual abuse and working with children, drawing on the team members' experiences.

Research Methods—Staff Participants

The need to explore the issue in depth ensured that the primary method of data collection would be semi-structured interviews. Questions and “themes” were created through a group process prior to the field research beginning. It was hoped that this would encourage ownership and deeper understanding of the issues at the heart of the matter. The team started by looking at the “big questions” and developed themes for probing deeper. These reflected the needs of the TOR, issues discussed at KI meetings and the requirement to scratch below the surface, understanding the world views of participants.

The questions included an exploration of definitions of sexual abuse and exploitation, existing experiences of working with sexually abused boys and attitudes towards child-rearing practices for male children. The guide also asked about existing knowledge and experiences related to the impacts and effects of sexual abuse, difficulties and successes related to working with boys and also recovery. The training and support needs of participants were discussed. A summary of the staff interview guide is in Appendix 5.

Focus groups with staff and carers from some organisations were carried out in several sites during the study, enabling data to be gathered in a more natural process. In some cases, the groups helped identify individuals to be interviewed alone and in more depth at a later date. Meetings and interviews were usually carried out at a time and place convenient for the staff, which in the vast majority of cases was their workplace or office. Further information was also gained by looking at documents produced by NGOs related to the subject area, including child protection procedures, service and information leaflets and tools used for working with children, where they existed.

Research Methods—Boys

Themes and questions for data collection were created in a process similar to that described above, following training, enabling a semi-structured interview schedule to emerge (Appendix 6). The sensitivity of the issue and the potential variety of ages, abilities and nature of participants' experiences required flexibility and a variety of methods to be employed to collect data. Consideration was given to the fact that talking about sexually abusive experiences was likely to be a difficult experience. Therefore a range of tools and activities was prepared to build relationships and enable boys to express themselves in a variety of ways. It was anticipated that providing a choice of methods and activities for expression, providing a “safe distancing”, would enhance the process. Life stories were used alongside other methods influenced by art therapy, such

as mandala drawings.¹⁷ The team was encouraged to spend time together and with friends and relatives practising using the tools prior to field research.

Interview questions or themes were explored utilising a “sanctioning” style,¹⁸ prefacing questions in a way that enabled participants to feel that their experiences were shared by others. For example, “Some boys say that after being abused they have problems with their health or feelings—what do you know or think about that?” This can help to reduce isolation but also placed the boys in a position where they were the experts, the ones who know, not the researchers or the “adults”. Boys also had a choice of how they talked about what they know, by being encouraged to refer to either other boys or themselves, also creating a “safe distance”. In most cases boys talked about their own experiences; those that chose to talk about others initially often referred to them selves later.

Although the term “interview” is used, in many respects it barely describes the process. In one field site, the team engaged in a variety of activities over several days, meeting, talking, listening, observing (and being observed) by boys until a level of trust was built, prior to interviews. Participants were given the freedom to take part or not and a choice of where meetings took place. The previously mentioned ethical policy and informed consent documents served as guidance throughout. Where it was not possible to gain permission of parents for children under the age of 18 years, staff discussed the research with the child to see if they wished to take part. Consent was gained either in writing, orally or both. Participants could choose not to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time without pressure being applied.

Key themes included “problem-free talk” at the beginning of the time together. Time was also spent finding out what familiar words and phrases boys use to describe abuse so that they could be reflected throughout interviews. Themes explored ways that boys are hurt, other than sexual abuse, and gradually the guide explored their experiences and knowledge of sexual abuse and exploitation, including impacts and effects. Subsequently the “open question” style explored experiences of and ideas for what boys need from helpers and supporters. Boys were also asked what they would like to say to other boys and adults in Cambodia about sexual abuse—in effect giving them a voice that would be shared with others in the final report. All participants were reassured about privacy and confidentiality, and there was more problem-free talk or activities at the end of the process.

Where possible, plans to meet staff and boys were made well in advance of field visits, following negotiation with key informants and other contacts. However, a degree of flexibility was required in some settings because of the unpredictable nature of people’s work schedules and/or lifestyles of the boys.

All interviews with boys were carried out by the Khmer researchers, usually working in pairs, one actively involved while the second listened quietly and made notes. Boys were interviewed at a range of venues, which included their own homes, offices of the NGO supporting them or, in some cases, somewhere else chosen by the respondents, such as a quiet place at the beach. Researchers also spent time with boys in small groups or pairs, informally, where they also volunteered information. The data were recorded on the previously mentioned research tools and/or in note form by the non-active researcher in the pair. After each interview, the researchers consulted and recorded the final notes to be submitted. These were also enhanced by use of a reflexive research journal, providing

17 Malchiodi, C.A. (1998)

18 Lummis, T. (1987)

an additional source of data. In line with good practice, participants were not paid for taking part in the research, although drinks and snacks were provided and travel expenses paid where this was relevant.

Many boys were understandably initially shy or distracted. Two boys at one field site decided that they didn't want to take part, but generally the vast majority of participants were reassured and were content to share their experiences and ideas. Some of the older boys and young men in particular appeared eager to speak out and expressed pleasure that people were taking the time to research this subject. The interviews were carried out with "conscious partiality", demanding that researchers assume the role of empathic listeners and neither exploit nor manipulate the researched. This places great emphasis on the treatment of participants as people with very real feelings, placing value on personal interaction and personal experiences.¹⁹

Team debriefing meetings took place at the end of each day in the field, at which experiences, concerns and support were shared by the team and plans made for the following day. The potential for the team to be adversely affected by what they were hearing, discussing or translating remained high, and plans were in place to offer support on an ongoing basis.

While all interviews with boys and staff were designed to allow participants' own stories and perspectives to emerge, researchers are not merely 'recording instruments'. Consideration was given to the potential impact of the researchers' own life experiences and presence upon the participants. The vast majority of the boys' experiences have been characterised by silence, shame and lack of opportunities to talk or be listened to. We were encouraging precisely the opposite. Where people are researched, the whole process has been described as being open to "double subjectivity"²⁰—that of the participant and of the researcher. The presence of this was acknowledged, used and understood as part of the process.

The team leader carried out a large number of interviews with staff participants, using a translator where required. Further data were gathered by monitoring media and press output throughout the research.

Difficulties Encountered and Limitations of the Study

Time

The need for flexibility within qualitative research is noted by several experts in the field, and this study required a monumental effort from all involved. The original TOR suggested a total of 80 days to complete the study, but was amended to incorporate the capacity-building team approach. It was also clear that a short training and preparation course would not adequately prepare the team and that a considerable amount of time and effort would be required. The time frame was therefore amended and the study, including analysis of data, planned to take place over a period of 22 weeks (110 working days). Days were lost to national holidays, and time in the field was also extended to accommodate the needs of two NGOs in Phnom Penh, not able to take part at the originally planned time. The study generated so much fieldwork and data that the time was eventually extended by a further two weeks, totalling 120 working days.

¹⁹ Mies, M. (1983)

²⁰ Lewis & Meredith (1988).

The plan to interview both boys and staff representatives in three geographic sites resulted in what was envisaged as a small-scale study becoming much larger. One seasoned researcher had remarked prior to the study that perhaps it was more suited to a 12- or even 18-month time frame. The study would have benefited greatly from a much longer term approach, similar to the one utilised by Durham.²¹

The team leader's lack of fluency in Khmer and use of interpreters throughout the study ensured that the majority of conversations became an intellectual exercise, which was an exhausting experience for all concerned, particularly as the data generated required that each and every recorded passage of speech had to be examined in meticulous detail. It was also clear that translation of language and actual meaning are very different processes, often requiring deeper and more complex discussion to clarify meanings and avoid misunderstandings. This ensured that in order to achieve goals with a sense of confidence, a level of intense scrutiny was experienced which is not present when researchers from similar language and cultural backgrounds work together.

Sexual abuse is a notoriously difficult research subject, riddled with methodological challenges that would stretch the abilities of the most experienced researchers. The need to master so many new skills and so much new information resulted in a very steep and exhausting learning curve for all concerned prior to entry into the field. While the team clearly benefited from the approach and new learning,²² it was an intense process that would also have benefited from more time.

Intense exposure to the issue of sexual abuse over a period of months also had a powerful and occasionally stressful impact on all members of the team. Members commented on feeling shock and anger when confronted with the acts of perpetrators and great sadness and other strong emotions when learning the reality of boys' experiences. We found it both frustrating and distressing at times not to be able to offer more meaningful and longer term support to some of the boys. One researcher commented that at times it felt like "watching a ship out at sea that was sinking and not being able to do anything about it", while others also commented on feelings of helplessness when faced with the reality of the boys' lives. Therefore, care was taken throughout the process to offer an outlet for these feelings, by provision of ongoing support and promotion of self-care.

Because this was the first specific research of its kind in Cambodia, there was no familiar path to follow or previous research to take advantage of. Everything had to be created from new, which also increased the time required for many activities.

Samples

While "snowballing" can be useful, utilising existing pathways and relationships between NGOs and individuals, the initial sample was skewed because they were boys known to have been abused predominantly by so-called foreign paedophiles. Prior to the research, little evidence existed of the abuse of boys by Cambodians, and it was hoped that this could be addressed. However, we had to take whatever opportunities presented themselves.

21 Durham, A. (2003) previously supported his sample for 18 months as a counsellor and carried out a study that lasted a further 18 months.

22 An evaluation of the process identified a number of significant benefits for the team, which will be included in a later follow-up document.

The nature of the organisations involved in the study (predominantly those working with poor or disadvantaged families or street children) resulted in no children or adults from middle-class backgrounds being included. While this may leave the impression that abuse of male children does not occur within those backgrounds, it is unlikely to be the case, and future research will also need to be carried out.

The study was limited to three geographical sites, and while they represented a cross-section of Cambodia, the study would have benefited from greater coverage, especially Poipet and the border area and other rural sites.

The final sample did not include any Vietnamese boys. It is known that sexual abuse and exploitation are strong features of girls in Vietnamese communities,²³ indicating the need for further research, which is addressed later in the report. Many organisations have either very few or no Vietnamese staff, and it is possible that many needs of the Vietnamese community are subject to high levels of bias and discrimination in a variety of settings, resulting in fewer opportunities to include Vietnamese boys in the sample.

Research elsewhere identifies that both physical and mental disability are known to be a significant risk factor in abuse and children with disabilities experience higher than usual rates of sexual abuse.²⁴ This study did not have contact with organisations working with children with disabilities, and this warrants further research.

A number of variables resulted in some key international and local organisations not taking part, or playing a minimal role in the study. These included lack of time or lack of response to requests for their involvement. Some organisations stated that they were not experts and were therefore unwilling or unable to take part, despite assurances that the research was not focused on so-called experts. Some significant organisations with clear responsibilities for working with children (and therefore boys) did not wish to take part, and this was a disappointment, although that fact itself is a significant finding.

Definitions Used in the Research

Definitions of sexual abuse and exploitation may vary according to the age of the victim or perpetrator, the relationship between them, the act or acts that constitute abuse and the theoretical background of the researcher. In preparation for this study, the team explored their own and numerous organisational definitions within the public domain to gain as wide an exposure as possible (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, World Health Organisation, ECPAT International and SSC, to name but a few). Some are succinct, others more detailed and expansive. Many include non-contact forms of abuse and reflect the growing body of knowledge in relation to sexual abuse, for example including the potential for other children and adolescents to sexually abuse other children.²⁵

Definitions that recognise “grooming” behaviours, including use of the internet, are more recent developments. The Cambodian legal system uses a number of different sources to define and respond to sexual abuse, which further complicates the issue. During the course of this study the laws used to prosecute perpetrators were amended, and at the time of writing a summary of those changes was unavailable. Efforts will be

23 Reimer, J.K., Gourley, S. & Langelier, E. (2006)

24 For girls with a developmental disability, the average estimates for abuse are 1.5 times higher than the general population rate; for boys with a developmental disability, the rate was roughly double. McCreary Centre Society (1993)

25 Cantwell, H. (1988)

made to include this information in the final copy, which will be available on the Hagar web site. Where boys were concerned, we encouraged them to use their own words and explanations to describe their experiences.

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were developed. Drawing on the work of others, this is intended as a baseline definition. The team recognises that following the completion of the study, it may be necessary to refine the definitions based on the evidence provided by the boys.

Sexual abuse: Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual activity with a child, by an adult, or by another child (male or female) where there is no consent or consent is not possible; or by another child who has power over the child. By this definition, it is possible for a child to be sexually abused by a child who is younger than him/herself.

Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- **exposing a child to adult sexual activity or pornographic materials;**
- **placing the child's hand on another person's genitals or sexual parts of their body or anus, or touching a child's genitals, sexual parts or anus;**
- **sexual kissing and oral sex;**
- **penetration, including by the penis, fingers or any object, of the vagina, mouth or anus;**
- **making sexual or lewd comments about the child's body;**
- **having children pose, undress or perform in a sexual manner—either for the purpose of taking photographs or film, or in person.**
- **voyeurism—spying on children for sexual gratification.**

Sexual exploitation: The use of a child for sexual purposes in exchange for cash or in-kind favours (this may include shelter, food, drugs, transportation etc.). The identity of the exploiter is not limited to but may include family members (including other children), customers, and intermediaries or agents who benefit. Sexual exploitation can include but is not limited to the sexual activities outlined above.

Many children may not identify themselves as victims of abuse or exploitation for a variety of reasons, including sophisticated “grooming techniques” and use of bribes and friendship that disguise the abuse. Quite often children who are sexually abused or exploited are described as “selling sex”, “sex workers” or “prostitutes”. This can dilute the perceptions of such abuse as harmful and obscures the criminality of the exploiter or abuser, encouraging a tendency to view such transactions as involving consent on the part of the child. For a far more comprehensive discussion of important issues related to defining sexual abuse and exploitation, read “Semantics and Substance”.²⁶

Child: For the purposes of this research, a child was deemed to be any boy or girl under the age of 18 years.

26 World Vision International and NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (2005)

Paedophile—definition and brief discussion

The term “paedophile” generally describes individuals with a sexual orientation toward prepubescent children and is a commonly used term in abuse-related literature and local and international press reports. However, I consider that it is overly and inappropriately used in relation to the sexual abuse of children. Whether intentionally or not, use of the term is usually accompanied by an emphasis on boys as victims. It seems that in Cambodia at least, the term is often used to include and describe all (particularly foreign) abusers of boys, or to refer to what is presumed to be a particular type of abuser.

The common use of this term excludes much needed discussion and debate. Research reveals that many abusers of boys are also involved in sexual relationships with adults or may have their own children, but this definition excludes the possibility of sexual contact with adults being explored. Similarly in the UK in years past, children were told to be alert to “stranger danger”; abusers were demonised as “dirty old men”, and protection efforts focused on strangers, rather than reflecting reality and protecting children from the most likely source of abuse—known and trusted individuals from within their own families and communities.

Writing over a decade ago, (and therefore prior to the recent growth of knowledge in relation to female abusers), Liz Kelly and others made the point that, rather than enabling the recognition of abusers as “ordinary men”—fathers, brothers, uncles, colleagues—over-use of the term paedophile means that we are in danger of returning to a more comfortable view of them as “other”, fundamentally different, “not normal men”. They also observed that the term shifts attention from a focus on “power and control” to notions of “sexual deviance, obsession and addiction”, thus medicalising and individualising what is clearly a social issue concerning the construction of masculinity and male sexuality.²⁷ Referring to the growth of the “sexual freedom movement” they commented:

Use of the term has perhaps contributed to a context where men who seek to justify their wish to abuse have been able to organise politically, and even seek the status of “oppressed sexual minority”.

They also noted that the separation and presentation of “paedophiles” from others who sexually abuse may result in us noticing the differences between them and ignoring the many similarities—in the kind of acts involved and the ways they entrap and control children.

Unlike “child abuser”, the term “paedophile” disguises rather than names the issue. The Greek origins of the word literally mean “one who loves children”. Author Richard Hoffman comments on the inappropriateness of this term in modern discourse:²⁸

To use this word to describe those who violate children and in many instances kill to silence them, is to help the wolf into his woolly disguise. The term paedophile is more than a poor word choice, however; a pseudo-medical term, it asks us to see such evil as arising from disease or illness, evil in its effect, perhaps, but no more intentional than other natural misfortunes like diabetes, say, or

27 Kelly, L., Wingfield, R., Burton, R. and Regan, L. (1995)

28 Hoffman, R. (1998)

muscular dystrophy. This makes the violation of children as part of the natural order and the perpetrator as one who cannot help himself.

In place of the term paedophile, then, let me offer an alternative: “paedoscele”, from Latin “scelus”, meaning “evil deed”. Try it “peed-o-skeel”: one who does evil to children ... The rape of a child is an act of contempt, not an expression of sexuality or affection. Paedosceles want us to believe otherwise. This is why they talk of “love” between men and boys. All too often we fall for it ... a TV commentator (reporting on a recent case) said the defendant had “admitted to being overly fond of young boys” (the word paedophile is there, in the shadows). At the pre-trial hearing, one boy said that the man had threatened to cut off his genitals if he told. Another boy testified that the man threatened to shoot his little brother. Overly fond indeed ...

Use of the terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’

Both are commonly used terms in abuse-related literature and by their nature convey powerful meanings. Borrowing from Muehlenhard,²⁹ the term “victim” is used to refer to someone who “is sexually coerced and while recognising that this term implies that a person is powerless while being coerced, subsequently however he or she would be called a survivor”. The limitations of these terms have been noted by Crowder and Lew,³⁰ the latter observing that “we must always be aware that survival is a temporary state, one that will be replaced by something better”. However, given the need for brevity, I will use the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably throughout the report.

29 Muehlenhard, C. et al. (1992)

30 Crowder, A. (1995); Lew, M. (1990) p.7

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE SUMMARY AND REVIEW

Because this is the first study of its type in Cambodia, to gain an understanding of the cultural, social and economic contexts in which the sexual abuse of boys arises and flourishes, it was important to observe the ways in which it is currently represented, described and understood in the public domain. This required extensive literature searches for publications, speeches, media reports and other social products that construct or reflect the way the issue is defined and represented. Documents and reports from international and local NGOs relating to sexual abuse, exploitation and child protection in Cambodia were obtained and examined for references to boys. Service leaflets and resources for staff and children were acquired, and local press and media output was monitored for the duration of the study.

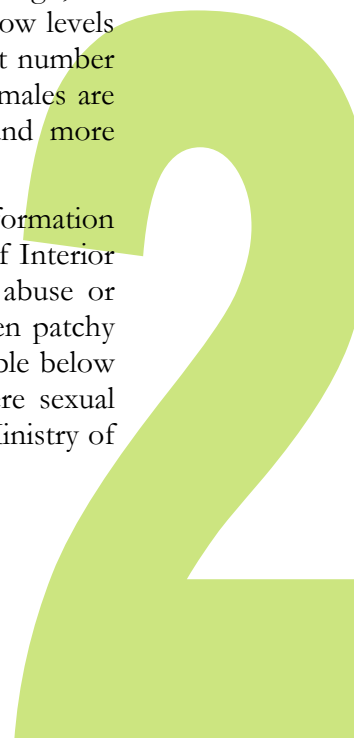
Due to the paucity of research on the subject, this is less of a review and more of a summary of available data; it is collapsed into three sections, on local, regional and international research. The sections on regional and international research are included because they contain data that may be useful for comparison and insight. It was considered important to consider the evidence from this study in the light of what has preceded it elsewhere, enabling the reader to consider important differences and similarities from the Cambodian data.

Where available, statistics relating to reported incidents or prevalence of sexual abuse of boys are shared, although it remains important to bear in mind that all sexual crimes are under-reported. Estimates suggest that fewer than 10 percent of victims report their experiences. In the case of boys, the figure may be considerably less.

Cambodian-Based Literature

Numerous publications related to sexual abuse and exploitation were obtained seeking references to boys. A great deal of valuable research and literature has been generated in Cambodia in recent years referring to the sexual abuse and exploitation of women and children. However, one could be forgiven for assuming that boys are in fact not children, because many studies make scant or no reference at all to males. This may reflect dominant theoretical perspectives as well as research methodology and design, or possibly lack of referrals to organisations. Whatever the reasons, it has led to low levels of concern and awareness among professionals and researchers. The significant number of publications referring to males as perpetrators reinforces assumptions that males are abusers rather than victims. This suggests the need for specific research and more scrupulous attempts to include victimised males in the future.

There have been few attempts to identify prevalence rates, while available information relating to reported incidents from a variety of sources, such as the Ministry of Interior and police helpline, indicate that very small numbers of boys are reporting abuse or coming to the attention of authorities. Information from these sources is often patchy and incomplete and is unlikely to reflect the true scale of the problem. The table below presents the limited information available at this time, relating to cases where sexual abuse of boys came to the attention of law enforcement authorities. (Source: Ministry of Interior).



Year	Age under 15	Age 16-17	Age 18+
2001	14	NI	NI
2002	NI	NI	NI
2003	2	NI	NI
2004	36	7	14
2005	18	0	1
2006*	9	0	0

* In 2006, statistics for the months of October, November and December were not supplied. NI (no information) indicates that statistics for that year were indicated by a blank space, as opposed to use of 0.

Research-Related Literature

In 1996, Tarr's study exploring risk-related sexual behaviour includes several references to male to male sexual behaviour, some of which may be considered abusive. She comments on Cambodian Americans involved in same-sex relationships as they were growing up in Cambodia, suggesting that feminine males were the "targets of their counterparts".³¹ Also cited is the publicity surrounding a British medical practitioner who was arrested in 1995 at NGO instigation, for sexually abusing Cambodian boys as young as seven. She comments that this case perplexed many Cambodians who could not understand the "politics of paedophilia" because it lacks deep roots in Cambodian culture, and that the government felt it necessary to respond to international pressure by proceeding with a court case.

A 20-year-old student described how older monks would tell younger monks that they should not dream about women; otherwise they would wake up having "wet dreams". To prevent this from happening, the younger boys had to show their penis, which the older monk would grab and play with until it became erect. He would draw a picture of a naked woman on the tip of the penis, while at the same time telling the novice not to think about women any more. The respondent stated that quite often the young monk would ejaculate and that this activity occurred almost every night with many others.³²

The study shares the story of an 18-year-old student recalling how a middle ranking state official often engaged in penetrative sex with him. The official, who was married with children, promised to get him an official position for performing oral sex.³³ Also cited are examples of a 17-year-old raped by a man in a rural area and also boys as young as eight or nine years, offering to engage in sexual activity with older males, including foreign aid workers from a variety of international organisations.

In 1993, the post-UNTAC government wrote into the constitution a number of safeguards to prevent trafficking of women and minors for sexual exploitation. It may be that the provision was made under duress or precluded any realistic debate on the issue, because the government wished to gain the acceptance of the international community and the benefits that accompany that. Tarr asserts that Cambodian conceptions may be

31 Tarr, C.M. (1996) p. 103

32 *ibid.* p. 104

33 *ibid.* p. 105

at variance with those entertained by many non-local NGOs that have taken it upon themselves to act as advocates for Cambodians unable to act as their own.

Abuse of boys should be seen in the context of what an older minister of state told her about why many older Cambodians were not concerned with the sexual exploitation of young people on the streets of Phnom Penh by expatriates. He is quoted thus:³⁴

“Do you not think that Cambodians do these things yourself? When I was young it was an open secret that there were always young boys to be had. Even today I know some older men still like to have sex with younger boys.”

It seems that while this activity does not enjoy widespread social approval, it was not unknown and, on the basis of the above comments at least, was considered to be a phenomenon that had occurred for some time.

In 2004 a Tearfund study into the prevalence and perceptions of sexual abuse of more than 1300 Cambodian children (aged 12–15)³⁵ reported high numbers of children (63.8 percent) who said they knew children who had been raped by an adult, while 23.5 percent of boys and 21.4 percent of girls said they had witnessed the rape of a child in their community. The authors speculate that children who have themselves been raped are reluctant to disclose and may prefer to say they have witnessed the rape of another child instead. When asked, the survey indicated that 1.8 percent of boys and 0.6 percent of girls said that they had been raped.

A significant minority of children (14.5 percent) said they were touched by an adult on the genitals before nine years of age, this figure rising to 16.1 percent after nine years. More boys than girls reported this in both cases: 18.9 percent for boys and 13.5 percent of girls after nine years of age. A later Tearfund study³⁶ considers the question of culturally appropriate touching and comments on observations of babies being touched and kissed on the genitals to soothe them when they are upset. Accounts are shared of boys of two to three years being teased by having their shorts pulled down and having their penis tugged, thus exposing them to ridicule.

Examples of adults grabbing the genital area of boys (and girls) up to the age of nine years, to check the presence of a penis, are said to be considered “acceptable” in Khmer culture. The same study cites another researcher observing that “Cambodian men tweak the penis of a young boy as a sign of affection rather than sexual gratification”.³⁷ The study also cites a previous World Vision report³⁸ that includes a description of the situation of 10 boys involved in “prostitution”, although attempts to obtain a copy of this were unsuccessful.

In contrast, important research by SCA,³⁹ seeking the views of Cambodian men and women between the ages of 21 and 26, suggested that “genital touching” by adults of children is in fact not considered acceptable. These contradictory accounts and other

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 160 (1996)

³⁵ Miles, G. and Sun, V. (2005)

³⁶ Miles, G.M. and Sun Varin (2006)

³⁷ Eisenbruch, M. (1988)

³⁸ Gray, L., Gourley, S. and Paul, D. (1996)

³⁹ Save the Children Australia (2006)

comments of both local and expatriate staff prior to the study ensured that this would be an area of exploration with both staff and boys.

The majority of participants in the SCA study also spoke of their “constant fear” that female children might be raped, with less concern being expressed about boys. Female children who are raped are said to be “soiled” or “damaged” for life, as a result of loss of virginity, honour and marriage possibilities. Honour in relation to male victims is not discussed, but the report skips over the possibility of male victimisation, stating that “the same is not true for the male perpetrator, he is not soiled and remains marriageable.”⁴⁰ While this comment is a true representation of the circumstances, it inadvertently reinforces the idea that males are not abused but perpetrators and are to be denied victim status, a common occurrence in research related to sexual abuse, as highlighted by Mathew Mendel.⁴¹

Judith Ennew and colleagues,⁴² reviewing other literature, address the notion of virginity and honour being considered as a gendered commodity, where purity among boys is considered much less relevant. They note:

... purity is a powerful concept which women and girls have to deal with in many environments in ways that males do not. Purity is central to many beliefs about children yet it is rarely discussed or defined ... children's purity and their innocence are directly tied to their ignorance and powerlessness and all are seen as essential components if childhood.

While recognising that female purity and honour are, to a greater or lesser degree, constants in most cultures, few contributions explore the notions of powerlessness, victimisation, purity and loss of honour in regard to male children. Many studies essentially ignore boys in research on “children” and sexual abuse, perhaps creating the impression that boys are not children and contributing to the belief that it doesn't happen and is not serious when it does.

Foreign “sex tourist” behaviour has been the subject of some surveys and studies, focusing mostly on girls and women as victims, although careful scrutiny occasionally reveals information relating to boys. One particular study, focusing on the Svay Pak area,⁴³ featured comments from a Vietnamese boy that he has sex with foreigners for money twice a day and that sometimes “foreigners take four children to one house for sex parties”. He also recalled being asked to have sex with one man's wife.⁴⁴ Of seven boys surveyed in Svay Pak (mean age 13.3 years), the mean age of their first sexual contact was 12.3 years. The survey concluded that there was significant demand for girls and boys.

In a later study exploring the impact of the closure of Svay Pak, Thomas suggests that brothel owners had moved to other parts of the city, taking the boys and girls with them.⁴⁵ The same author provides detailed information relating to “sex tourists” in

40 *ibid.* p. 44

41 Mendel, M.P. (1995)

42 Ennew, J. et al. (1996)

43 Svay Pak, 11 km from Phnom Penh, is notorious for prostitution and sexual exploitation.

44 Thomas, F. and Pasnik, F. (2002)

45 Thomas F. (2005)

Cambodia, concluding that local newspapers highlight the presence of foreign, usually western “paedophiles” but always underestimate the number of local ones, who are described as “rapists” for committing similar offences.⁴⁶

An IOM study, exploring the problems experienced by children trafficked to Thailand and repatriated to children’s centres in north-west Cambodia, suggests that girls (9.3 percent) were more likely to have been sexually abused than boys (1.2 percent), although the issue was generally not explored in great depth and the study is unlikely to present an accurate reflection of experiences.⁴⁷

Specific research related to consenting male to male sexual behaviour in three cities in Cambodia⁴⁸ remarks on experiences of discrimination and sexual violence towards males who are described as *srey sros* or *sak veng* (transgender or “long hair” MSM). Cases of forced sex and rape of MSM by police and military are briefly mentioned but not discussed.

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive and useful contributions to literature relating to sexual abuse of boys in recent years has been made by the NGO APLE. Much of its work focuses on investigation of street-based sexual abuse and exploitation, the vast majority of which (80 per cent) involves boys. In 2006 Palliard⁴⁹ provided a comprehensive analysis of the criminal justice system in Cambodia, citing cases involving boys and identifying both criminal and procedural laws as unclear, incomplete and poorly implemented. In the same year, Renault’s⁵⁰ overview of seven Cambodian provinces mentioned cases involving boys and suggested that travelling sex offenders are moving to remote areas where their activities are not monitored. It also cited several examples of the authorities showing unwillingness and inability to respond to the needs of victims.

Perhaps the most valuable recent contribution was made by Keane,⁵¹ who interviewed 19 boys and seven girls. She identified the influence of street-based lifestyles and other risk factors related to abuse, including exposure to family violence and conflict, poverty and alcohol misuse. Her work also provides valuable insight into the strategies employed by abusers, including use of grooming techniques, coercion and threats.

Published in July 2007, Nakagawa Kasumi’s account of gender based violence during the Khmer Rouge (KR) regime shares survivors’ stories of rape and sexual abuse. It includes some reference to respondents mentioning rape of men, particularly gang rape by female Khmer Rouge soldiers and an account of a 17 year old boy who was forced to have sex with a 45 year old female KR official.⁵²

It is important that throughout the study, apart from mention in Tarr’s report and Kasumi’s recent publication, the team did not discover any research literature, documentation, tools or publicity materials from NGOs that specifically mentions or is related to the sexual abuse of boys by Cambodian nationals. This paucity of information

46 Thomas F. (2006)

47 IOM (2005)

48 Catalla, T.A.P, Kha, S. and van Mourik, G. (2003)

49 Palliard, H. (2006)

50 Renault, R. (2006)

51 Keane, K. (2006)

52 Kasumi, N.(2007)

may also contribute to the belief that, when boys are abused, it is invariably foreigners who are responsible.

Locally the literary debate about sexual abuse and males barely recognises them as victims, focusing on males as perpetrators of sexual violence. While the fact that men and boys are responsible for considerable numbers of sexual offences in Cambodia is not disputed, it may be time for all concerned to widen their perspectives if all children are to be afforded protection.

This situation is illustrated by a recent and potentially influential document produced for World Bank in relation to “gender inequalities”.⁵³ While providing an excellent summary of many key issues in Cambodia, it makes no mention of males of any age as victims of any form of violence or abuse. Emotive use of adjectives such as “destructive” to describe men’s behaviour and sections titled “Men behaving badly” hardly seem to promote equity, and speak for themselves.

It does reflect, however, some of the predominant contemporary views where males and sexual abuse are concerned. If sexual violence is to be truly understood, the experiences of boys (and therefore men) as victims need to be considered and included in a balanced discussion. Failure to do this in effect colludes with the silence that perpetrators rely upon and continues to leave boys isolated, marginalised and unsupported. The need for more nuanced and thoughtful analysis of work with males and reflections of masculinity has been identified in recent work by Graham Fordham⁵⁴ and will be considered later in this report.

The “feminisation of victimisation” has been discussed at length by Mendel and others and is identified as a barrier to change in relation to western societies;⁵⁵ it will be addressed below. However, the presence of such discourse locally is no surprise given that the educational, cultural and political backgrounds of many local authors and researchers are similar.

Consenting Sexual Relations

Any exploration of sexual abuse and exploitation needs to consider the nature of so-called consenting relationships and the backdrop against which they take place. Similarly, cultural contexts and norms in relation to sex and gender play an influential role in how behaviour, especially sexual behaviour, is perceived. Many current contributions to this debate result from research in relation to sexual health risk factors, HIV and AIDS, and exploration of men’s sexually abusive behaviour.

It is virtually impossible to read any contribution to this issue without coming across the much quoted Cambodian proverb, “Men are like gold and women like white cotton”, which suggests that when soiled by their actions, men are easily cleaned, whereas women are tainted forever.⁵⁶ This suggests that Cambodian society imposes significant double standards for males and females. Girls are expected to uphold the honour of their family by retaining both their virginity and their imputed sexual reputation.⁵⁷ Conversely, it is

53 Urashima, C., FitzGerald, I., Levisay, A. (2007)

54 Fordham, G. (2005)

55 Mendel, M.P. (1995)

56 Phan, H & Patterson, L. (1994)

57 Ledgerwood, J. (1990)

expected that young men will seek out multiple partners, both prior to and after marriage, because it is believed that their irrepressible sexual needs must be met.

The basis for women's honour and personal and family reputation lies in control over her sexuality, whereas for men, sex is perceived as a need, so much so that visiting prostitutes is considered socially acceptable. Men can walk away from sexual relationships with their reputation unspoiled.⁵⁸ It appears that Cambodian females, albeit reluctantly, accept this state of affairs. Tarr and Aggleton,⁵⁹ however, affirm that this analysis is incomplete because another, more egalitarian, aspect of gender symbolism appears in the proverb, "The rice gives the soil that cultivated appearance and the soil helps cultivate the rice seeds", stressing the complementary nature of gender relations.

They also identify other myths and beliefs suggesting that sexual activity among young unmarried people, male and female, is to be opposed, although recognising that dominant Khmer discourses of sexuality identify the "ideal virgin woman" who must take care not to signal improper attentions to a man. Men, on the other hand, are drawn to women just as "ants are attracted to sugar", have uncontrollable sexual desires and cannot avoid becoming involved in sexual mishap. They summarise:

Dominant discourses about sexuality in Cambodia are therefore best characterised by conflict, in which women are expected to do everything in their power to resist sexual advances of young men while, regardless of what they themselves do, men avoid condemnation for their actions.

The gender-specific moral codes *Chbab Srey* and *Chbab Proh* may also reinforce expectations of female and male social and therefore sexual behaviours. However, neither ancient proverbs, codes of behaviour nor contemporary literature or thinking seem to address the scenario or possibility of males being victimised. The idea of a male being "soiled by the actions of another" in an abusive scenario is completely overshadowed by understandings of males as sexual predators, partly sanctioned and reinforced by a combination of ancient belief but also reflected in limited contemporary thinking and discourse.

Same-sex experiences exist among Cambodians, but are rarely if ever understood as "homosexuality", at least as defined in western frameworks. The men we met in the study involved in same-sex relationships referred to themselves as "MSM" and generally divided themselves into two groups—*sak klay* (short hair) and *sak veng* (long hair). From a western viewpoint, the former are men who present as and generally are considered "heterosexuals" and "bisexuals", while the latter are labelled "transgender"⁶⁰ and may dress and act in more a feminine manner.

Our experiences of meeting MSM during the research confirmed the above report's assertion that both *sak veng* and *sak klay* experience discrimination from families, communities and employers. Cambodian parents are said to prefer their children to be either men or women; implicit to this kind of thinking is that sexual practice determines if a person is a man or a woman. Many of the MSM considered commonly used words

58 Gorman, S., Pon, D. and Sok, K. (1999)

59 Tarr, C.M. and Aggleton, P. (1996). They ask, "in a country where 85% of the population work in the countryside, where do men and women not work alongside each other in the rice fields?", suggesting that gender relations are more complicated than they appear.

60 Catalla, T.A.P., Kha. S. & van Mourik, G. (2003) p. 15

such as “gay” or *kteuy* to be discriminatory or “looking down words” used by others, notably heterosexuals. In 2003 Catalla et al.⁶¹ suggested:

Many Cambodian men don’t identify themselves as kteuy, even if they have sex with other men, because they will marry and have children in future, and because Khmers in general do not think that homosexuality is part of their culture

The area is not particularly well documented, but it appears that same-sex activity is tolerated for men, does not affect male gender identity and does not exclude the possibility of sex with women.⁶² Prior to the field research, it appeared that “consenting relationships” between males are characterised by secrecy, lack of clarity and experiences of discrimination. The team was therefore intrigued to discover how non-consenting, abusive and exploitative relationships would be understood by participants.

Research Contributions and Representations of Masculinity

Responses to the sexual abuse of children are the direct result of how we define sexual abuse and what we think about children. By the same token, society’s response to the sexual abuse of boys and the aftermath of that abuse often reflects how we define maleness.⁶³ Definitions, experiences and expectations of males and masculinity provide the backdrop for understandings of male victims and survivors to be explored. Setting the scene for this also requires consideration of ideas about abuse, victims and perpetrators, children and women.

As in most cultures, socialisation of male and female children differs from an early age in Cambodia; young girls’ bodies are covered up earlier than boys’ and they are supervised more than boys because they are considered more vulnerable.⁶⁴ Team discussions and later comments from participants confirmed that boys are not expected to cry but be strong, solve their own problems⁶⁵ and “act like a man” from an early age. Boys are expected to be able to protect both themselves and others. In fairness, it has been observed by Emerson⁶⁶ that responses to emotional distress are gendered because women are conditioned to repress their emotions and to suffer in silence in societies where politics, religion and societal customs are controlled by men, and where the value of women is governed by their purity.

One of the participants in the study recalled an insulting phrase—“to act as a coward, like a female animal”—used to comment on his expressions of tearful emotions. A significant number of participants recalled the idea of the ideal man with a “five hudt chest”,⁶⁷ who is idealised as strong, one who must not cry and must also be reliable and respectful of customs and tradition. The value of male characteristics such as physical strength and being the provider and head of the family are also emphasised. The use of

61 *ibid.* p. 26

62 Tarr, C.M. (1996)

63 Lew, M. (2004) p. 31

64 Ebihara (1968), cited in Miles G.M. and Sun Varin (2006)

65 This point was also emphasized by PADV (2002).

66 Emerson, B. (1997)

67 *Hudt* is a measurement, being the distance from the tip of the fingers to the elbow. Therefore, a man with a five hudt chest has a big chest and is a “real man”.

language both as a reflection of expectations of males and also as a control over behaviour should not be underestimated.

The limitations of what is described as “homogenous models of masculinities” in relation to sexual abuse have been noted elsewhere by Durham, and will be addressed below.⁶⁸ Until recent times, there has been little exploration of notions of masculinity in Cambodia. Most recent contributions emerge from research related to sexual behaviours and problem or criminal behaviours such as alcohol misuse, domestic violence or gang rape. Even less is known about males who don’t indulge in that kind of activity. As in many cultures, the transition from boyhood to manhood is often marked by an initiation into sexual experience, and in Cambodia this often occurs with a ‘sex worker’, the young man often being accompanied by friends, who facilitate and sometimes pay for the encounter.

Several recent studies have reported the phenomenon of *bank* or gang rape, in which groups of youths will have coercive sex with the same woman, often, though not always, a sex worker.⁶⁹ The evidence suggests that taking part in *bank* sets a precedent that associates masculinity with forced sex. It is linked to perceptions of masculinity by those taking part, and seen as enhancing value and reinforcing traditional notions of masculinity and power.⁷⁰ The research does not state that all men take part in *bank*, but it does suggest that considerable numbers of students in Phnom Penh have heard about it and take part. Another study also concluded that knowledge of this practice was not confined to the capital city.⁷¹

Graham Fordham’s *‘Wise’ Before Their Time*⁷² identifies a strong relationship between male socialisation, development of strong masculine identities and alcohol use in the transition to grown-up status. It explores other academic explanations of masculinity and gender-based violence, which are said to be primarily based on the concept of individual pathology. They focus on the impact of the Khmer Rouge history and its legacy as an explanation for violence and also the “warrior model” that views men as acting in a manner akin to Cambodian warriors of the past.

He suggests that there is a need for a more nuanced and textured approach to masculinity and violence. These ideas will be revisited later in the report in relation to the findings. However, he also explored the notion of a “good man” with respondents from the countryside. Identified qualities included not drinking too much, not being violent, being respectful and helpful to others and having control of his emotions, particularly anger.

Later work by the same author⁷³ identifies that pornography is teaching male children violent and abusive sexual scripts as normative ways of being male and relating to women. He speculates that pornography and consumption of alcohol also play a role in bonding gang members.

68 Durham, A. (2003)

69 PSI (2002); Wilkinson and Fletcher (2002); Bearup (2003)

70 Wilkinson, D.J., Bearup, L.S and Tong, S. (2005)

71 Tong, S. (2004)

72 Fordham, G. (2005)

73 Fordham, G. (2006)

Less is known or written about males who don't indulge in the kind of activities described above; current discourse in relation to Cambodian boys and men is dominated by those who do. It is hard to find mention of men who are victimised by any form of violence, sexual or otherwise, perhaps reinforcing the idea that males are not victims. The sexual abuse of boys in Cambodia therefore has to be explored in the context of all that came before.

Studies in relation to child rearing and socialisation of boys and girls in Cambodia indicate significant differences in expected roles in virtually every aspect of life. This vision of the world of men and women is described by Rodier as typical of countries like Cambodia, where a large proportion of the population still lives in the traditional way.⁷⁴ She identifies that after weaning, male and female children evolve in very different ways; girls are closely watched and must learn to comply with the rules imposed on them, contrasting with the choices and level of action that boys are allowed. Comments of participants in her study illustrate this point, one stating, "Boys can often come and go as they please", while a Cambodian proverb is cited: "Girls are not as long-legged as boys. They can only go to the stove and back". The relative freedom granted to boys is also likely to play a role in the perception of them as invulnerable and likely to contribute to perceptions of sexual abuse and the harm it causes.

Media Presentation of Males and Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

From January to July 2007, two local Khmer and two English-language newspapers⁷⁵ were monitored for items related to the sexual abuse of boys. By observing what was presented, we hoped an understanding would be gained of what and how messages about boys and sexual abuse were shared in the public domain. From time to time, occasional news articles from overseas relating to Cambodia were also discovered. The team was also asked to monitor and note television and radio output where possible.

In Khmer-language newspapers there were few reports during the time of the study, and they usually focused on the arrest, conviction or release of foreign nationals, not Cambodians, as well as stories about foreigners abusing boys in other Asian countries. In April 2007, the *Kampuchea Thmey Daily* ran an article about a monk in Thailand who had allegedly raped two boys aged nine and eleven, commenting that this kind of thing had happened before in that country. One article in March described government and NGO attempts to eliminate the trafficking of girls and boys, although generally it appears that little information relating to the sexual abuse of males in Cambodia is carried.

In June 2007 a Khmer-language magazine, *Khemara*, featured an article headlined, "Be Careful! Men Also Get Raped" related to male rape in Texas, USA, of all places. The same issue also carried an "undercover expose" of a growing number of young men selling sex to older wealthy women in Phnom Penh.

The *Cambodia Daily* featured stories related to boys and sexual abuse on a more regular basis, predominantly in relation to foreign offenders. Comments from the British ambassador urging authorities to arrest Cambodian "paedophiles" as well as westerners featured in January. In the same month, it carried a report stating that the market for child pornography VCDs in Phnom Penh was thriving, featuring children as young as seven years old and including scenes of bondage and torture. At the time of writing, Cambodia does not have a law against the distribution of child pornography.

⁷⁴ Rodier, C. (1999)

⁷⁵ *Koh Santipheap*, *Kampuchea Thmey Daily*, *Cambodia Daily* and *Phnom Penh Post*.

Headlines in May noted that, “Svay Pak Child Sex Trade is Back in Business—Again” and suggested that attempts at law enforcement are often hindered by collusion of authorities. There were relatively few reports of abuse of boys by Cambodian nationals, but on 12 July it was reported that a 20-year-old Pailin man was arrested for allegedly raping a three-year-old boy. The offender was described as a “school drop out and methamphetamine addict”, marginalising him from mainstream society.

Further searches of the archives generally revealed that the vast majority of reports involving boys related to foreign nationals, court appearances, convictions and situations in which, despite the weight of significant evidence, offenders were found not guilty. The *Phnom Penh Post* rarely featured stories related to abuse of boys, although it carried a front-page story relating to the work of APLE and western paedophiles in April. One perhaps disappointing feature of the news coverage is the lack of informed debate about the issues relating to sexual abuse of boys or girls, which can leave the reader with a sense of inevitability about the issue.

In relation to Cambodia, the team received a copy of an article from *Cambodia News*⁷⁶ dated December 2006, describing the arrest of a 28-year-old woman from Cambodia -in Las Vegas, USA, for kissing her six-year-old son’s penis, which she said was just an expression of motherly love. An official from the Cambodian Association of America confirmed the custom but said it never extends past two years old.

Regional Literature

Library and internet searches using key words “sexual abuse”, “exploitation” and “boys” were carried out; other researchers were contacted and personal contacts utilised. The information below is not exhaustive; access to university web sites was limited, and a significant number of potential participants failed to respond or indicated low levels of knowledge. Generally little information is available in relation to boys. However, some intriguing information came to light.

China

A situational analysis survey of 3577 school and university students from six provinces revealed that significant numbers of Chinese children, girls and boys, experience physical, psychological and sexual abuse.⁷⁷ One point nine percent of boys and 2.7 percent of girls reported having been forced to have sex against their will; the report showed clear links between maltreatment in childhood and mental health problems in later life, including alcohol misuse, violence and thoughts of suicide. Reaching back into history, Bullough describes behaviour in the theatre in the Tang Dynasty, AD 618–907, among male actors. Women were forbidden to appear on the stage and junior actors were expected to be at the sexual service of the more senior. The juniors were said to be “abject participants in highly ritualised acts of anal dilation before participating in sexual acts”.⁷⁸

A Hong Kong-based survey of 137 men and women abused as children indicated that the majority of men (62 percent) were abused between the ages of six and 10 years; most of the abusers were men (81 percent), although 13 percent were abused by women and 6 percent by men and women. In the majority of cases (62 percent) the abuser was between the ages of 11 and 20 years. None of the men and only 8 percent of the women

⁷⁶ *Cambodia News* (2006)

⁷⁷ Chen, J. and Dunne, M. (2005)

⁷⁸ Bullough, V.L. (1976)

reported the offence to the police. The vast majority, 89 percent of the whole sample, knew the abuser prior to the abuse. Key impacts identified by men included confusion about sex and affection, loss of self-value, fear of intimacy, feeling powerless, guilt, shame, lack of empathy for self or others, problems with articulating emotions and suppression of overwhelming feelings of fear and anger.⁷⁹

Archive reports from Taiwan related to the abuse of significant numbers of boys aged seven to 14 years, reporting abuse by an abbot in a Buddhist monastery.⁸⁰ A representative of the monastery was quoted in the *Taipei Times* as saying that the allegations were based on “misunderstandings”, while Taiwanese government plans to enact new laws to protect children from child sex tourists did not include sex offences against boys.⁸¹

A recent conference in Hong Kong confirmed a growing awareness of the sexual abuse of boys and increased media reporting on the issue, although to date there has not been any in-depth research carried out in China.⁸²

Indonesia

One report described child prostitution as increasing, widespread and often underestimated, estimating that 30 percent of all “sex workers” in the country are aged under 18 years.⁸³ The author suggests that child pornography occurs less than other forms of commercial exploitation, because only one case involving a boy was reported in the media. Sexual abuse and exploitation involving boys are reported to be increasing, but girl victims were 93.5 percent of the total reported. The study cites the influence of cultural beliefs, including that magical power and rejuvenation are gained through “heterosexual or homosexual” intercourse with children and also that having “boy concubines” can increase social status. A link between previous sexual abuse and prostitution is identified; in a very limited exploration of the popular cycle of abuse hypothesis, the report concludes that child victims are “likely to become potential exploiters”.

Nepal

One of the most comprehensive regional studies obtained was carried out on child sexual abuse in the Kathmandu Valley.⁸⁴ More than 5400 school children aged 8–18 years (57 percent boys) and 216 “out of school children” (148 boys) were surveyed. Findings suggested that teachers were “completely ignorant” of the fact that boys could be sexually abused although significant numbers of boys (13.1 percent) and girls (14.5 percent) had experienced “contact” forms of abuse (kissing, fondling of genitals, oral and penetrative sex).

Of the total number of boys, more than a third had experienced fondling over clothes, 24 percent fondling under clothes, 22 percent fondling of genitals; 17 percent had been forced to touch the abusers’ genitals, 15 percent had been forced to take part in oral sex

79 Yeung Chi Wah, R. and Hau Suet, M. (2006)

80 BBC News web site (28/07/00)

81 *Asian Times* (May 15–21, 1999)

82 “From Survival to Living” Conference, Caritas Project for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Hong Kong, November 2007

83 Farid, M. (2000)

84 CWIN & Save the Children Norway (2003)

and 10.6 percent had been penetrated using an object. Ten point four percent had experienced penetrative sex in the anus. Strangers accounted for just over half of the accounts of contact abuse, which is somewhat more than many studies suggest, while the sex of the abusers was not recorded. Most abuse took place in the abuser's or child's home, while other common places cited were the market, picnic spots and schools. Means used by the abuser to abuse children were described, in order of frequency, as offering of friendship, abuse of trust, bribes, seduction, force and intimidation.

The most common feelings following abuse were described as hurt, disgust, anger, shame, fear and guilt. When asked the reasons for not talking about the abuse, the most common responses were, "being threatened or bribed", "ignorance of what is happening", "being told to keep it a secret", "concerns about not being believed", "self-blame", "bringing shame on the family" and "fear of being punished". Among those choosing to talk, 72 percent told friends, only 19 percent told parents and 10.5 percent told police. The study recalls an account of a 14-year-old schoolboy calling the CWIN help line who had been abused by a 28-year-old woman who was a relative. The study concludes that boys are as vulnerable to abuse as girls.

Japan

Little information was accessible, but it appears that one of the most developed Asian countries has so far paid little attention to the sexual abuse of males. There have been several small-scale surveys and a few anecdotal writings from male victims as well as a doctoral thesis and several articles by academics.⁸⁵ Historical accounts exist of pederasty involving monks in ancient Japan.

South Asia

The first ever national survey in India related to child abuse suggests that more than 53 percent of children in that country are subjected to a variety of forms of sexual abuse.⁸⁶ The survey included more than 12,000 children and also 2300 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, finding that children aged five to 12 years reported higher levels of abuse. Parents, relatives and others known to be in a position of trust were found to be responsible for most abuse. ECPAT international has carried out research in both India and Pakistan⁸⁷ related to the commercial exploitation of boys, confirming that many misconceptions related to the abuse of boys remain, firmly rooted in the belief that the issue relates solely to homosexuality and child sex tourism. In the case of the latter study, Pakistani men were found to be responsible for the majority of abuse of boys, and the majority of participants were abused prior to involvement in prostitution.

Reports by journalists in relation to sexual abuse and exploitation in Asia often focus on "undercover reports" and "foreign paedophiles" and are generally characterised by sensationalism rather than rigorous attention to detail and informed debate. An article featured on Asiaweek.com⁸⁸ suggested that "Western paedophiles are particularly attracted to Asian children because they have smoother skin and grow body hair later". Also, somewhat missing the point, it commented that because the children do not speak much English, "forcible sex can be passed off as a misunderstanding". It described

85 Miyaji, N. (2007) PhD. Institute for the Study of Global Issues, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo. personal communication.

86 Women & Child Development Ministry/Prayas, UNICEF & Save the Children (2007)

87 Akula, S.L. (2006); Muhammad, T. and Zafar, N. (2006)

88 Cordingley, P. and Dakot-Gee, A. (2001)

Cambodia as the “new frontier for paedophiles”. Reading between the lines, references emphasising “culture” and “poverty” often appear to reinforce and thinly veil the often held view that children and their families are almost willing participants and therefore, perhaps, partly to blame for abuse.

Judith Ennew and colleagues observed that the press and NGO campaign literature assume that most commercial sexual exploiters are foreign males, presenting them as the main threat to children and the root cause of prostitution in some counties. They also note the “immense silence” with regard to exploitation exclusive to boys.⁸⁹ Criticism of journalists’ efforts states that “repetitive use of shocking detail [is] justified in the public interest ... there is emphasis on the personal circumstances of each child, without wider sociological information. Broken homes and bad parenting are stressed, societal breakdown and under funding of welfare services rarely mentioned”.

The same writers summarise their review of literature in relation to the commercial sexual exploitation of children by stating, “[D]ata in this field generally arise in the context of campaigns so that knowledge is organised around adult requirements for particular kinds of fact, rather than the actual lives and needs of sexually exploited children”.⁹⁰ In the case of boys and young men, the silence surrounding the issue renders them a mute and invisible population.

International Literature

The material from international research concerned with the sexual abuse of boys is included for several reasons. By providing insight into an otherwise hidden world, it reveals the diversity of important research carried out in recent years, identifying key themes for comparison with Cambodia. Important similarities and differences may surface that would otherwise not have been observed. Secondly, it identifies specific areas of research that may be required in Cambodia if we are to move towards a fuller understanding of this phenomenon; because this research is the first study of its type in this country, the summary may provide ideas about key issues and potential models for supporting boys and staff. It may also be useful to consider the range of contemporary research debates in this field, identifying options and methodologies for future research in Cambodia. Ultimately it may prove useful to consider the issue in the light of what has preceded it internationally.

The literature summarised below is just a snapshot of what is currently available from international organisations and some of the leading experts in the field. It is not exhaustive but will help to identify useful resources that will be referenced and included in the bibliography. The majority of studies have taken place outside of south-east Asia, where the contextual, historical and cultural frameworks are very different, so a degree of caution needs to be observed. Some of the contributions cited below refer to studies carried out with adult males who were abused and exploited as boys.

Historical Accounts of Abuse

Few historical or ethological data are available. However, Ivor Jones’ fascinating summary indicates the existence of male sexual assault over a wide variety of species, cultures and times.⁹¹ The majority of socio-biological material suggests that acts are more

89 Ennew, J., Gopal, K., Heeran, J. and Montgomery, H. (1996)

90 *ibid.* p. 39

91 Jones, I. (2000)

likely a manifestation of power relationships than of sexual ones. While historical data largely agree with this view, it is clear that major differences across cultures appear as a result of social attitudes. Findings appear to be in accord with contemporary thinking about “homosexual” rape, particularly in institutions where the acts are best seen as acts of dominance. He concludes:

In humans the acts appear to serve the function of both power and sexual gratification simultaneously, and the question then becomes how much of one and how much of the other in any particular interaction.

International Reports

The WHO 2002 report on violence and health⁹² observes that acts of sexual violence are experienced predominantly by women and girls but identifies the rape of boys and men by men as a problem, as well as coercion of young men into sex by older women. The first *UN Study on Global Violence* estimates that some 150 million girls (14 percent) and 70 million boys (7 percent) are sexually abused each year; also cites a study of mainly developed countries showing that 36 percent of women and 29 percent of men reported sexual abuse in childhood.⁹³ Lifetime impacts of abuse included PTSD, panic disorders, depression, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug misuse or dependence. Non-consensual sex involving young people in developing countries is clearly an important yet under-researched subject with considerable public health implications,⁹⁴ growing evidence indicating that it plays a significant role in the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.⁹⁵

Perhaps one of the most insightful contributions to the latter report was provided by the International Save the Children Alliance⁹⁶ based on reports from 13 countries in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe. It is one of the few studies available that notes in detail abuse issues in relation to both girls and boys, providing stark evidence of the reality of child sexual abuse in the 21st century. The methodology is inclusive of children, giving voice to their messages and recommendations, including the significance of listening to and believing children, avoiding the “labelling” of abused children and the importance of provision of safety. Key lessons for supporters include child participation, the need for multidisciplinary approaches and requirement to address root causes—sexuality, power and culture.

Prevalence and Under-Reporting

Attempts to establish an accurate picture of the sexual abuse of boys have proved problematic, due to research-related factors, the power of cultural and social myths and stereotypes related to males and clinically related factors. Definitions and samples are not standardised, leading to a great variance in statistical evidence, reported levels of abuse varying between 3 percent and 31 percent.⁹⁷

92 Krug et al. (2002)

93 Pinhiero, P.S. (2006)

94 Jejeebhoy, S.J. and Bott, S. (2005)

95 Krug et al. (2002)

96 Save the Children Norway (2005)

97 Crowder, A. (1995) p. 11

The belief that males are always powerful and able to fend for themselves is referred to as the “male ethic of self reliance”⁹⁸ and has created the idea that if a boy or man is victimised, he is less than a male. Boys are therefore less supervised and given more freedom, which can result in them being more vulnerable. Adrienne Crowder contends:

Male victims are seen as being like a woman and therefore feminised, as being powerless and therefore flawed, or as being interested in sex and therefore homosexual.

This theme is taken up by Mike Lew, who suggests that each society has ideas about what constitutes masculinity and femininity, which are reinforced at every turn. He comments that many traditional views of men (and therefore boys) as strong, powerful, dominant, controlled and self-reliant have serious limitations on the lives of real men and are at odds with the reality of the boy or man who has been abused.⁹⁹ The lack of visibility and recognition in most cultures that males can be and are abused merely compound this view. In Cambodian culture, the expectation that males are to be strong and in control may also be a powerful determinant of behaviour prior to and following abuse.

Disclosing abuse is likely to be a difficult experience for anybody. It is acknowledged that it may be particularly difficult if the person concerned has already experienced other forms of abuse or lived in circumstances where he had already experienced being silenced.¹⁰⁰

An additional factor related to under-reporting is the myth of “sexual initiation”, resulting in boys abused by males often being seen as having engaged in sexual acts for pleasure; this view is often held by the victim, especially if he gained an erection during the abuse. Sexual arousal is a common reaction in boys, Gillian Mezey suggesting that many perpetrators may deliberately encourage arousal and ejaculation as a method of implying agreement, therefore keeping the victim quiet.¹⁰¹ Crowder, referring to North American and western cultures, notes:

The analysis of sexual acts between adult males and male children as consensual sexual experiences, without regard for the power and control issues that are involved, emphasises the cultural blinders that permit the continued sexual exploitation of children ... our culture promotes the belief that all sexual activity is good for men, no matter what its context ... when abuse is heterosexual and a sexually mature woman abuses a boy, he may have difficulty recognising this as abuse, since the cultural interpretation of this event is that he “got lucky”.¹⁰²

The “myth of female innocence”, suggesting that women and girls cannot be abusive, also prevents abuse of boys from being identified. Cultural biases influence the ways in which male and female behaviour is seen, Banning observing that the behaviour of women may be labelled seductive and not harmful, while the same behaviour in a man is identified as abusive.¹⁰³ Official data in the UK and USA tend to suggest that few sexual

98 Finkelhor, D. (1986)

99 Lew, M. (2004)

100 Durham, A. (2003)

101 Mezey, G. (1994)

102 Crowder, A. (1995)

103 Banning, A. (1989)

offences are committed by women (1.8 percent and 8 percent respectively).¹⁰⁴ However, other studies suggest that up to 20 percent,¹⁰⁵ 25 percent¹⁰⁶ and 40 percent¹⁰⁷ of sexual abuse is committed by women. Overall research suggests that female and male perpetrators commit the same acts and follow many of the same patterns of abuse against their victims.¹⁰⁸ The general public, practitioners and researchers in the past have often minimised the impact of abuse by females, although more recent findings suggest that, while some dynamics may differ, abuse of boys can be very harmful.¹⁰⁹

In western countries, protection agencies tend to focus on abuse within family settings, because legislation mandates them to ensure the safety of children within families. Research suggests that the majority of boys are abused outside the family, often by known adults in a position of trust. Those cases that are reported tend to be reported to police or the criminal justice system, not child protection and treatment agencies. Professionals within welfare communities are also likely to be affected and influenced by the same factors that affect the culture as a whole, which limits their capacity to respond appropriately to the needs of boys. The debate about the prevalence of sexual abuse of boys will continue, perhaps obscuring the reality that it occurs far more than we care to recognise.

Sexual Abuse Dynamics

A number of themes that warrant attention have emerged from research in recent years in relation to the dynamics of the sexual abuse of boys. I am indebted to Josef Spiegel for generously allowing me to include in this section (up to the next subheading) selected material from his summary,¹¹⁰ identifying key points of interest. He notes that many studies lack degrees of methodological rigour and therefore present what he describes as “tentative propositions”. This section is not exhaustive and predominantly relates to research carried out in western countries.¹¹¹ However, data from this study may identify important areas for later comparison, in relation to identification of risk factors, for example. His summary contains dozens of references, which are not included here. I therefore recommend his most recent work for a more complete and rigorous exploration of these issues and the specific researchers responsible.¹¹² Additional research findings and comments are added there where appropriate and referenced accordingly.

Family: Evidence suggests that boys who are abused are more likely than non-abused boys to reside in single-parent or reconstructed households, where divorce and separation are apparent. The majority of sexually abused boys (60 percent) have multiple or shifting care givers and are more likely than non-abused males to have experienced

104 Ford, H. (2006)

105 Finkelhor, D. (1986)

106 BBC TV *Panorama* (6 October 1997)

107 Berliner, L. and Elliott, D.M. (2002)

108 Canadian Children’s Rights Council (2007)

109 Saradjian, J. (1996); Ford, H. (2006)

110 Spiegel, J., personal communication (4 April 2007)

111 He comments that his work has focused on cross-cultural concepts that have withstood the test of time and study and that individuals across a range of cultures convey a sense of familiarity with the material. He suggests that, as more studies relating to the brain and psychobiology emerge, psychodynamic concepts are likely to receive more credibility and validity

112 Spiegel, J. (2003)

insecure attachment dynamics with both parents, but particularly with their mothers. Boys reporting an unhappy family life are twice as likely to be abused as those without such dynamics.

Boys who are abused often experience more of the following within families: drug and/or alcohol misuse; sexual abuse history among the parents; unstable home life with serious arguments within the family; inability to manage and express anger productively; domestic violence and the witnessing of violence between parents. Additional dynamics include low income, inappropriate attitudes towards sex, confused parental roles, low positive parental involvement, isolating, scapegoating and blaming the boy for abuse and at times a history of child neglect.

Offenders: A history of sexual abuse is a feature of the lives of some though not all abusers. However, this is a complex and controversial area of study, which will be discussed at greater length below. Other predictors of sexually abusive behaviour include insecure childhood attachments and difficulties in interpersonal relationships as adults. As a group, they may exhibit inadequate social and relationship skills, low self-esteem, anxiety, inability to trust others and problems with anger management. However, these characteristics may not be evident because perpetrators strive through grooming strategies to build rapport with children and parents.

A majority (66 percent) of perpetrators report that stress leads to their offences. In preparing for abuse, they may use drugs or alcohol, view pornography or fantasise about previous abuse of children, all of which act as disinhibitors. Abusers have a keen instinct for discovering and exploiting a child's vulnerabilities, such as the need to be loved, validated and valued by primary care givers. They tend to experience sex with children as less threatening than with a peer. A substantial majority of male perpetrators (70 percent) commit abusive acts against one to nine children, a minority (23 percent) against 10–40 children and a smaller minority (7 percent) against 41–450 children. On average, a perpetrator if intra-familial abuse is likely to abuse 1.7 children, whereas an extra-familial abuser is likely to subject an average of 150 boys and approximately 20 girls to sexual abuse.

Paedophiles: Despite popular misconceptions, not all child abusers are paedophiles. Central to paedophilia is a sexual orientation towards pre-pubescent children, as described in the earlier part of this report. When compared to non-sexual offenders, paedophiles exhibit more fragile body images and manifest more indicators of social introversion. Some studies suggest that they are more likely to demonstrate impulsivity, inhibition, passive aggression and harm avoidance.

Relative to male paedophiles who abuse girls, adult male perpetrators against boys display significantly weaker ego structures. Regarding emotional congruence, paedophiles with a preference for boys are more likely to align with the boy at his development level, ultimately personifying the role of a child, whereas incest perpetrators are more likely to elevate the child into the role of an adult. Neurological research taken collectively indicates significant chemical and hormonal alterations in the brain that may underlie their sense of impulsivity, aggression and violence.

Adolescent offenders: Juvenile sexual offenders as a rule commit their first offence before the age of 15, and a considerable minority (46 percent) before the age of 12. Males and females are similar in the acts that they commit and their tendency to select victims of the opposite gender. Caretaking and babysitting appear to be the settings in which it is most likely to occur. Adolescent offenders are more likely than controls to experience a range of academic difficulties, in addition to neurological, cognitive and/or intellectual impairment. They are more likely to exhibit substance misuse problems, behavioural

problems, inappropriate sexual boundaries, deviant sexual fantasies, uncontrollable sexual urges, impulse control problems and depression.

Common family dynamics may include the presence of a mother with a history of sexual abuse, the presence of and witnessing of domestic violence, a home environment with insufficient sexual and personal boundaries, exposure to pornography, emotional detachment or physical separation between child and parents and subjection to physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. Child, adolescent and adult sex offenders are equally likely to use force and bribery to ensure the compliance of the victim, perpetrate similar types of sexual acts and use weapons to convey threats of injury or death.

Perpetrator-boy relationship: Although the numbers of boys abused in families is high, the vast majority of perpetrators against boys are known to the child but are outside the immediate family or unrelated, often adults in a position of trust. Among younger boys, parents tend to be the most common perpetrator group, followed by immediate family members. The largest category of perpetrators against boys older than 12 are known non-relatives, followed by parents (mothers and fathers), other relatives, siblings and strangers. Few perpetrators of sexual abuse are true strangers to the abused boy. Most studies suggest that strangers abuse boys in around 10 percent of cases, though some have identified frequencies of stranger perpetration as high as 40 or 50 percent.

Selection criteria: Perpetrators characteristically hold a preference for the gender of their target child; a narrow majority of (58 percent) target girls, 14 percent target boys and 28 percent target both girls and boys. The mean age of boys at the onset of abuse is 8.5 years and mean age at cessation 13 years. The vast majority of offenders (85 percent) offend against one child at a time, while 15 percent abuse several children at one time, individually or in small groups.

Perpetrators select children who appear to possess the following characteristics: sensitivity, insecurity, low self esteem, quietness, passivity, curiosity and blind trust. They also tend to seek boys who appear to be vulnerable, who appear to be experiencing problems within the family, who appear to lack secondary sex characteristics or whom they perceive to have qualities typically allotted to females.

Selection strategies: Some perpetrators gain access through the neighbourhood, family or work. Playing games and teaching children to play sports or musical instruments are common methods. Some use affection, understanding and love while others focus on establishing relationships with family members, ultimately securing access to the child. Grooming strategies with the family also isolate the child from potential sources of support, making it unlikely that the child will be believed if he or she discloses abuse. The image of the perpetrator created by the grooming is often more comfortable than the truth.

To establish first contact, abusers employ coercion and discussion of sexual matters, “accidental” touching or rubbing and the use of bribery and gifts. Other strategies involve introducing the boy to pornography, drugs and alcohol. At times abusers threaten or coerce current and older abused boys to recruit other children. To further entice “new recruits”, bribes and gifts are frequently used. The vast majority of abusers state that once a particular strategy appears to have achieved the intended goal, they will use the same method every time. In Cambodia similar and different strategies may be used, depending on a range of variables. Further and specific research with sexual offenders is required to gain an accurate picture that may inform approaches to prevention and protection.

Sibling offenders: In comparison to adolescents who offend against children other than siblings, adolescent perpetrators against siblings report significantly more distressing family dynamics, such as more physical punishment, more negative communication patterns within the family, greater marital discord and less satisfaction with family relations.

Child sex offenders: In recent years, awareness has grown of the potential for children under the age of 12 years to perpetrate acts of sexual abuse against other children. Although sexual aggression has been documented in children as young as three years, the mean age of onset appears to be between six and nine years.

Role of the internet: Studies show that children who use the internet are routinely subjected to sexual harassment, sexual solicitation and pornography. An estimated 4 million child pornography sites exist worldwide, and other research suggests that the worldwide web plays an increasingly influential role in the transmission of material and solicitation of children to potentially sexually abusive situations.¹¹³

Location of abuse: The child's or perpetrator's homes are the most likely place for abuse to take place, accounting for 85 percent of locales. School-aged boys are more likely to be abused in the perpetrator's home or a community setting. A considerable amount of abuse of boys occurs in public places such as parks, beaches and restrooms.

Perpetrator sexual orientation: Contrary to popular opinion perhaps, the vast majority of perpetrators against boys—approximately 98 percent across studies— appear to be heterosexual. In one study, only 4 percent of male perpetrators were known homosexuals while in another, 74 percent of boys were abused by a male who was or had been involved in a heterosexual relationship with the boy's mother, foster mother, grandmother or other female relative. A boy's risk of being sexually abused by a relative's heterosexual partner is over 100 times greater than by someone who could be identified as having a homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation.

Perpetrator age: The majority of perpetrators are adults, between the ages of 20 and 60. A limited to considerable minority of perpetrators, (10–40 percent) are under 20.

Generally male and female perpetrators against boys are significantly older than their victims, some studies indicating a difference of 11–20 years. Incest tends to be intragenerational in that when boys are abused by a relative, the relative tends to be closer to them in age.

Multiple episodes: Multiple episodes of abuse by the same perpetrator are the norm; a majority of abused boys are subjected to between five and 20 episodes.

Violence and other forms of abuse: Those subjected to sexual abuse are more likely to experience physical abuse as well as emotional abuse, psychological abuse and neglect.

Exposure to pornography: Adult pornography is used to teach children about and induce them into sexual activity, and boys are more likely to be exposed to pornography than girls. At times, boys are also used as pornographic objects. Abusing adults use the generated images for sexual stimulation and trade.

Bribes and coercion: In many cases children are rewarded for the abuse and its concealment. Common strategies involve seduction in the form of money or gifts, or special privileges, attention, affection and care. Fifty-eight percent of runaway adolescent males with a history of sexual abuse are offered money to have sex with an adult.

113 Gallagher, B., Fraser, C., Christmann, K. and Hodgson, B. (2006)

Given the need of perpetrators to secure cooperation and silence, it follows that virtually all abused boys experience some form of coercion. This may involve withdrawal of special treatment. The vast majority of offenders operate in stages, carefully and subtly testing a boy's reaction to increasing levels of sexualised talk, materials and touching. Emotional coercion involves subjecting the boy to labels that manipulate him into believing that he will be judged harshly if anyone were to find out. Coercion can be expressed verbally and physically, each with emotional undertones and implications; the aim is to convince the boy that he is consenting, rendering the perpetrator less responsible.

Force and violence: Quite commonly, someone or something important to the child is threatened. Threats include physical harm to the boy, against the lives of parents or grandparents, possible abandonment or rejection and the consequences to the perpetrator. Homicidal threats appear to escalate with the age of the boy. Threats and persuasion often shift the boy's attention away from the abuse itself, to the threatened consequences of its disclosure.

Threats and acts of violence are common strategies, used to begin and conceal the abuse. Actual force is routinely brought to bear against more males than females and occurs in 15–50 percent of cases, with rates as high as 65 percent in some studies. Physical force tends to be used more routinely by unrelated abusers than those within the boy's family and consequently engenders more physical injuries for boys abused by non-family members. If and when a boy expresses fear or resists, a considerable minority (39 percent) of abusers are prepared to use violence or weapons to silence the child and control his anxiety. Knives and handguns are common features of the US research, while physical beatings are also employed.

Perpetrator rationales: Perpetrators rationalise abuse with the intention of minimising their responsibility and maximising the boy's consent and benefit. Consequently, sexual abuse is often reframed as sex education, developmental preparation for sex, a common yet private family activity and/or an expression of love. Failure to resist is often reframed in the mind of the perpetrator as consent.

Perpetrator drug and alcohol use and misuse: There is a high incidence of perpetrator alcohol and drug misuse throughout the sexually abusive relationship. A substantial majority (74 percent) of perpetrators have chemical dependency histories and a narrow majority (54 percent) have moderate to severe levels of alcohol use.

Sexually abusive acts: Child sexual abuse usually follows a gradual progression from non-contact to contact forms of abuse. Once the behaviour reaches the sexual abuse stage, boys experience three or more types of sexual act, the three most common being anal penetration of the boy, fellatio¹¹⁴ of the boy and fellatio of the perpetrator. Among boys, penetrative acts are more common than non-penetrative, irrespective of perpetrator gender. Boys experience more anal penetration with both objects and the penis than girls. For boys of eight years and above, anal intercourse is the most prevalent form of sexual abuse; prior to that age, anal contact and penetration with an object is more common.

A substantial majority (78 percent) of boys are coerced into performing sexual acts on the perpetrator, including vaginal penetration. Vaginal intercourse is the modal abusive act where females are the perpetrator. Coerced fellatio upon the perpetrator is higher for boys than girls. A majority of boys have to perform oral sex on their abuser, fondle him

114 Oral sex.

or her, masturbate him or her, digitally penetrate him or her and perform penile-anal or penile-vaginal intercourse on him or her. A limited minority of boys (10 percent) are subjected to sado-masochistic bondage, while genital violence and mutilation, a particularly undisclosed form of sexual abuse, may be more common than currently known.

Subsequent abuse: Reports of subsequent abuse among boys range from 25 percent to 65 percent. A review of literature carried out by Muchlenhard and others¹¹⁵ revealed significant links between child sexual abuse and adolescent or adult sexual victimisation, while Lew notes that male survivors are often vulnerable to sexual and other forms of abuse throughout their lives.¹¹⁶

Disclosure: The sexual abuse of males is significantly more likely to be concealed than abuse of females and, consequently, unreported. Younger children may disclose accidentally, for example by inappropriate sexual behaviour or through observation of injuries by a third party. In general, younger children are less likely to initiate disclosure deliberately, while adolescent boys, compared to girls and younger boys, are significantly less likely to disclose under any conditions. Having supportive carers can increase the likelihood of disclosure to a rate 3.7 times higher than those with carers identified as unsupportive. The substantial majority (74 percent) of disclosures of children 3–17 tends to be accidental.

Boys who do not disclose their abuse directly display lower levels of anxiety and hostility compared to those who purposefully reveal their abuse either immediately or subsequently. The latter tend to show higher levels of symptoms as per the “Trauma Checklist for Children”, particularly in areas such as depression, dissociation and sexual concerns. Ironically from the perspective of carers, family members and child protection professionals, deliberate disclosure by boys often signifies a greater level of psychological functioning and consequently a lesser need for therapy compared to boys who disclose accidentally.

Even when abuse is disclosed, children are significantly inclined to deny and minimise their experiences. A study by Bruck and others indicates that the majority of children do not reveal abuse during childhood,¹¹⁷ while others suggest that males tend to keep the abuse concealed for decades. Children exposed to aggression and threats often take twice as long to disclose; age at onset of and severity of abuse are also factors that influence disclosure.

Upon disclosure, research shows, the majority of adults initially disbelieve the boy and often attempt to silence him. After their son’s disclosure, parents may choose not to report due to the stigmatisation the child or family may experience. This may be harmful to the boy in terms of self-concept and opportunities for resolving the trauma and its effects. The responses of those around the boy are hugely significant, and can either ameliorate or exacerbate the traumatic effects depending on the degree to which disclosure is validated or invalidated.

Non-disclosure: Research shows that males are significantly more likely to conceal abuse from everyone, at the time of the abuse and for a significant time afterwards. Reasons for non-disclosure include shame, fear, embarrassment, not wanting to get into

115 Muchlenhard, C., Highby, B., Lee, R., Bryan, T. and Dodrill, W (1998)

116 Lew, M. (2004)

117 Bruck M., London, K., Ceci, S.J. and Shuman, D.W. (2005)

trouble and concerns that no one will believe them. Males with abuse histories who feel responsible or have positive feelings or concerns about the perpetrator are even more reluctant to disclose. It is certain that in the majority of cases, (99 percent in some studies) boys, adolescents and men experience an overwhelming fear of disclosing abuse to others. Fear of negative consequences includes being seen as “gay”, feminine or a potential perpetrator. Fear of disbelief, being blamed and being viewed as abnormal or deviant feature strongly.

Similarly, fear of responsibility for accusing the perpetrator and of negative repercussions if he or she is respected by many, fear of perpetrator harm and fear of scandal, being placed in care and losing family are noted. Feelings of guilt for experiencing pleasure and shame for failing to prevent the abuse; guilt and shame for receiving gifts, money or privileges in exchange for sex; fear of the attitudes of others and familial and peer rejection; and fear of perpetrators’ threats render the majority of boys silent.

Sexual abuse of children with disabilities: Research globally indicates that children with disabilities are significantly more likely to be abused than other children. They are often more easily manipulated by perpetrators, are more isolated and may be less likely to report, be believed and receive appropriate support when they do. They have less power, may be less able to communicate their experiences and are more reliant upon others for their personal care. A number of additional and influential beliefs and myths ensure that disabled children may not be believed, over and above the factors that already render most victims silent.¹¹⁸

False allegations: In the USA only 1.3 percent of cases are assessed as false, where the case was reported to local, county or state officials. In one study of child sexual abuse at a major children’s hospital, investigators noted that a child’s disclosure was more reliable than medical examinations.

Family responses to disclosure: Disclosures frequently result in negative outcomes for the child. If a boy discloses, families tend to deny the abuse. Males with histories of abuse in comparison to abused females report less family protectiveness after disclosure and less support from parents and siblings. The seriousness of sexual abuse is often minimised by adults, many believing that boys in general and adolescents in particular are not psychologically harmed. Many parents are unable to respond to and cope with disclosure; parents of abused boys appear to be less concerned than parents of girls with similar abuse histories. Parents may become preoccupied with concerns about their son’s sexual orientation and that abuse may determine that.

Parents are often opposed to seeking help of any kind for their sons, yet problems persist as the parents, upon disclosure of abuse, tend to experience intrusive thoughts, depression, anxiety, relational difficulties, sexual problems, conflicts with their abused son and loss of significant relationships. After disclosure, many parents perceive a number of personality problems with their sons, and boys are often seen as “the bad seed”. Other family responses include denial of the abuse, reframing of abuse as normal

118 Additional myths: If young people with disability are kept away from strangers, they will be safe (most are abused by those they know and trust); disabled children are incapable of understanding and relating information and are prone to lying and fantasising (they may process information in different ways but are no less credible and truthful); they don’t fully understand what is happening, so they will not feel emotional pain when abused (they may not have the same words to describe their pain, but their emotional anguish is very real); disabled young people are either over-sexualised and unable to control their sexual impulses, or are asexual (young people with a disability go through similar stages of development as their peers without a disability). McCreary Centre Society (1993)

behaviour, acknowledging the abuse but blaming or punishing the child, acknowledging the abuse but neglecting to protect the child from further abuse. Perhaps most importantly from the boy's perspective, males often feel pressured, threatened or rejected for disclosing and feel punished by their parents for the abuse. Children receiving support, even after a period with no support, fare better physically; their experience is validated, their sense of personal autonomy is enhanced and they are more likely to place responsibility with the perpetrator.

Social responses: Reports of male child sexual abuse are increasingly likely to be viewed with suspicion for a number of reasons. Peers and classmates, when informed about abusive experiences of boys, tend to ridicule, label and stigmatise them. Women, married partners and individuals with children are more likely to believe and make efforts to prevent further abuse than are men, non-married individuals and those without children.

Social intervention: Numerous studies and texts show that social welfare and medical intervention for children with histories of sexual abuse is inadequate. Many professionals are influenced by the same factors as the general public. Inadequate training and support also lead to the prevalence, severity and effects of this problem being minimised. Cases involving boys are substantiated by the authorities at a significantly lower rate than cases involving girls, and it takes far longer from the time of disclosure for the process to be completed. Legal services are less inclined to follow up prosecutions where boys are concerned, and a conviction is less likely if the boy is older than 12 years. Boys are less likely to receive counselling, and when they do, its duration is shorter.

Explanatory Models of the Impact of Sexual Abuse

Several explanatory models have emerged for understanding the impact and effects of sexual abuse, which for the most part have been developed for understanding the effects on female victims and survivors. They have provided the basis for contemporary understanding, a lens through which to view of the consequences of abuse. Some of the key models are described very briefly below; more detailed understanding will require the reader to use the bibliography. Following explanation of the models, specific issues in relation to males will be discussed. This may be useful for comparison with data from this study but also provide insight when developing responses and support for boys.

The four traumagenic dynamics: Probably the most influential and inclusive framework for understanding the impact of abuse, developed by Finkelhor and Brown,¹¹⁹ in which the effects of sexual abuse are divided into four traumagenic (trauma causing) dynamics. They are traumatic sexualisation, betrayal, powerlessness and stigmatisation. The model is not presented as gender specific, but is considered applicable to both males and females. At the time it was published, few studies relating to males were available, and the review was limited to female victims. It seems reasonable to assume that the four dynamics are present in male victims, but differences in the way they are viewed and experienced will exist.

Child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome: Conceived by Summit to help explain a female child's life context following sexual abuse.¹²⁰ Summit suggested that the child's reaction is typically characterised by secrecy and helplessness (two prerequisites of sexual abuse), entrapment and accommodation (the sexual abuse itself) and delayed disclosure and retraction (two common consequences of sexual abuse).

119 Finkelhor, D. and Brown, A. (1986)

120 Summit, R. (1983)

Post-traumatic stress disorder and sexual abuse symptomatology: Borrowed from psychiatric literature and first proposed as a syndrome commonly affecting war veterans. Veterans displayed characteristic symptoms months, years and even decades after their time in the forces had ended. It was gradually recognised that the concept of PTSD may have a wider application. Researchers and clinicians working with survivors of natural disasters and accidents, and with victims of rape and other forms of assault, observed similar symptom patterns, leading to an extension of the concept. Features include flashbacks and re-experiencing of the trauma, emotional numbing and dissociative behaviours. Its application is limited in many respects because it has very little to say about the unique nature of sexual abuse.¹²¹

Rape trauma syndrome: In 1974, Burgess and Holmstrom¹²² identified a particular pattern of behaviour in victims of rape and coined the phrase rape trauma syndrome (a specific form of PTSD) to describe the many physical, emotional and behavioural stress reactions that are common to sexual assault survivors. These are considered as a normal reaction to sexual assault, and survivors are said to experience some if not all of the symptoms in “acute”, “recoil” and “long-term” phases. Still popular today as a framework, it was developed prior to any substantial research related to males was published. Like PTSD, it may have only partial usefulness supporting the needs of longer term survivors of child sexual abuse.

Feminism: Perhaps one of the most influential frameworks for understanding incest is the feminist perspective of Judith Herman,¹²³ arguing that incest stems from power imbalances between parents and children and males and females. She asserts that power imbalances result in parents being prone to abuse their children; the greatest power imbalance occurs between fathers and their daughters, resulting in father-daughter incest. She contends that without an understanding of male supremacy and female oppression, it is impossible to explain why the vast majority of incest perpetrators are male and why the majority of victims are female. While the essence of her argument is hard to challenge in many respects, and arguably still greatly influences contemporary practice, her study was carried out when relatively little was known about males abused by their fathers and has less relevance still when exploring female perpetrators and extra-familial abuse.

Intergenerational transmission of incest: The recurrence of physical and sexual abuse across generations is perhaps one of the most widely accepted but also controversial relationships in the field. It is understood from a variety of perspectives—the psychoanalytical notion of the victim’s identification with the aggressor, in order to escape painful feelings of powerlessness, shame and passivity; cognitive schemas suggesting that children in abusive homes may learn a very black and white view of the world in which people are either perpetrators or victims, with no template for relationships based on mutuality, love or respect. Social learning models suggest that sexually abusive behaviours are learned in a straightforward manner, and being abused is seen as being trained for sexual abuse.

The “cycle of abuse” theory is popular and accepted as the truth in many sections of the professional population as well as the general public. In its simplest and most common form, the theory proposes that if you are abused as a child, you will in turn abuse others. During the course of this study, individuals referred to this “cycle” as if it were an

121 Mendel, M.P. (1995) p. 78

122 Burgess, A.W. and Holmstrom, L. (1974)

123 Herman, J. (1992)

inevitable fact of life, some suggesting that as many as 70–80 percent of abused boys were likely to go on to abuse or exploit others. What is the reality?

A number of researchers have found a significant correlation between a child witnessing intra-familial physical violence and experiencing neglect and rejection, and subsequently becoming a sex offender.¹²⁴ Similarly, histories of physical and sexual maltreatment have been linked to sexual offending.¹²⁵ Bentovim also found that boys who had committed abuse but who had not been victims themselves had experienced a violent climate in the home, including violence against the mother and discontinuity of care.¹²⁶

Others have carried out studies to identify strategies for preventing the continuation of abuse. Hertzberger suggests that the presence of an emotionally supportive other is an important factor that could prevent transmission of abuse.¹²⁷ Durham similarly identifies the presence of a supportive adult as a significant factor in preventing transmission, suggesting that if victims are allowed to discuss their fear, distortions and rationalisations openly, i.e. if they are not shrouded in secrecy and silencing, this opens an opportunity to overcome their victimisation.¹²⁸ In addition, Bentovim and also Bouvier¹²⁹ suggest that supportive adults can help victims repair attachments, manage emotions and develop a positive sense of self-worth. It is worrying, therefore, that so many children living in a variety of abusive situations appear not to have supportive adults available.

Studies with sex offenders found that 22 percent¹³⁰ of a sample reported that they were victims of sexual abuse, which may permit some to draw the conclusion that many victims become abusers later in life. However, other studies show that 20 percent of prison inmates incarcerated for non-sexual crimes reported being sexually abused,¹³¹ suggesting that rates of abuse of sexual and non-sexual offenders are very similar.

Research with males who have not gone on to abuse others is conspicuous by its absence, so much of the research has been carried out with offender samples, such as those above, the limitations of which are recognised by the authors. Similar concerns have been raised by others. Etherington¹³² poses the question, “What about the men who did not go on to become offenders? We have never heard from them. How valid is the research if we only hear from those who had gone on to re-enact their own abuse?” Lew also notes the absence of research in this area describing non-offending survivors as “an invisible population”.¹³³

Many studies rely on accounts of convicted offenders without use of control groups of non-offending survivors. Sex offenders are well known for their denial and minimisation, and we are warned against believing their versions of offending behaviour, while at the same time we are also asked to believe their reports of their own victimisation when they

124 Salter et al. (2003)

125 Becker, J. (1998)

126 Bentovim, A. (2002)

127 Hertzberger, S.D. (1993)

128 Durham, A. (2003)

129 Bouvier, P. (2003)

130 Coxe, R. and Holmes, W. (2001)

131 Dhawan & Marshall (1996)

132 Etherington, K. (2000)

133 Lew, M. (2004)

are given in a research setting. Hindman and Peters found huge differences in the accounts of adult sexual offenders' own childhood experiences. One of two groups agreed to take a polygraph test. In the first study, without the threat of a test, 67 percent claimed to have been abused, while with the threat of a test only 29 percent claimed to have suffered sexual abuse. Similar rates—65 percent and 32 percent—were found in a repeat study, and one study of juveniles produced figures of 83 percent and 17 percent.¹³⁴

Other criticisms of the cycle of abuse theories include the fact that the majority of studies rely predominantly on individual psychological influences, not taking into consideration societal factors that contribute to the abuse of children. Finkelhor¹³⁵ warns of the dangers of finding a direct causal link based on a single factor theory of victims becoming victimisers, as it risks creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Recently, more studies have focused on resilience in children and factors that prevent them from developing a wide range of destructive behaviours; these will be discussed in more detail following the presentation of the findings of this study. Kelly and her colleagues summarise:¹³⁶

Why when the evidence is so shaky and the implications for child and adult survivors so negative, has the cycle of abuse become so widely accepted as an explanation? On one level it's a neat and accessible concept. In offering this "common sense" explanation, it represents abuse as if it were learnt behaviour, the same as learning a "nursery rhyme" ... so powerful is this idea that even academics who recognise that most people do not repeat the cycle refer to this as "breaking it". We need to ask ourselves why this notion has taken such a hold within public and professional thinking. Most crucially it excludes more challenging explanations—those which question power relations between men and women and adults and children. "Breaking cycles" is a much safer goal to discuss than changing the structure of social relations.

This is a sensitive topic that will continue to be debated, Warwick concluding:

The evidence from research is that it is dangerous to look for the next generation's perpetrators amongst this generation's victims, because perpetrators are created in many different ways and survivors are not necessarily going to become abusers.¹³⁷

It is generally accepted that there are three possible outcomes of sexual abuse: that victims may become adult victims (in the widest sense), may become perpetrators (in the widest sense) and, importantly, are also likely to become protectors of others,¹³⁸ an outcome that receives far less attention.

Victim advocacy and male sexual victimisation: Sepler¹³⁹ reviews the evolution of treatment of sexual abuse victims from its source within victim advocacy for female rape victims, arguing that principles for working with females are inappropriately transferred

134 Hindman, J. and Peters, J.M. (2001)

135 Finkelhor, D. (1986)

136 Kelly, L. et al. (1995)

137 Warwick, I. (1999)

138 Lew, M. (2004)

139 Sepler, F. (1990)

to work with males, where they may do more harm than good. Victim advocacy emerged from the feminist movement. The dominant view that sexual crimes are perpetrated by males against females serves as a frame of reference for intervention, and therefore symptoms and responses have largely been defined from the perspective of the female rape victim. This is referred to as the “feminisation of victimisation”. Over time more males came to the attention of mental health and justice systems but were often not recognised as such. In Sepler’s view, the basic model for defining victimisation breaks down when confronted with male victims. Intervention efforts equate “victim” with “female” and therefore misapply to males treatment strategies founded on female victims.

In her view, the notion of being powerless—a victim or survivor—is anathema to males. There is nothing a male fears more than being unable to do anything about the situation in which he finds himself, and helpers working within the framework of female victimisation may be assuring males of what they fear most: being powerless. She argues that in order for male victims to be served, the understanding of victimisation needs to be radically expanded. Cited in Mendel, she states:

The male victim ... looks nothing like the sympathetic, traumatised and vulnerable victim that the public recognises but may instead appear aggressive, violent, masterful, commanding and threatening.

While it is true that professionals need to learn to empathise with the diversity of gender responses to abuse and exploitation, Cresswell¹⁴⁰ suggests that Sepler overstates her case, because it is always important for victims to know that they were in no way to blame for their abuse.

Finally, Sepler asserts that sexism in society results in the denial and invalidation of male victimisation and argues that this has far-reaching and profound effects. In her view, the societal denial of male victimisation is itself a part of rape culture, and the invalidation of the experiences of male victims contributes to sexual aggression by males.

Mendel responds that the concept of the feminisation of victimisation provides a corrective for the overextension of feminist perspectives (and perhaps ironically of the mainstream) on sexual abuse, but suggests that feminist models err by equating victims with females. The feminist perspective is correct to focus upon power relationships and differentials in power that make some more prone to abuse and others more prone to be abused. In most societies, women have less power than men and are therefore more vulnerable to abuse; men have more power and are therefore more likely to abuse it, including through sexual abuse. Mendel asserts that the fundamental underlying factor, however, is not gender but power. It is not being women per se that makes women vulnerable to victimisation but that they are at a power disadvantage with regard to men. He summarises:

There is a very fine line, difficult to disentangle, between the two schemas. The distinction is critical however, with respect to children. Anyone who has less power than those around them, is vulnerable to victimisation. Children are children before they are boys and girls. Children, as children, have less power than their parents and other

140 Cresswell, M. (1988)

adults, and than older children. They are, therefore, susceptible to abuse, regardless of their gender.¹⁴¹

Impacts and Effects

Male victims and survivors of sexual abuse generally experience multifaceted consequences that can impact upon all aspects of the self—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual—and which are experienced in both the short and long term. Often, sexual abuse is accompanied by other forms of abuse and neglect, so that trauma from sexual abuse can rarely be viewed in isolation. Effects vary among individuals, but it is also true that survivors share many common issues.

Variables that affect the impact, duration and severity of abuse include the age when abuse began, duration and frequency, type of activities the abuse involved and the nature of the relationship between offender and victim. The number and gender of offenders involved, the manner in which the abuse occurred and other circumstances in the victim's life can also play a significant role.¹⁴²

Physical impacts include nightmares, sleep disturbances and externalising behaviours that may take on sexual overtones. Enuresis or soiling, injuries to the anus or genitals may be present, while chronic somatic complaints for which there is no obvious cause, such as headaches or stomach complaints, are common. Some boys develop hatred for their own bodies and engage in self-harming behaviours or may neglect their physical and personal hygiene.

Many survivors hold themselves responsible for the abuse, and self-blame is just one of a number of mental impacts related to cognitive distortions. Low self-perceptions and self-esteem manifest in a variety of ways—hopelessness, helplessness and a belief that what happened was deserved. Many of the ideas imparted during “socialisation” are not good for boys, and, faced with traditional expectations of being a man, it's little wonder that boys are virtually silent when it comes to disclosing even so-called minor forms of abuse. Many males find it hard to identify, acknowledge and express their feelings, experiencing affective numbness. Some survivors may indulge in alcohol or drug misuse to suppress memories and emotions. When in touch with emotions, many boys may experience feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, guilt, anger and rage, some of which are not considered or recognised as responses resulting from abuse and may result in punishment.¹⁴³

Difficulties and confusion are evident with gender identity, fuelled by the social mythology and expectation of males as self-reliant, strong and in control. Boys are not expected to cry and therefore hide vulnerability. Successful males are portrayed as heterosexual, sexual initiators and fearless protectors of themselves and others. These expectations contradict their experiences, while questions about their sexuality or suspicions related to the likelihood of boys becoming abusers do not help. The impact of cultural factors and expectations of boys may therefore be a key area to be acknowledged in provision of support.

Boys abused by males may be confused about their natural sexual identity, which may be a central issue to explore in support settings. Boys are often stimulated and aroused by the abuser, experiencing ejaculation and therefore a degree of pleasure. In the absence of

141 Mendel, M.P. (1995)

142 Crowder, A. (1995)

143 Hilton, A. and Roberts, J. (1995)

explanations for this, many attempt to understand it by use of physical cues (i.e. physical arousal and orgasm) rather than internal cues (emotional discomfort and confusion). Crowder¹⁴⁴ observes that children are not aware that many men who engage in same-sex behaviours and abuse are not homosexual, and the children therefore do not analyse their experiences in relation to power and control issues. Abusive experiences are framed as homosexual experiences, perpetrators are seen as “a gay man who was being sexual with a child” rather than as “an abuser who was sexually using a child to meet primarily non-sexual needs”.

As previously identified, beliefs that boys will become abusers are powerful influences. Both supportive adults, professionals, parents or carers and the boys themselves may be concerned about this.

Abusive sexual initiation can establish patterns of arousal and sexualised coping behaviours that may be dysfunctional, or considered inappropriate in that they transgress acceptable behaviour, or may be considered harmful to the boy and others. These may manifest themselves in sexualised behaviour or compulsive sexual addictions, excessive masturbation, a preoccupation with sex or re-enacting the abuse with others, while some may avoid sexual contact or talk altogether.

Short- and long-term interpersonal difficulties, including aggression, delinquency and non-compliance are common; mixed loyalties to the abuser may be evident, which may manifest themselves later as an inability to distinguish between sex and affection, trust and exploitation and safe and abusive relationships. Survivors may become socially isolated and are more likely to be re-victimised in subsequent relationships. Some may become “hyper vigilant” towards the behaviour of others, while longer term sexual difficulties may also emerge.

Recent research related to the biophysical system (voluntary and autonomic nervous systems and brain) has revealed how responses to child sexual abuse alter the development of the brain in a number of ways. This may prevent consolidation of traumatic memories and therefore contribute to preservation of the traumatic state. It may leave boys with difficulties regulating emotions in response to subsequent stress or expressing the words to describe their experiences. This can also affect memory, learning capacity and performance in a variety of settings, including school. I would recommend the work of Spiegel¹⁴⁵ for a detailed, comprehensive and invaluable contribution to this specific field.

Current research, in western countries at least, notes significant differences between the sexual abuse of boys and girls, both in the nature of the abuse and how it is understood, which may be useful to note when working with boys. Males often consider sexual abuse as initiation rather than abuse and don’t always view it as harmful. This does not mean that they were not negatively affected; there is now clear evidence that the sexual abuse of boys is extremely destructive.

In a further contribution, Krause and others,¹⁴⁶ focusing on gender, trauma themes and PTSD, note that survivors often rely upon social constructions of masculinity (or femininity) to inform their efforts at recovery. Self-blame and guilt, for example, are notable themes and may manifest themselves differently. In females self-blame may be

144 Crowder, A. (1995) p. 28

145 Spiegel, J. (2003)

146 Krause, D., DeRosa, R. and Roth, S. (2002)

related to thoughts that she attracted the abuse, whereas a male may blame himself because he was not “man enough” to stop it, thus contradicting social expectations of males and masculinity. Gender role construction can be detrimental to male survivors, resulting in the likelihood that abuse will be downplayed by significant others, family and supporters.

Because of such bias, male survivors tend to be denied protection, treatment and the validation needed to explore the impact of their trauma.

Masculine gender identities generally demand strength, denial of physical and emotional pain and the avoidance of expressions of vulnerable emotions. Some male survivors may rely upon anger or aggression as their sole emotional outlet—it is easily accessed and often socially condoned. It therefore follows that different and compensatory responses may be required from those around males when considering offering support and help.

Being abused within the context of patriarchal relations may prevent males from feeling comfortable in expressing feelings or fears, or being dependent on others, leading to the development of repression as a coping strategy.¹⁴⁷ Durham also explores the notion of “hegemonic (or dominant) masculinities” and its detrimental influence on both boys and those around them.

Crowder¹⁴⁸ carried out research with 41 therapists specialising in work with male survivors and summarises the issues related to impacts and effects on males succinctly:

The differences between male and female victims of sexual abuse are few compared to the similarities. Both male and female victims of sexual trauma feel isolated and marginalised. Both struggle with low self esteem and a damaged sense of self. Ultimately, healing and recovery for both male and female victims involve embracing all aspects of one’s humanity, a process that goes beyond gender.

147 Durham, A. (2003) p. 20

148 Crowder, A. (1995) p. 37

CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The research project generated enormous amounts of data in relation to boys and staff participants from all three geographical sites. Prior to the field research, 23 key informant meetings were held with representatives of a variety of organisations. In total, 40 boys and young men and more than 100 staff took part in interviews. Furthermore, five focus groups were held, ensuring that the number of individuals with opportunities to share their views exceeded 200. Each and every set of field notes was scrutinised in detail by the team as part of the analysis and coded to identify emerging themes, similarities and differences, a process which is described in more detail in Appendix 7.

The qualitative nature of the study required that individual's thoughts, opinions, feelings and world views be shared for an accurate understanding to be gained. Therefore the majority of data is presented in narrative form. The key to sharing qualitative data is to "stay close to the story", and every effort has been made to ensure that direct quotes are used to illustrate and elaborate on specific points where possible.

While information gained from key informant meetings represents a relatively small amount of data, these were considered an essential part of the pre-study process and directly influenced the study design. Therefore a brief summary, illustrating the range of responses, is given below. The KI meetings all took place in Phnom Penh and were carried out with a range of organisations working with children and those who are identified as trafficked and/or vulnerable to abuse. Meetings were generally held with experienced staff in senior positions within the organisations, and were open and flexible, reflecting the range of individuals who took part. They provided valuable insight into the issue at an early stage.

Awareness of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Boys

Foreigners and gay Cambodians are responsible.

It's a big problem but NGOs address only girls and ignore boys. Foreign sex tourists are mostly responsible; for Khmer it's not a big problem, they don't use boys for sex—I've never heard of Cambodian nationals doing this.

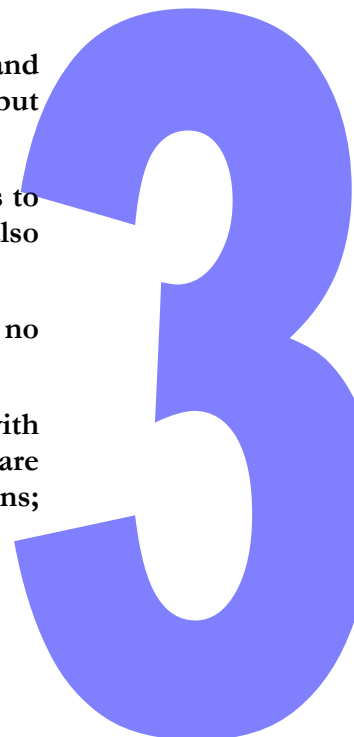
It's a big problem, caused by poverty; people have low education and therefore don't know what else to do. Lots of Khmers abuse boys, but because of newspapers people think it's only foreigners.

Foreigners groom the children with food and clothes. I tell the boys to stop it as they will get diseases and they are Cambodian. I've also heard of Cambodian fathers raping their own sons and daughters.

I don't know about boys. It's the first time I have heard about this; no one is interested in boys really.

I have not heard about it here. I am aware that some may work with boys in shelters. I think foreigners and gays or MSM who like boys are responsible. Heterosexual men? Rare—incest is not for Cambodians; it's against culture.

Donors are not interested in working with boys.



Everyone is interested in girls. So why boys? It's impossible and unbelievable!

I hear about foreigners, not Cambodians. If Cambodians, they must be gay.

It is mostly foreigners, fewer Cambodians because our culture does not allow it. It's only a recent thing and not happened much before now. Khmers don't want to have sex with boys.

The issue is overblown. It's flavour of the month; the really important issues are drugs and street gangs.

In many shelters, abuse is not recognised. At organisational level there is a conspiracy of silence. Available materials have very limited definitions: child sexual abuse is seen either as rape of girls or paedophilia, and many organisations are not considering the possibilities.

Experience and Knowledge of Impacts and Effects

Eighty percent will get HIV and they will want to abuse others.

It's hard for boys to talk. They have mental problems and may become paedophiles in future.

Girls are hurt twice as much as boys because they lose their virginity.

May sell sex for money? They experience fear and may go on to abuse others.

It has a serious impact on society—health, mental health, AIDS and they may sexually abuse and harass others. Girls are damaged but because boys have no virginity, Khmer culture is not interested.

I observed a lot of sexualised behaviour as a result of abuse, but there is no help available.

Training and Development Needs and Needs from the Research

I need information related to boys' abuse and a programme to help boys.

What makes it easier to work with boys?

To know how sexual abuse affects boys.

Talking about sexual abuse with boys is difficult—help with that.

Information, training—you need to prove it exists!

Awareness of the impacts of sexual abuse.

We need to understand boys' feelings and to know about boys selling sex.

What are the root causes and why are there no programmes for boys?

Do boys have problems like girls?

The reasons boys are abused. What skills do we need?

How we can work together to protect boys.

What boys want and need.

Grooming—how does it happen?

We need knowledge to work with all boys, not just those abused.

Brief summary: Key emerging themes at this early stage of the study indicated that levels of awareness in relation to sexual abuse of boys were generally quite low. A slim majority of respondents (52 percent) believed that foreigners alone were responsible for the abuse of boys, while over a quarter assumed that gay men are the cause. Of those who expressed an opinion, many assumed that boys were likely to abuse others as a result of their experiences. Responses to the question regarding training provided an early indication of the wide range of needs. One respondent expressed concern that by researching boys and sexual abuse, we might encourage those with no previous interest to abuse boys. They cited the Khmer proverb “One knife has two faces”, to illustrate their point. This was based on their experience of previous research in relation to girls, and their assumption that this had led to an increase in rape and sexual assault, rather than increasing reports to authorities. This would not be the only time the team encountered this opinion.

Pre-Research Focus Group Discussion

In late January 2007, prior to the field research, a pilot FGD was held with a team of social workers from a mental health project in Kompong Speu province, some 50 km south-west of Phnom Penh. The team consisted of males and females ranging in age from their early 20s to over 60. Some were born and raised in the countryside and others in Phnom Penh. The purpose of this FGD was to pilot the methodology and potential questions for future focus groups; it produced some interesting responses at an early stage of the research, some of which are shared below. Responses from women are indicated by use of ♀ and males ♂.

On Awareness of Abuse of Boys

I overheard about boys being abused in UNTAC times by foreign soldiers. They would bribe boys with food and cakes. Boys seemed to talk about it openly compared to girls, but it wasn’t taken seriously by anyone. ♀

I’ve heard from children that gangsters procure homeless children to have sex with people and keep the money—sometimes as much as \$10. It happens very often near the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. I didn’t believe it before. ♀

I’ve heard that it’s mostly foreign men. ♂

One of my clients was abused by a woman when young. I also heard about monks in the wat abusing boys and someone I know says it happens a lot in prisons. ♂

People don't believe that boys can be abused because boys usually abuse. ♂

It happened in Pol Pot times too. ♀

On Child-Rearing Practices of Touching Boys' Genitals

People do it to show love and affection up to the age of two or three years, not to abuse them. It's passed from one generation to another. ♀

In my experience, older boys get very angry about it. ♂

I'm not sure about other countries, but to me, from birth to maybe three years is okay. People don't do it to girls because they think that later they may "seek men". ♀

On the Consequences of Sexual Abuse

The man I knew felt great shame and guilt—he thought that he was bad. ♂

Boys think they are strong and therefore not sure how they should feel. Maybe they want to take revenge as a result of abuse. ♂

Perhaps it's not so different from girls in terms of their feelings and behaviours. ♂

There is the issue of virginity and honour for girls. This doesn't apply to boys; for them it's not a problem, they think it's normal and their value is still high. ♀

Brief summary: The FGD revealed that abuse of boys had been encountered in many scenarios, stretching back 30 years or so to the Khmer Rouge period. Abuse by UNTAC troops was also noted. Further discussion indicated a genuine confusion about the differences between consenting same-sex relationships and abusive ones, particularly where boys are concerned.

The issue of girls having virginity and therefore honour to lose was raised, indicating that male and females are viewed very differently by some, even when the sexual contact is abusive. This evidently had the potential to influence how male victims are considered, thus influencing levels of empathy and support. This became a key theme to explore in the field research. The fact of boys of having their genitals touched or played with seems well known, most people considering that it is done out of affection or love until the age of two or three years. Some respondents noted that perhaps boys don't like this, and may express anger, particularly as they get older.

The Language of Abuse

Some of the terms used by participants to describe their experiences are included in the glossary of terms. However, it is important to clarify some specific points. When describing anal intercourse, penetration of the boy's anus, or male rape, the terms most often used were, *bok* or *bok koud*.

Elsewhere the term *bok* may also be used to describe two things coming together very quickly with force—a car crash, for example. *Koud* refers to the bottom or anus. Sometimes the boys would say the equivalent of "He *bok* my *koud*". Therefore it is often

used as a slang term to describe sexual acts (essentially used by some boys to describe the term “fuck”) indicating the strong movement or force used. The literal translation, “insert the penis into the anus”, while being polite and accurate in the biological sense, does not accurately communicate the nature of the act as described by the boys. Therefore, throughout the text, unless another term was used, *bok* is used to indicate anal sex, penetration and/or anal rape.

Data from Sihanoukville

Sihanoukville, also known as Kompong Som, is situated on the south-west coast of Cambodia, some 230 km from Phnom Penh and is popular with local and foreign tourists alike. A continuing tourism boom in Cambodia and recently introduced visa regulations in Thailand¹⁴⁹ have led to an increasing population of long-term resident expatriates in the town. At the time of the last census (1998)¹⁵⁰ the population was around 155,000.

The research team visited Sihanoukville in April 2007, meeting boys who had contact with two NGOs and were known to be victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Meetings were facilitated by staff that had trusting and healthy relationships with the boys. A total of nine boys participated over a period of 10 days. In many respects, this visit also acted as a pilot for the rest of the study, because prior to this time the team had not met any boys. Data were gathered in a variety of ways, after the researchers had spent time with staff and boys, observing, listening and taking part in a range of activities. Some interviews were carried out continuously at one meeting, while many took place over several meetings. Due to a range of factors,¹⁵¹ not all participants answered all the questions. It was made clear to the boys that they had a choice to answer or decline to answer any question and they were not pressured to answer.

Despite thorough planning, the reality in the field resulted in very few of the interviews being carried out step by step. In-depth data were often gained at a variety of venues and times of day and often recorded and pieced together at a later time. The reality is that many of the participants’ lives are fairly chaotic, so flexibility and patience were required. Informed consent was discussed with staff, carers and boys prior to all meetings, and ethical guidelines were followed as described earlier in the report.

It must be stressed that it was not an easy task for any of the participants in any site to talk about their experiences. As a result of criminal procedures, many had been interviewed numerous times by police and local authorities, which in itself can be an ordeal. The boys were encouraged to say as little or as much as they wanted.

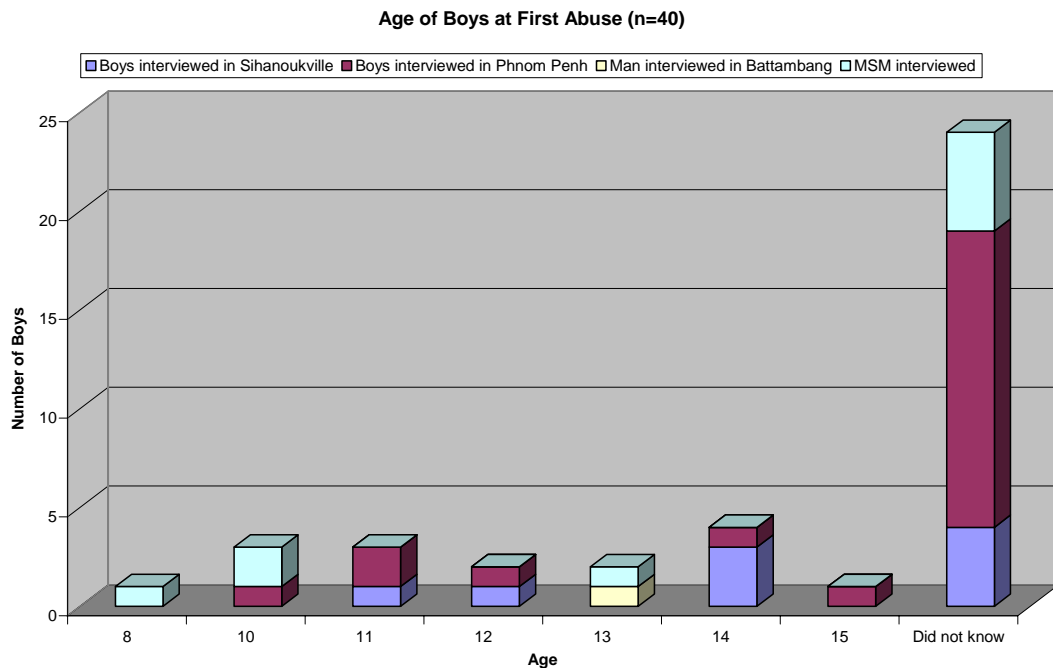
The data will be presented in relation to specific questions and subjects, drawing upon key themes, similarities and differences emerging from the field notes and other tools. The intention is to “stay close to the data”, representing the words and stories of the boys as accurately as possible; they have been checked and clarified on several occasions prior to the writing of this report. At the end of each section, reflective comments have been included to summarise the main themes or comment on salient points.

149 Legislation imposed from October 2006 restricts the time that nationals from 39 countries can spend in Thailand to 90 days within any six-month period. In contrast, the purchase of long term visas in Cambodia is relatively easy.

150 National Institute of Statistics (NIS)

151 Quite often the attention span of participants was limited or they were distracted by others nearby. Some were recovering from the effects of sniffing glue and/or preferred to sleep or do other things.

In Sihanoukville, all of the boys in the sample were abused by foreign males. This does not mean that all abusers of boys are foreign. Current child protection efforts reveal the presence of foreign abusers because they are more visible and therefore easier to detect. However, little or nothing is known about abuse of boys in any setting by Cambodian perpetrators. It was reported to the team in July 2007 that the very first prosecution of a local man, for sexual offences against a boy, had taken place. At the time of writing, the outcome of that case is unknown.



About the Abuse

Most boys said of the abuse that they were scared and didn't understand what was happening, because they had limited knowledge about sex or abuse prior to the event. Some boys were asked or persuaded to go to the abuser's house by other boys. It is likely this was a deliberate ploy by the abusers to "recruit" new boys; money is often given to all the boys afterwards. Many boys reported that they went in pairs or small groups because they were afraid to go alone, further blurring the boundaries of responsibility. Most stated that the first time it happened, they had no idea what was going to happen, and once there, were too afraid to say no or escape. Another source of confusion for many was the fact that they were frightened but also became sexually aroused and experienced an element of pleasure as a result of the perpetrator's acts. One boy described a fairly typical scenario:

The man asked me to take a shower and then get in bed naked. He took photographs and asked me to suck his penis and masturbate him. The man then sucked the other two boys' penises. I was very frightened, fearful and didn't want to do this, but I couldn't say no or escape. I later tried to avoid him and the other boys who persuaded me to do this.

One 18-year-old explained how both money and force are used by abusers. His story also illustrates the intense shame that boys feel as a result of their ordeal:

Foreigners rent boys to sleep with them by giving them money. Sometimes they take boys to the forest at the back of the beach ... They ask them to suck their penis and make them have anal sex ... I remember one time I saw a man take a rope to tie the boy up and then have forceful anal sex. He also put a carrot into the boy's anus and I remember there was blood coming out. The boys are ashamed of others knowing about this because they use words that look down on them ... People say that the boys are contaminated by AIDS. Some boys take drugs so that they are not scared, but they always lower their heads when walking because they are so ashamed. My mother is poor and doesn't have money for food or rice, so I give the money to her. I hide the truth and tell her that I found it; if she knew, she would beat me.

Another boy explained that a violent home life led to him living on the streets, encountering further risks and being trapped in a lifestyle characterised by the absence of safety:

Both of my parents had remarried. I was always beaten by my father when he was drunk; I remember he beat me with a bat when I was eight years old and threatened to kill me with a knife. At that time I was very frightened and tried to escape but I couldn't. These things made me decide to leave home. Now I live on the street with rubbish-collecting children in order to earn money to buy food and glue. When I moved to the streets I was beaten by a group of adults and children from a rich family. Sometimes they took all my money. Sometimes when we meet big groups of adults, they force us to sit in a straight line and if anyone doesn't have money, they beat us until we nearly die.

A 12-year-old boy's account shows how abusers may pay boys to recruit others and, similarly to scenarios elsewhere, use payment as a strategy to legitimise abuse. His account echoes feelings of intense fear and shame caused by sexual abuse:

I was with three friends at a petrol station and a man who could speak Khmer asked me to go with him and gave me 1000 riels (approximately US 25 cents). He bought me ice cream and noodles. At first I didn't know that he wanted to cheat me at all. He took me to his house and asked me to take a shower. After that he sucked my penis and asked me to masturbate and suck him too ... My friend was afraid to do so because the foreigner's penis was so big, but he forced me to have anal sex ... Afterwards I felt ashamed, I wanted to beat the foreigner. I didn't want anyone else to know about this because my mother might beat me if she knew. The foreigner gave \$1 to another boy to ask other boys to have sex with him ... If we only suck the man's penis we get \$2 but if we have anal sex we can get \$5 ... It's really painful; I was so scared that my heart was beating faster and faster and I was crying. Other people scold us that we are bad children, so I ran away from home. I cannot eat or sleep ... I want to hide this issue and keep it a secret forever.

A 15-year-old shared his account of life with his 10-year-old brother. It illustrates that poverty can be a significant risk factor in many abuse scenarios. Money is a powerful influence in a country where the average monthly wage is around \$30. The youngest of

the boys also explained that a rich Khmer man with a car used to call him to have sex but he did not go. His friend used to go with the man, but he paid less money than foreigners.

My brother and I started to sniff glue when our father died; it was a long time ago and we were small boys. The reason we started to sniff glue was to forget all the sad things—it makes us feel happy and dare to do anything. My family does not have food or money, so we go outside to find food to support ourselves ... In my group we always have five people go out together; we rarely go out alone because we are afraid of the gangs beating us ... We were abused since we were young but can not remember how old we were, or which year. We always get given food by the man before we have sex and get \$5 to \$20 depending upon the acts and how rich the man is. Sucking the penis and allowing the man to *bok* us is \$20 ... The places that the foreigners take the boys to have sex are the beach, garden and his house ... We talk, eat, watch video sex, take our clothes off, suck his penis and later the foreigner *bok* us. We always go as a group—two, three or four boys.

Another young man, 18, shared his story of a violent childhood, which led to him living on the streets, facing further risks.

My parents used to argue a lot, and when they were drunk, used to beat me. I asked my grandfather to help when I was five and he beat me badly. He asked me to sit in a mosquito swarm and hit me with an electric cord, so I moved to the street when I was 11. When I lived on the street, a group of adults abused me, beat me, took my money and kicked me against the wall. They beat me badly, and my eyes were black and blue. Every day I sleep at the rubbish place. I sleep on a chair, and I have one pillow and a mat. I get 3000 riels (US 75 cents) a day for collecting rubbish. When I can not find money I have no food to eat and have to be patient because I am poor ...

He then described how he was lured into a life of abuse by a foreign man but also suggested that some Khmer men also like to approach boys:

My friends always call me to go sleep with him ... The man bought me orange juice and had sex with five boys ... He gave us money and asked us to come back the next day. He asked us to suck his penis one by one and asked us to have anal sex one by one also ... He used to buy us clothes ... As time went by, I realised that this person is not good, so I told my teacher to complain to the police. I first ejaculated when I was 12 years old ... I was with older boys of 14, 15 and 16 years. It hurt when he had anal sex with me and I suffered cuts to the anus ... I am so embarrassed around others ... My friends say that I am not a “good boy” to suck the foreigner’s penis because of wanting money. I feel ashamed in front of my teacher, relatives and my neighbours. Sometimes I was also approached by Khmer men, usually moto drivers, when I walked along the street. I met them and they would ask me, “Are you circumcised yet? If so, that is very delicious”.

About the Impacts and Effects of Abuse

It was clear that, despite many of the boys receiving money or food for having sex with men, they felt very uncomfortable and shameful about the experience. It also caused them to have a variety of physical and psychological problems, and affected their relationships and self-perceptions. Some told of physical pain and injuries caused by anal sex, which most of the time were left untreated due to lack of money or being too scared or ashamed to tell anyone. The researchers all commented at one time or another on how small some of these boys were for their age, and it is difficult to understand how grown men can perpetrate such acts of abuse, realising that they are clearly causing such pain and injuries. It was later confirmed by a local NGO staff member that the vast majority of offenders do not use condoms, further indicating a clear lack of concern for the boys' welfare.¹⁵²

The use of food, money, accommodation and other bribes to entrap children, does not disguise the fact that these vulnerable boys are experiencing brutal, nasty and violent crimes. Most of the boys had already experienced a number of other forms of deprivation and abuse prior to the sexual abuse, thus increasing their vulnerability. One boy explained that he had told his mother about the abuse but wasn't believed at the time, because she thought it was impossible for boys to be abused.

Many of the boys spoke of a range of emotions, including fear, talked of their hearts beating fast while being abused and being angry afterwards, while some told of feeling great shame and wanting to hide from the world. Many of the boys were sniffing glue prior to abuse and continued to do so afterwards as a method of numbing and escaping their feelings. Following is a compilation of their responses regarding the impact, with the most frequent responses at the top of the list. They provide clear indicators of the wide range of factors that those in a position to help boys will need to take into consideration when planning support:

Injuries (cuts, tears), pain to the anus and having blood come out.

Feelings of great shame and loss of honour.

Being afraid of being looked down on.

Blaming myself for what happened.

Wanting to die or commit suicide.

Thinking I am wrong and sniffing glue to forget that.

Hating myself.

Being ashamed when others find out about me.

Feeling isolated.

Having no confidence.

Crying.

Wanting to run away from my family.

152 Interview, 2 May 2007. A staff member estimated that in cases with which she was familiar, 85 percent of abusers did not use a condom when abusing boys.

Being scared of telling others.

Worried about being labelled as “cheap”, “inferior” or having AIDS.

Hiding the problem and being scared to meet people I know.

Feelings of anger and wanting to kill the abuser.

Stealing.

Wanting to keep it a secret.

Being suspicious of other people.

Afraid of dying of AIDS.

Sometimes feeling resentful and bullying others.

Worried that I might become gay.

Nightmares about foreigners abusing me.

Sexually transmitted infections.

Having poor health including not eating and sleeping.

Sniffing glue to forget sadness.

Feeling I have to force myself to do this to get money.

Being addicted to sex.

Afraid people will blame my mother for not looking after me.

One boy, 15 years old, used the analogy of a bird to describe the way that being sexually abused made him feel:

I am like a small bird that has been flying a great distance for a long time. I'm tired and have no food to eat, so I take a rest on one of the branches of a tree and I feel like I have been shot by someone ... I fall down and nearly die.

Another explained the serious nature of the aftermath of sexual abuse and the power of shame, in relation to one of his friends:

I knew one boy who was so ashamed of others knowing, he was so upset that he wanted to kill himself. He took a knife to do it but I forbade him to do it. He was crying and I took him to the centre. Later on he went to his home village and was happy.

About What They Need to Help Them Recover

The participants were given an opportunity to describe what they wanted from families, friends, supporters, staff of organisations and authorities to help them and also what they wanted from the future. Many of the boys didn't find this an easy question to answer at first, one commenting that he had never had the experience of imagining his future before. Some appeared more concerned with looking after their own families than being able to identify their own needs.

In many respects, all the boys are asking for is to have their basic human needs fulfilled and their human rights respected. The responses provided some interesting answers and indications of the things they think are important. Some responses reflect the help they are already receiving (i.e. centre-based services); others reflect a more personal vision of what constitutes a “good enough life” and, importantly, many described what they do not want from supporters and helpers. Some comments also illustrate a very real concern for and capacity to care for others. Ultimately it seems that these boys just want to get on with a normal life that is free of abuse:

We want a place with nice docile staff (not staff who shout), a place for playing football, swimming, studying and drawing, and I want to have a ruler, pencil and books. We need clothes and want to have a job and have money. I want to live with my whole family in a nice place with a table, chairs, beds dishes, spoons and pots, and I want to be able to go for a walk along the riverside.

I want to have small house, enough for two or three friends so that we can live together, with dishes and pots for cooking and rice to eat; I want to have a bicycle for going somewhere with a basket on the front for keeping used things from the rubbish bins. I want to have better living conditions and help seeking a job.

I want to go back home to help my parents and stay with my grandmother and siblings, maybe hire someone’s land and work on it.

We want to be loved by adults and would like to live in a nice house with friendly staff, big rooms, lots of toys, a playground, with lots of sports equipment. We want to go to schools and have delicious food and good medical care.

I want to study in a public school and want to hide my issue forever. I don’t like my house, I want to live in a centre, I need a kind teacher (member of staff) and a big centre with enough space to play football and volleyball and have a place to study literature or other skills. One day I want to be a staff member of an organisation so I can help street children.

I want all children to stop using drugs and I want to live together with my family.

I want to study at public school and hide my issue.

Children’s Voices: What the Boys in Sihanoukville Want to Say

Prior to the interviews ending, all participants were asked what they wanted to say to other people about their experiences and the sexual abuse of boys. They were asked what they wanted to say to other boys, families, carers, parents, other adults and people who hurt or abuse boys. Their powerful messages speak for themselves:

Stop the sexual abuse of boys!

It is wrong to think that boys are not abused—it happens!

Please help me and don’t allow foreigners to abuse me!

Don’t scold me ... listen to what I say and believe me!

If your son is abused, will you blame him? So do not blame me!

Abusers should stop this and change their behaviour, have pity on children!

I want to tell all children not to let *barang* (foreigners) cheat them; when barang call all of you, go somewhere else.

I want all children to stop doing like me: do not sniff glue!

I want all the abusers to stop abusing children.

When parents know that boys experience sexual abuse, they should console them ... Parents should not scold boys ... They will listen and stop doing it

Parents, don't hurt me; be a good example to me!

Don't sexually abuse children!

Don't say bad things about me.

Don't beat children any more when they do something wrong!

Parents, do not maltreat children!

Don't allow people to sexually abuse boys, or you will be abused in the next life.

Summary and Reflections

All of the boys the team met had been abused by foreign perpetrators. This should not be seen as indicating low or non-existent levels of abuse by Cambodians, but merely the fact that abuse by foreigners is more visible and therefore easier to detect. Data from staff in all three field settings, to be shared later, also indicated that Cambodian nationals also abuse boys.

Risk Factors

Previous research elsewhere¹⁵³ identifies significant risk factors that make children vulnerable and more likely to be sexually abused, and many of those are present in abundance in Sihanoukville. Virtually all of the boys came from large families of many siblings (from four up to nine); some had experienced the death of siblings, or of one or both parents. Many talked of experiencing extreme poverty in their families, which had led them to leave school and seek work on the streets or beaches, scavenging for cans or bottles. One experienced team member, with several years' experience working in Kompong Speu province (one of the poorest in Cambodia), described being shocked at the levels of poverty endured by these boys and their families. It seems that many of the boys exist on the margins of mainstream society due to that poverty and backgrounds where many basic needs remain unmet.

All mentioned a background in which they had been exposed to domestic violence, either witnessing violence towards their mother and siblings or being the victims of beatings by parents or grandparents. In some cases the boys described leaving home to live on the

153 Bentovim, A. (2002)

streets at a young age (11 years in one case) to avoid violent behaviour. Others described home lives in which alcohol misuse and domestic violence also appeared to be common.

A high proportion of the boys also experienced bullying and violence on the streets at the hands of older boys. All of the boys had limited schooling. They indicated that they had very little knowledge of sexual issues prior to abuse, and did not realise initially that developing friendships with foreigners would lead to a sexual relationship. One member of staff commented that once it became known in the street-living communities that boys had been abused, they became the target of discrimination, mockery and jokes, and were seen as the “lowest of the low”. This results in further marginalisation, thus increasing vulnerability to abuse.

The Abusers

All of the boys in this site were abused by foreigners, predominantly Europeans and Americans. In the cases the team was aware of, abuse usually occurred in the company of other boys, at the home of the foreigner, in guesthouses or at secluded spots near the beach. Several boys at a time would go to the house of the perpetrator, many of whom were short- or long-term residents of the town. Boys said that they would go in groups because they were frightened and it was easier to go with others. However, it may also be that perpetrators prefer situations in which they can abuse many boys at one time. The boys were often approached or befriended by foreigners; the time between first meeting and incidents of abuse was sometimes very short, minutes in some cases. Many of the foreign perpetrators appear to be brazen in their attitude.¹⁵⁴ It is likely that some boys are encouraged to act as recruiters of other boys because in some cases it appeared that boys are paid to take friends with them and that the “new boys” are the ones to be abused first. They are often taken to the home of the abuser by other boys, having been promised food, and abused the first time they meet them. Further research with perpetrators is needed to identify patterns of abuse and methods of targeting and recruitment. Some guesthouse and hotel owners and staff may also be implicated to some degree, as well as a number of moto drivers. Most foreign males, including myself, can testify to being approached by moto drivers asking if we are interested in “little boys or girls”.

Other research indicates that the commercial sexual exploitation of boys in Cambodia is predominantly street (and in this setting beach) based. However, this can be misleading. The majority of sexual abuse and exploitation goes undetected, and virtually nothing is known about the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys by Cambodian nationals or community-based abuse. It is therefore highly likely that there are significant numbers of boys whose abuse goes completely unrecognised and unacknowledged. Future research initiatives are needed to address this gap in knowledge if all children are to be afforded the protection they have a right to. In July 2007, after our visit to Sihanoukville, it was confirmed that the very first prosecution in that city of a Cambodian national abusing a boy had taken place.¹⁵⁵

Abusive Acts

Most often the perpetrator would abuse boys in groups, initially getting the boys to watch TV, films, cartoons and then pornography with others. The boys would be offered

154 *Cambodia Daily*, 30 December 2005, reported a western man fondling several young boys within clear view of other tourists and locals.

155 Personal communication with staff of NGO working in Sihanoukville.

food and have to take a shower or bathe prior to abuse. Sexual abuse almost always involved the abuser performing oral sex on the boys, arousing them and masturbating them until ejaculation. Boys were often asked and coerced to reciprocate and take part in sexual acts with other boys, which were often photographed. Most of the boys reported that they were penetrated in the anus by digits, objects or the penis of the perpetrator, and sometimes coerced to penetrate the abuser. Following abuse, individual boys and groups were given money by the abusers, which many boys reported was used for food and drugs. Some boys explained that they gave the money to their mothers and families.

Impacts and Effects

Many of the boys commented on serious physical injuries to the anus, which often went untreated, and concerns about sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. From a public health perspective, an additional concern is that very few of the perpetrators used condoms when abusing the children. The boys talked of a range of long- and short-term problems and difficulties caused by their experiences, almost identical to those reported in other global literature and research. Many of the symptoms expressed are similar to those often associated with PTSD. Of specific interest are the high levels of shame and loss of honour expressed, fear of others finding out and attaching labels such as “cheap”, “gay” or “inferior” that clearly have a profound impact on their self-esteem and mental health. Many expressed anger, self-blame and hatred for the abuser and themselves. Ultimately, it can be observed that in many respects, the boys’ lives are turned completely upside down by their experiences.

Data from Battambang

Battambang province is located in the north-west of Cambodia, around 300 km from Phnom Penh. Its capital is Battambang City, the second largest city in the 1998 census. People in the province earn their living from rice cultivation and cross-border trade with Thailand. Battambang was chosen as a field site for the study because of its proximity to the Poipet border area and the fact that there are numerous NGOs, children’s centres and projects providing services to children and families who either migrate or are trafficked to neighbouring Thailand. One Poipet-based NGO working with street children refers many of the children to organisations in the Battambang area.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, IOM research, carried out by the Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation, also identified that trafficked children are more likely than controls to have been sexually abused.¹⁵⁷

Therefore, when the team visited Battambang, we expected numerous organisations and staff to talk of their experiences of working with and supporting boys and young men who had been sexually abused. However, the vast majority of participants stated that they had either not heard or had heard very little about the sexual abuse of boys. Without exception, when asked, staff participants stated quite categorically that they had not and were not working with boys who were victims or survivors of abuse. The reasons for this will be discussed following presentation of the data relating to staff, later in the report. As a result, it was not possible to find any boys in Battambang who fitted the criteria for the research.

However, eventually, one member of staff remembered a boy who had talked about his experiences of sexual abuse some years ago. He is now young man and was approached

156 Guillin, N.J. (2006)

157 IOM (2005)

by the social worker. He was very keen to talk. At times he was upset but wished to continue and share his story. While his account is not representative of all boys from that area, his moving account provides an invaluable insight into many of the issues faced by boys who are sexually abused. Now 22, he was first abused when he was 13 years of age. It is his words that provide the title for this research:

I want to come for an interview, I'm very interested. It's strange ... no one has ever asked me about sexual abuse before. I want to speak out. We've never been offered help by anyone; no one believes us.

I lived in Thailand when this happened. I was 13 or 14 at the time. I lived with foreigners ... They were like my "godfathers". When it happened I felt so ashamed, I didn't want to tell anyone, I kept my feelings in my heart ... When I told my friend I felt terrible.

It's hard to describe ... unbelievable. It's like a girl whose body is lost too. My parents didn't know what happened to me ... A lot of people are the same as me, but no one is concerned ...

They [the abusers] attract us ... They make us believe them, because we don't know what they are going to do to us. They told us about being a godfather. They move us and have different means to make us know nothing, to make us earn more money ... especially to attract other boys.

They spend a lot of money because it's hard to attract boys because they are not happy to do it. So they use a lot of money on boys. We didn't know about sexual abuse of boys in society; there is a lack of knowledge so it was unexpected.

Street children have more effects, have more problems ... It is easy to be groomed when you need food and money. The abusers know what boys need so they groom them using a lot of techniques.

They abused me more than others ... They took photographs for selling; they sucked me and quickly penetrated ... anal penetration. They treated me like this for many years because my family is poor and we needed money. With girls, people help and find a solution, but with boys, no one is concerned, they mock them and laugh at them.

I still remember how it affected my life ... I thought it could never happen to boys ... I was very angry ... I used to try to tell other people but they didn't believe me. Because I didn't know and because of the ways to groom and because my family had nothing to eat ... if I didn't do it, the family would starve and suffer.

I blamed myself ... I'm a male ... I'm angry with the abuser. I wanted to file a complaint with the authorities but because they [the abusers] have money ... it was not possible. Now when I think about this, I'm still angry but not like before ... Sometimes I would be so angry I would fall unconscious ...

Sometimes I still think about it but because I have received some education about abuse, it makes me reduce blaming myself ... I read books on mental health. Staff didn't know about this, I hid it from

other people and changed the subject to talk about a different issue, so no one knew about it.

There was a time when I was at the centre and the abuser came to take me away. He told the staff that he was my godfather. When thinking about that ... I feel like it's difficult to breathe ...

Anger, Shame and Honour

At the time, I had thoughts of revenge, but my family needed money so I forced myself. When the man abused me I did not want to do it ... I felt trapped and concerned for my family. I then thought of helping myself first, before my family because I thought I might get infected one day ... That's the reason I stopped doing that. Now ... I feel happy and satisfied with myself, my job, wife and children. I can help myself and my family.

Boys do feel very ashamed and lose honour when people know about the abuse. They are so ashamed of others knowing. Girls feel shame and cannot hide it ... If people talk, they can file a complaint, but boys ... they insult us. For boys ... once their issue is revealed, it will be passed from one to another. When revealed, it's considered as "normal" by others ... but inside the boys feel shame.

Touching a boy's genitals when he is growing up:

It's a normal way that men and women show affection to boys. But after seven or eight years old, it can be trouble, because the purpose of touching can be to abuse ... Children don't like it; me—I hate it very much.

Who can boys talk to about abuse and what do they need from a listener?

Maybe boys can talk to close friends who have a similar problem. We can tell someone if they have knowledge, but they must not use our issue for kidding and joking ... They must empathise with us and maybe give us ideas and opinions to help us solve problems. They must be a reliable person and keep confidentiality ...

Family must also empathise with us. Knowledge is also important and keeping confidentiality for the child. My mum is not talkative; she sat and cried when I told her. She was resentful, she didn't want to use the money and she felt pity for me ... Some mothers feel happy for their sons to do it ...

According to my ideas, abuse can happen everywhere ... We need an NGO to help boys, educate these people and prevent boys from being groomed. If there is a place for them to go, there should be education ... all kinds of programmes ... good food and a picnic once a year. Staff must talk gently to the children when they do something wrong; don't use violence. Children should be listened to and considered in decision making. There should be a centre for education, with no violence.

Asked what he wanted to say to other people, the young man responded:

Both boys and girls have pain ... They have ideas, opinions, feelings, hearts and pain. Stop mocking boys when they are abused, because it affects their feelings!

Boys: find an organisation to help solve your problems and to raise your awareness about sexual abuse and infections.

Abusers: don't do it ... children get pain in the body and you will get pain too when you are in prison!

I want people to write a book, so people know about my abuse, and what causes boys to be so ashamed ... their loss of honour ... They must know that boys have these things too. Because confidentiality is considered in this research, I would like to talk about this, I want to be asked ... I would say thanks if this organisation can open a place for boys.

Data from Phnom Penh

Cambodia's capital city is spread over an area of 290 square kilometres at the confluence of the Mekong, Tonle Basak and Tonle Sap rivers, with a population of 1.2 million at the time of the last census in 1998.¹⁵⁸ Migration from rural provinces is likely to have added to the population since then. Surveys estimate that there are between 1000 and 1500 street children who have completely cut ties with their families of origin and have made the streets their home.¹⁵⁹ UNICEF statistics suggest that there may be between 10,000 and 20,000 children regularly working the streets who have kept ties with their families and return home either irregularly or regularly.¹⁶⁰

In total, the team met and listened to a further 21 boys and young men in the Phnom Penh area at various times in April, May and June 2007. Some boys lived at home with their families, although many were currently living or having regular contact with children's centres or living in foster care. Some of the boys were asked if they wished to take part by APLE or staff from centres working with street children. Meetings and interviews were facilitated by the staff of organisations that had relationships with the boys. Where possible, attempts were made to meet boys on more than one occasion, so that the team could spend time building a relationship through informal activities such as playing games. This was not always possible due to organisational and logistical issues; in those cases, single interviews were carried out.

In addition, the researchers also met with some adult men who had contact with organisations supporting the needs of MSM in Phnom Penh. Many of them had experienced sexual abuse as children and provided valuable insight. The data from their participation will be presented separately.

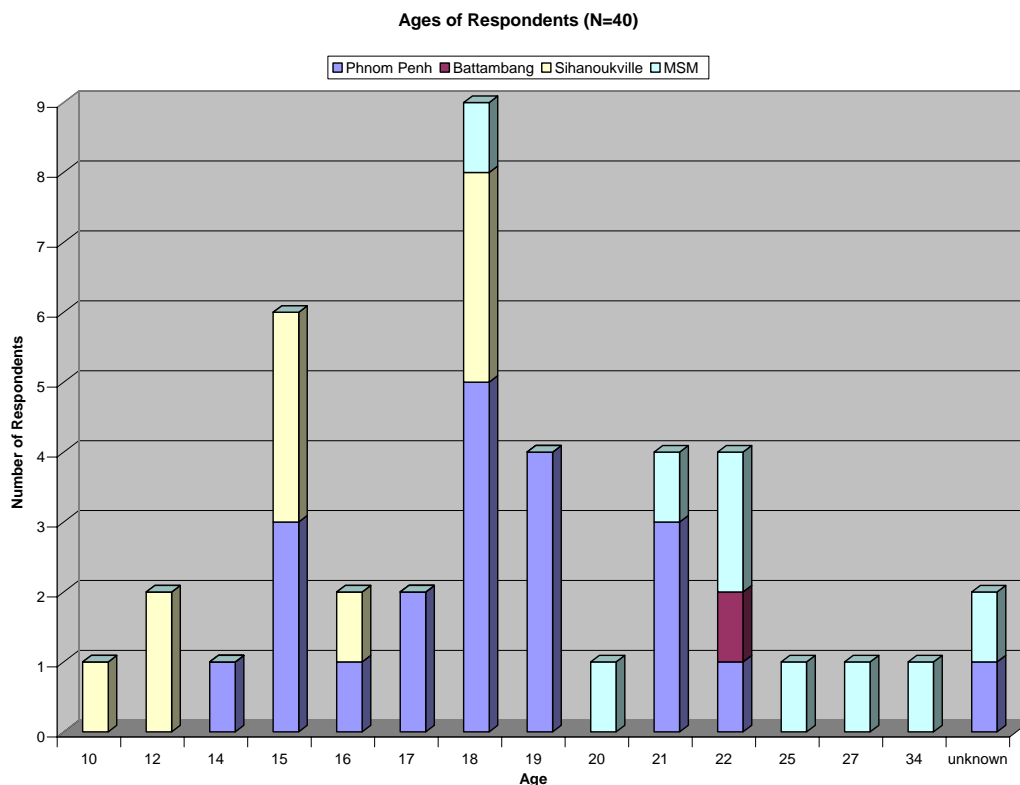
Our study did not discover any large-scale organised commercial sexual exploitation of boys in the Phnom Penh area. However, it remains important to note this does not mean that it does not exist. It is likely that, given the lucrative nature of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, it could be happening, albeit on a smaller scale than that of women and female children.

158 National Institute of Statistics (NIS)

159 Mith Samlanh (2002)

160 Kostler, A. (2006)

One recently published book suggests that the commercial sexual abuse and exploitation of boys has occurred on a more organised basis in northern Thailand, predominantly involving boys from Myanmar.¹⁶¹ Recent reports in the Phnom Penh press have also indicated that that commercial “activities” in the infamous Svay Pak area have resumed, although more covertly than before. While official reports of organised commercial abuse of boys do not exist, evidence has recently emerged of its presence.¹⁶² An interview with a member of staff from an NGO based in north-west Cambodia revealed that he had previously worked with a boy who had also reportedly been trafficked to Malaysia for sexual purposes.¹⁶³



Not all participants answered every question asked; some clearly found it hard to share their stories and express their feelings in relation to a number of issues or did not wish to talk about the sexual abuse itself. Children were encouraged to say as much or as little as they wished. Responses generally fall into the categories of “talking about abuse”, “impact and effects of sexual abuse”, “experiences and needs in relation to receiving help” and “voices and messages for others”.

Many of the boys from the Phnom Penh sample had backgrounds similar to those in Sihanoukville. Poverty, environments in which one or both parents misused alcohol and the witnessing of and exposure to domestic violence by parents or siblings were

161 Batstone, D. (2007) p. 13. Evidence emerged of a sophisticated operation leading to boys from Myanmar being taken to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand on the pretence that they would be given schooling. Upon arrival, they were sold to sex bars and brothels.

162 A personal communication from NGO staff in June 2007 quotes a young girl, rescued from Svay Pak, saying: “A man used to come and take lots of boys and girls to his house, where he took our photographs. Then he would take us to meet the guests”.

163 Interview, 1 June 2007

common. Similarly, divorce or separation of parents, death of siblings or one or both parents were also common. Some children explained that they had been “sold” by parents and/or taken by their families or intermediaries to Thailand, held against their will with other children and forced to beg on the streets of cities there. Most had endured and experienced a variety of forms of physical abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Some explained that they had little or no money and food, leading them to live a life on the streets where they survived on their wits, earning money through scavenging and shoe shining. Most had little education, schooling being often disrupted by the need to earn money for their families. Another similarity with Sihanoukville was that many children living on the streets experience violence at the hands of gangs of youths. Some reported being beaten by policemen and/or having money extorted by them. These findings are consistent with the findings of Katherine Keane’s study in 2006.¹⁶⁴

About the Abuse

Most of the boys the team met had experienced sexual abuse at the hands of adult foreign perpetrators, reflecting the fact that many had contact with NGOs investigating such abuse. But it became evident that some had also been abused by, or witnessed abuse by, other young people and adult Cambodians in a variety of circumstances, which are described in more detail below. Similarly to the boys abused in other field settings, they experienced a range of sexual acts at the hands of perpetrators, including oral sex (being coerced to receive but also to give to the perpetrator) and penetrative sex. Anal penetration of the boys with objects and digits also occurred. One boy was forced to eat excrement at the time he was abused.

Many boys reported abuse by foreigners taking place in groups, with several boys at one time, in guesthouses, hotels and the perpetrators’ homes. The use of pornography and taking of photographs were not uncommon. Some boys talked of being abused in homes, centres and foster care by other children and young people, where one might assume that they are safe. The feedback also revealed that some had experienced abuse by adults in pagodas, including monks.

The participants were interviewed in a range of settings—some in their family homes, others at SSC offices but the majority at the group home, foster home or centre where they either lived or had regular contact with staff. All provided consent, either orally or in writing, after having the research explained by interviewers, working in pairs. It is important to reiterate that it was very difficult for all the respondents to talk about their experiences, particularly as they did not have long-term relationships with the researchers. Some were reluctant to talk in detail about the actual events and in accordance with good practice were not coerced into doing so. Open questions were asked so that participants could say as little or as much as they wished.

A number of boys spoke about children having their genitals touched or played with:

Touching and playing with the genitals is not good. I would be very angry if someone did this to me.

Touching a boy’s genitals is an abuse of his rights. Why do adults use the private parts of a boy as a joke? It’s very embarrassing. The boy may want to hold onto the anger for a long time and take revenge if he can.

164 Keane, K. (2006)

Touching or playing with the genitals is not good, because it brings embarrassment in front of girls.

It's no problem up to seven or eight. After that it is painful.

Older people used to touch my penis and say "Oh, it's a big *trey ptos* [fish]". I would feel pained, scream and be irritated because it was in front of other people ...

It's irritating when people touch your genitals. If it were me I would be very angry.

When I was younger, this old woman near my house would always say, "How big is your penis now?" She used to grab my penis, but in front of many people ... I was shy and regarded and thought of her as a mother.

Two boys interviewed together explained how they had experienced violence at home and on the streets prior to being abused:

When my parents didn't have money, they beat me and asked me to polish others' shoes. Older people cheat children. They beat us, use bad words and trick us to sell the lotus to them and don't give us money. Sometimes they use a knife to bully us and take our money.

It is often believed that boys are abused predominantly by foreigners and gay men. The accounts shared by these boys challenge that view:

I saw older boys abuse others in the centre.

No one knows about Cambodian people who abuse children because they are not investigating.

There are a lot of abused boys, but we don't know it.

When the *barang* go back to their countries with the pictures, they return to Cambodia with their partners a lot.

I saw the older boy ... about 15, abuse the small boy. He gave the small boy money. The small boy was scared and cried

I was abused by another boy when I was 11 years old.

I know about foreigners abusing boys and taking photographs, but also it happens in the centre too, where the big boys abuse the small boys. When the counsellor learned about it, they called the big boy to meet for a whole week, but I don't know what happened or what they talked about.

Shame emerges as perhaps one of the most powerful effects and determinants of behaviour throughout the study. Boys in Phnom Penh are no exception:

I lived at the pagoda. There was a monk who mistreated me. He made me suck his penis, have anal sex and he forced me to eat excrement ... I didn't dare tell anyone. I didn't want everybody to know ... I was so ashamed that someone had mistreated me ... unhappy, many painful

feelings but also pains in my body. It was difficult to study and I could not forget it even when I grew up ...

Some children are so broken-hearted about the abuse that they commit suicide; others may want to control or beat others or sniff glue. When boys tell their difficult issue to others, it can help them forget their sadness, but if they tell someone who tells everybody in the village, the boys may run away or commit suicide.

One 18-year-old said that he had experienced abuse by both foreign and local men. His account illustrates the confusion that many victims have surrounding the sexual identity of abusers and trying to understand the impacts following abuse:

Most of the abusers are either gays or foreigners, but the person who abused me was perhaps hiding the fact he was gay ... short-hair MSM hide their faces and often abuse boys. Boys who experience abuse can perhaps become abusers. Maybe one time is okay, but if they are frequently abused, they can like or love the same sex. Like my friend: before he loved girls but now he loves the same sex. There was a man who is a bodyguard; he's strong—a “real man”, but actually he loves the same sex ... He took us out to eat ... We found out about this when we had a long chat with him.

Grooming happens a lot with normal men too. They want to abuse children a lot ... near Wat Phnom and Wat Botum ... They choose boys from nine years old according to what age they like ... Sometimes children dare not refuse. So many of them are “normal” men but they have anal sex and they are “real men”. I know a boy of 20 who lives near my house; he is from the rural area and I saw him at Wat Phnom. After that I saw a man call him to live at his house. He's a teacher at a primary school; he's over 30 years old and has a wife and two children who live in the countryside. The man abuses the boy every day and beats the boy when he goes outside the house. None of the neighbours are interested in this. They think he is a relative ... No one investigates ... So many people are victims of this but there is no one to help ...

This boy's account illustrates that it is not just victims and survivors who are confused about sexual identity issues, and also shows how shame can dominate a person's life:

Some people think that we are gays because we sleep with the same sex ... I wonder why they think we are gays. We dare not study in that school again and we flee to the other school because of the shame ... It's hard to study when we are reminded of this issue. It's a problem for society. It happens most to girls but boys are abused too ...

The story of this 16-year-old boy illustrates a range of difficulties that many boys have prior to abuse, also providing insight into the strategies employed by some abusers, who target clearly impoverished and vulnerable boys. It also demonstrates the aftermath of abuse on both him and his family, the influence of shame and fear of others knowing. He concludes by thoughtfully describing what boys need to help them.

When I was 12 my father took a new wife and the family split up. I lived with my mum and sister, but we had no money or food, so I had to find money shining shoes to feed myself. I wanted to go to school to

study like others, but I could not ... Life on the street was hard. I met gangs who would take my money or beat me if I didn't give it to them.

I met the foreign man in 2001. He gave me clothes and food and allowed me to stay at the hotel for a couple of months having sex for money. He gave me \$10–15 a time ... He would hug, kiss and suck, play with my penis and take pictures. He would sleep with four or five boys at one time. I was introduced by my friend who also experienced abuse ... I didn't want to sleep with him. It made me feel disgusted, but if I didn't do it, I wouldn't have food. I gave the money to my mum and lied, telling her it was from my father.

I blamed myself for doing wrong things ... I was so ashamed ... If my mother, grandmother and neighbours knew about this, they would think I have a bad background and would not let me go to their house ... It's very embarrassing with girls if people find out about it, but with boys ... they never believe it; they think it's only girls. I was frightened when my mother found out. My mother and grandmother blamed me ... My mum beat me, they cried and were afraid I would go to jail ... There was lots of crying and I ran away from home ...

I also think that in the future people will not want me to be engaged to their daughter. I am more ashamed than girls are ... I am able to forget only for a while ... Girls will hate us if they know. I walk with my face down because people look down on me and laugh at me, but I get used to it...

I was worried that I would have diseases, such as syphilis and AIDS and I had a blood test ... I was very worried at the time because I thought, if I die it will make my mother's life more difficult and I would not be able to earn money for her ... The result was negative so I was happy. I thought a lot about it. I was restless and tired and had a sleep problem and used medicine in order to get to sleep. I was unable to stop going to the toilet too.

Boys need to be able to talk to a trustworthy person they can feel relaxed with, and school and study materials and the opportunity to go to public school. We need someone to offer food, shelter and a place to stay with room for four or five people to share ... books and a reading room and places to play sports with friends.

Another boy (14) told of a man abusing boys by giving them food and taking them to his room, where he abused several boys at one time:

He had anal sex with all of them except me. I was afraid of them doing that and him infecting me with diseases. If my mother knows she will hate me. I am really ashamed of it. I'm really angry at people who try to do this [rape boys]. They make the children have a bad future.

The experiences of another boy suggest that the grooming strategies employed by many abusers are well researched and planned. When considering the backgrounds of many of the boys, in some respects abusers seem to be more effective at building relationships with the boys than many of the other adults around them:

The man came to meet me and four or five friends, and we went together to eat corn and drink Coke ... He pointed at me and told me that we should go and watch a film, but I didn't dare to go with him alone, so I asked my friend to go with me. He showed a Thai film, *The Boxer* [a very popular film] and we watched cartoons and he gave me bread to eat.

The disguised friendship offered by the abuser soon turned into a terrifying experience:

When he abused me I had a jumping heart, I was so ashamed and scared of being asked to take my clothes off ... I had to stay alone in a room with one door. I was locked in, unable to run away, I had to sit silently feeling sorrow, crying and being afraid that my mum would find out and beat me.

Another boy told of how the generosity and friendship offered by one abuser masked his real intentions. It is interesting to note how in this case, once the perpetrator had isolated his victims from sources of support, the friendship was replaced by threats, provoking fear and, ultimately, consent under duress.

He took me to many provinces on holiday, such as Kampot and Ratanakkiri; he always took new children he wanted to abuse away from Phnom Penh. He threatened that if we did not suck his penis, he would not take us back to Phnom Penh and we would have to walk home. So I agreed to do it, and he also said that if we allow him to suck ours, he would buy us new clothes. He wanted anal sex but the children would not let him do that, so we had to pull his penis up and down until he ejaculated. He sucked all of the children until they ejaculated too.

One young man, spoke of his life on the streets shining shoes after his parents were divorced. Like many boys, his story indicates that there are a number of risk factors that lead to some boys being vulnerable: poverty, lack of safety and violence within the home and low levels of awareness in relation to the potential for boys to be vulnerable and abused, to name a few. It also illustrates the lack of control and power that victims have throughout the process and long afterwards, as well as the confusion and long-term impacts upon all aspects of life.

I had seven siblings, and there was not enough food to eat. Sometimes I could not earn from shining shoes, so I dared not enter the house because I was afraid of being beaten by my mum. I was called by the foreigner when polishing shoes ... I was paid with food. I didn't know anything, so I went with him, I was 15. I slept with him in order to get money for my mum, but she didn't know. I was afraid of being beaten by her but also if she knew, she would call me "*plert plern*".¹⁶⁵

My friends also persuaded me to sleep with him, and they got money for that. At least I had food and a room to stay in. They gave me \$10 a day. When he sucked my penis, at that time I knew nothing, I just stayed still. I was scared, tears ran down my face and it was painful. I

165 The term "plert plern" is an insulting term, literally meaning someone who is materialistic and concerned with wanting money and modern things.

dared not shout when caught and forced by the man; I was afraid of others hearing and coming to beat me. The issue remains in my mind ... I cannot learn ... It is difficult to sleep ... I wake up three or four times in the night and have lost weight.

He gave a lot of money and clothes. I was very happy because by polishing shoes I could get only 6000 riels (US\$1.50) a day ... When my mum found out, she blamed me. She said that if she had known, she would not have used the money. Sometimes I would see her sitting and crying. When I saw my picture in the newspaper, I was very resentful. I shouldn't have done it; maybe I am *plert plern* like people say. I was mocked by others too. I was angry but I stayed silent...

It was only later that I realised it is punishable by law. I went to court and I told them the truth, but I was scared of making mistakes. It's painful going to court; it reminded me of the past. I had to talk about the same things over and over. My mum had to go with me too but we wasted our time and money for transportation and could not work. Money for food was spent on going to court instead. The court say we are "victims" ... It means vagrants ... kids who have sex with foreigners....

Now I live with five or six friends; we share a room. They don't know about my story. I dare not tell them, I hide from them. They just know I have a problem. They ask me about it but I tell them something else. One day they will know anyway ... If they didn't have mouths, it would be fine but if they talk I will feel pain; it will remind me of the past and then I will not live with them any more.

One 21-year-old explained that he left home after stealing money from his mother and came to the city. He has experienced violence on the streets since his arrival and explained that since that time he has been selling sex to women. "Sometimes foreigners but also Khmer and Japanese women ... if boys had a job, food to eat and a place to stay they wouldn't do it".

There is confusion about the sexual identity of abusers:

I am often approached by both Khmer and foreign gays who want to buy sex. If we go with them for an hour we can get \$5; the whole night is \$10–15. First they ask me to take a bath; they ask me to touch their penis and sometimes suck it ... They look like real men, wear normal clothes ... They sleep with men, so are they gays?

One 21-year-old man involved in selling sex to Khmer men 40–50 years old for drugs describes them as hidden face *ketuys*, long and short hair:

Cambodians also abuse boys ... sometimes heterosexual sometimes not. I've seen a lot at the riverbank, and they abuse boys. Foreigners like boys under 15, but Cambodians like boys of all ages. I heard people talking about women who abuse boys but they hide their faces to avoid being seen.

Abusers can be anybody ... Khmer, foreigner, gay man, straight man ...

A popular misconception exists that boys or young men who sell sex are not vulnerable and are more or less happy with this lifestyle. However, the story below sheds light on the truth for many. Research in other countries shows that many victims of sexual abuse become involved in subsequent sexual exploitation following the initial abuse.¹⁶⁶

One young man in his early 20s, currently living in a pagoda, explained that he started selling sex to foreigners and Khmer men in 2004 to raise money for education. He stated that more Khmers than foreigners like to buy sex from boys and young men. He told of short-hair MSM, including wealthy and high-ranking individuals, doctors and bodyguards of high-ranking people as customers. Many of them are married with children. He also talked about wives of high-ranking men who buy sex from boys and young men. His experiences also provide valuable insight into the long-term problems with self-esteem and confidence that some boys have following sexual abuse and exploitation and the influence of shame upon victims. It also illustrates the lack of opportunities for males to talk:

When I was 15 years old I lived in the pagoda. One night, when I was sleeping there was a 23-year-old man who caught and abused me [anal sex]. It was very painful and I think I had blood too ... he abused me twice but I dared not scream out because I was ashamed. After that I moved to another house where the monks lived. The person who abused me had a girlfriend already, and when he abused me, the pain nearly made me pass out.

I feel so much regret and want to escape ... I wish I could turn back the time and I would try to escape from what happened ... In the future I should marry a girl who sells sex. It's better than with a "good girl" who still has her virginity, because she might look down on me. I am ashamed of others knowing. I want to stop this so that I can have a good job and make friends with others ... I've never had anyone help me with my feelings from the time I was abused until now ...

The money he earns pays for his education and living expenses, and he also sends money to his grandmother in the provinces. He explained that many organisations help only boys who are under 18 years of age. His confusion leads to him seeking answers from his faith:

Sometimes it's hard to live and I want to commit suicide, but because of Buddhism and the belief that a person taking their own life will not be reborn, I stopped wanting that. Maybe I sinned in a previous life and used to mistreat others ... Is that why this happens to me in this life?

Another young man of 19 said that he has been selling sex to both foreign (western and Asian) men as well as Cambodians since he recently arrived in the city from a rural area. He explained that some of his friends are happy to do this, but he felt quite differently, also identifying a lack of support for boys:

It causes shame to you ... You are a man, it's not good to do it, you look down on yourself. I will hide the issue—not tell my mum, relatives or wife and children, when I have a wife. I will tell my son

166 Livingston, K. (2004)

about this so that he will not take this as an example and prohibit him from doing it ... We males are like females, we have pain and shame, so why do people treat us like this? We may be different in terms of genitals, but we have the same mind! Being born as a male is very difficult: when you have problems, no one helps, and they help only girls.

Sexual abuse and exploitation can be not only very damaging for the victims but clearly very confusing. It is not always possible for victims to identify that they have been abused, for a variety of reasons including a lack of knowledge and understanding, especially if the abuse involved bribery, gifts and grooming and perhaps the apparent knowledge of family. If boys are used to having their genitals played with by adults from an early age, this may blur the boundaries, creating uncertainty about safe and unsafe touch, non-abusive and abusive relationships. It may well be considered as a “normal” experience, especially if it occurs over a long period of time. One 18-year-old man’s story illustrates this point:

I had sex with a friend of my grandfather from when I was 12 or 13, every time that man came to Cambodia, perhaps two or three times a year. This also happened to my cousin too. My family and I had a very close relationship with that man, and he used to provide material support. I don’t think it was sexual abuse because it was just sleeping naked, touching and caressing and having anal sex ... It only caused a bit of pain sometimes. Sexual abuse is forced sex, without being voluntary. Many adults, including my father, like playing with a boy’s penis to show love to boys. It’s okay to play with the genitals like this because they are small and don’t know anything. But playing with the genitals of big boys or pulling their trousers down is unacceptable because it makes boys angry and embarrassed. But where there is a quiet place and no one can see, maybe it’s no problem for him.

The implications of this can be considered very serious. This young man continued to be abused by others after he moved to the city. When abuse was revealed at a later date to his family, they did not (as he described) “blame me”, which in many respects is positive. He now describes the abuse as “normal” because he was not blamed, rather than seeing what happened as sexual abuse and his family as supportive. It is not known if his family was aware of the abuse and happy to keep silent for fear of losing material benefits. How many more boys share similar views?

About Impacts and Effects

I have tension in my chest because real men don’t cry.

Shame—I don’t want others to know.

Loss of honour for myself and family.

Boys and girls have the same feelings of pain.

At the time it was happening, I was fearful, my whole body was shaking. I asked another boy; he said it is “okay”.

When people started to know about this, it was so embarrassing. I couldn’t go out; I hid in my home. This became too overwhelming and I couldn’t cope any more, I had to leave home. I felt like I was a

stranger to everyone. I had nightmares; in my dreams I saw the event vividly. I can not forget this for the rest of my life.

Abuse affects boys' studies. They stop going to school, and they leave home and become a street boy and destroy their future.

Some may want to abuse others.

Scared.

Boys must be braver than girls. Boys also cry but must not let others know or see ... We are ashamed in front of others because we are men; we must be brave and have a five-*budt* chest. If we struggle, we must be patient and not show it.

Being pale and feeling ill.

We will have tension in the chest, headaches and sleeping problems if we cannot speak out.

Angry.

Sitting alone ... drowning in feelings.

Feeling hopeless and resentful.

I saw people change after the abuse. One gentle boy suddenly became bad; he was stealing, being short tempered, bullying and performing very badly at school. I asked him, "Why does an outstanding boy suddenly become a drop-out student?" He said "It's too late ... Once you have entered this, there is no turning back".

Wanting to commit suicide.

Afraid of being looked down on and discriminated against—being labelled "the *barang* penis sucker"

Feeling that this shouldn't have happened to me.

Hating myself.

I was worried and unable to learn ... I used to sit quietly and cry ... When the neighbours knew they called me "the *barang* sleeper". I was worried; it was my mistake because of going with the *barang* ... I used to dream of a giant catching me. I was scared when I woke up and unable to sleep any more.

Day dreaming, cannot focus on studies.

Wanting to hide from and avoid meeting others.

I didn't want to be asked a lot about it.

I hate this thing.

Boys feel very shameful, they can't concentrate any more, want to kill themselves. They get angry with other people who blame them about this or talk behind their back ... They may want to kill the abuser.

They want to run away from home and become a street child and throw away their future.

Sleep problems.

I had a friend who was crying because of anal pain but he had no money for medicine.

Being addicted to sex.

The police asked about these things in a normal way—they did not think that I was ashamed ... My picture was in the newspaper; they only covered my eyes a bit and the people who live near me recognised me ... I escaped for a year from the place where I lived because I was so embarrassed ... They did not think of me at all—the police, journalists or my neighbours.

I knew one boy. He stayed alone inside for four days and then went outside to cry.

Blood from the anus and anal pains.

Boys feel pain like girls too ... My friend was tricked into abuse. The man forced him to have anal sex and *bok* him strongly. He asked him not to do it because of the pain, but he wouldn't listen. Now, whenever he goes to the toilet he has blood.

Painful anus and penis.

I can not forget what happened to me.

I am sad and don't know who to talk to because I am afraid that they will laugh at me.

This example shows how abuse can turn people's lives upside down and how normal everyday events can act as a trigger for painful memories:

I have a lot of sexual feelings and cannot be patient because I can not find a person to have sex with, so I masturbate. It also causes me a lot of pain in the rectum. I felt pained and unhappy and wanted to commit suicide. I felt isolated and thought a lot and dared not tell others. I felt lonely and didn't want to speak or go out. I didn't want to meet my mother because I didn't want her to be unhappy, so I would rather be alone and be unhappy. I get irritated too. When others ask me to have a meal, it reminds me of the abuse, when the *barang* asked me to eat out and then took me to his room.

Some talked of confusion, shame and fear related to gender and sexual identity:

People think we are gay, not abused.

The young boy who is a survivor may grow up to like having sex with a man, because he felt pleasure when he was abused ... so he may become gay.

Maybe later in life, a boy can become gay because he feels pleasure when abused. This might make him want to continue to have sex with

a man. Another point is that people will call you *kteuy* if they know you have sex with a man.

I hate it and don't like adults doing this to me, but I dare not tell anyone because I am so ashamed. I'm afraid of others knowing and saying that I am gay ... I'm also afraid that I will become gay.

A boy might have feelings and think that we are like a girl. When a man has sex with him it makes him have doubts, he might think he is a gay ... Some people call me a *kteuy* because they see I like to spend time with girls ... They might know that I sleep with a man. It's very embarrassing

Many of the boys we met talked about having difficulties studying following sexual abuse. They explained that they found it hard to concentrate, had feelings of being numb and spacing out, or were preoccupied with thoughts related to their abuse, similar to PTSD perhaps. These responses were often misinterpreted by others.

Some people say that I do not pay attention to my studies, but the fact is that I can not study. I am not lazy ... I don't want to tell them my problems because I am afraid they will blame me more.

When a boy experiences frightening things, it makes it hard for him to be good at studying. The children who experience sexual abuse and rape ... all feel despair and some can not study at all because they remember this kind of thing forever ... Even when they grow up it still remains in their minds.

Fear of retribution, shame, self-blame and gender confusion all ensure silence:

We dare not tell parents. We are afraid that if the abuser knows, he will gain revenge on us. We are ashamed of others knowing too.

I was abused by another boy ... I tried to escape but I could not ... I was so scared and ashamed, and I blamed myself because I thought I was careless ... I was also afraid that other people would find out about it ... It made me irritated and want to beat the abuser ... I thought that I was a girl and that's why I was abused.

It's the same as girls; boys also lose honour. No girl will love him; girls will stop coming close to us because we were spoiled when we were 15 years old. They think we may have a virus.

Even a five-*budt*-chest boy has feelings.

I'm scared and confused and afraid of people knowing about having sex with a foreigner. I don't want to meet people who know about the abuse.

My friend dared not tell others about the anal pain. He was suffering in silence and cried a lot. If he tells others about the pain, he will be asked why, so he hides it and does not get help.

I was so ashamed, I didn't want to meet my friends and didn't speak much like before ... I was different, strange behaviour ... Sometimes I was nasty ... sometimes I wanted to kill myself. Some people

humiliated me by saying “You are a man—you should not have sex with the same sex!” In the future when I get married, if my wife knows about this she will look down on me. What do I want from others? I want people around me to encourage and console me and help me to be happy ... Please ... do not humiliate me.

Some boys become furious, change their behaviour, want to beat others, try to escape from their friends ... They cannot study and it's hard to control their feelings due to abuse ... If the children get HIV or AIDS, they may commit suicide because of despair.

About the Help They Want

Some participants found it hard to express needs and ideas for getting help, because they had never been asked before. A few responses mirrored the places they were already living (i.e. a centre), while others focused on personal qualities needed in the staff. Equally importantly, many also expressed what they do not need. It appears that currently most boys struggle to find appropriate support and feel isolated and uncared for. They have many creative ideas of what they require in the short and long term and in relation to their basic physical and psychological needs. We hope these messages can be incorporated as guiding principles into existing and future service initiatives and training for staff.

We need someone to love us.

I need people to keep confidentiality.

I want people who don't criticise me, people to listen and discuss things with me. Staff must have gentle characteristics, be good people, use gentle words—not gossip about children later. Staff must have capacity [sound knowledge] when they come to talk to children. Children need help and protection!

Give information about the place to boys' parents.

We need someone educate us in how to love each other.

We need to open a place so that victims can get help and examinations for their health. Help us to solve our problems when we are not happy ... and when someone abuses boys they should take them to prison.

We need a place for children where they can study, have enough food, play sports and grow plants.

Counselling is good; it can help children.

Help boys learn to love other boys like brothers.

If I can tell others about it, I feel better.

Sometimes I talk with my friend when I am not happy and feel a release after talking. I trust my friend and the counsellor, but not carers—some can not be trusted and they tell my story to others ... I got very angry and didn't want to talk to her again. The counsellor should pay attention to me, listen to me carefully; don't blame me,

look down or criticise me. If they do so, I will not tell them about me any more.

I want to have a place for boys but not to show it's for abused children ... with places to play games, football, volleyball, music ... have dancing, a place to study and learn about computers ... and have someone help us with our feelings and emotions. I don't want to keep it inside, I want to release it.

I want lots of friends.

I want knowledge, money for my mum and happiness.

We need motivation from the family [parents]—do not blame the child for what happened.

I want staff to be patient with children.

I want to talk and laugh with friends, have a job or go to school, lots of sports activities.

Time can help you to forget things.

Need someone to offer food, shelter and study.

I've never heard about counselling ... but if someone can ask about our feelings, then we can get better.

I need others to help me ... and want a place for boys!

Staff who don't discriminate.

Support from an organisation for learning and study

About Experiences of Seeking and Receiving Help

I never tell them and no one asks me.

Most boys don't know where to go for help and don't even know they have a problem. Therefore they don't seek help. Boys don't dare or have the courage to tell anyone, even their own mothers, about the abuse. Boys can tell about the abuse only to someone who is trustworthy.

My foster carer tells me not to talk about it.

A boy needs someone to help him but doesn't know where to find help. When I lived in the pagoda, I heard many boys complain about this issue.

I did stay in a centre for few days, but it was like a prison because they wouldn't let me go anywhere. That place is not like a centre, it's like a place for making money!

The counsellor tells me not to think too much, and that we have lots of things here, so there is no need to think too much.

About Physical Safety

Some boys talked of a lack of safety and other children bullying them, including the use of knives and weapons at some centres.

We need a place where children don't fight and mistreat each other, because I experienced this at one centre.

I stayed in one centre. It was very bad; the boys there are very cruel ... They fight and stab each other. Every day I saw blood ... Every boy has a knife.

Some boys and young men also identified the need for staff to treat them differently from what they had experienced.

I want to be to be believed and for adults to understand our minds, not to use violence to threaten children.

We need staff who understand our minds and have pity on children. We don't need staff who use bad words to children ... When I lived at one centre, the staff used such bad words, I stopped living there and walked away ... Staff should understand children, not blame them, and treat them gently.

Provide boys with their basic needs: health, education and transportation to school. The staff should not be angry, blaming, cursing and swearing at boys. They should not behave in the manner of "Angry with cow, beat the cart".¹⁶⁷

I want adults to understand our minds and to believe us ... Sometimes they use violence and threaten the children. They say we are lazy and bad persons. Sometimes foster carers insult us and say that we are stupid.

Teachers and foster carers should not be nasty; they should be friendly ... If the carers are nasty, it will make the children nasty too.

About the Importance of Confidentiality and Trust

I would walk away from a place where people know about my issues ... Over there, they criticise me and look down on me and say, "There's the child that the *barang* had anal sex with". It's hard to speak about scandalous issues to others unless they can keep it confidential. If we have someone to talk to about our feelings, it's good; we need to have a person that we can trust and talk to. I always tell my friend about the bad thing that has happened and my feelings get better. The important thing is for the person we speak to not to break confidentiality ...

There should be a counsellor ... someone to encourage the boy to rebuild a new life and not be "short thinking", and help us manage our emotions. If not, a boy may go out and become a gang member.

167 Getting angry with one person or event and projecting the anger onto someone else.

The counsellor must be able to keep a secret; only the counsellor and the boy must know about the abuse.

We need somewhere comfortable to live and sleep study and eat ... a peaceful place, not chaotic. Somewhere we can learn skills—language, literature. We need someone to support us with polite, gentle talk in which they can advise us and keep confidentiality.

Children's Voices: What the Boys in Phnom Penh Want to Say

Some powerful messages were shared by participants. A recurring theme was the need for parents, carers and others to recognise that boys are also vulnerable, due to the fact that they are often given more freedom to go further from home unaccompanied.

It's too late for me ... Make sure other people know about this!

Parents: Have pity on the child. Care for and understand the child. Try hard to earn money. Don't let the child do that and don't blame him! They should accompany the child when they go somewhere and not let him go alone.

Boys: If this happens to you, please don't "think short" (hurt yourself, kill yourself or do something bad).

Boys: Don't think short— build a new future.

Abusers: Please respect other people's rights—do not abuse children!

Parents: Do not neglect children; don't allow your sons to go out alone, because they are being abused too!

Staff: Be gentle and pay attention to what children say!

Please don't laugh at me!

Please do not humiliate or look down on boys who have experienced abuse—please encourage and console them!

Boys: Don't go with foreigners; don't be tempted by their money. They have lots, so a few dollars is nothing to them. This affects our lives very seriously ... Don't exchange our shame [private parts] for a few dollars.

Even though we are poor, don't do this because it damages our future ... It's late for me but please, other boys, try to study for your future.

Villagers: If you know about our issue, keep confidentiality for us so that when we grow up we can have a good future!

Boys do this because they need money and food, so do not hate boys because they force themselves do this; please help them. Help boys based on your ability and then children can study and have a job to feed themselves ... Boys, do not do like me.

Parents need to listen to their children, forgive children when they are wrong and console them.

Do not abuse each other and please do not allow this abuse to happen any more.

After a boy is abused, don't change your behaviour; treat him like normal!

Public, NGOs, parents and carers: **Don't gossip about boys but console them, pay attention to them, care for them—don't criticise but motivate them!**

Boys: **Please don't kill yourself!**

Parents: **Don't ever say that it's only girls who are victims; it's boys too, so you all have to be careful. Don't let them go out with others so much and do not think that they are “just boys”!**

Don't let them abuse children. It's a crime and will break the child's future and make them unhappy and commit suicide.

Parents: **Don't let boys go outside because they can be abused too!**

Organisations and staff: **Help us, investigate and capture all the abusers.**

Abusers: **Respect others' rights and don't sexually abuse me!**

Staff: **Pay attention to us ... Ask us if we are fine.**

Mothers and uncles: **Don't be careless with your sons, don't allow them to go out too much—boys can be abused too! Those men who can't find women or girls to have sex with will choose boys instead.**

Abusers: **Stop doing this to boys! It's not good to destroy our future—don't find happiness and pleasure in other people's suffering!**

Boys: **Don't allow yourself to be cheated by others.**

Abusers: **Stop doing it! It's your brothers and sisters and other people's brothers and sisters you are abusing—so don't do it!**

Newspapers: **Don't publish our photographs!**

Adults: **Don't abuse children!**

You have a wife. Why do you do this to children?

Child Sexual Abuse and MSM

Throughout the field research, the team met several young men receiving support from organisations working with men who have sex with men (MSM). They were keen to share their experiences of being abused as children, which provided additional insight into the experiences of Cambodian boys. The team considered that any study not including their stories, opinions and ideas would be incomplete. Consenting sexual relationships between men in most societies are shrouded in secrecy and often characterised by discrimination and prejudice. Furthermore, research from other parts of the world in relation to child sexual abuse among MSM suggests a strong relationship

between childhood sexual abuse and alcohol misuse and suicidal behaviour, as well as indicating a connection between juvenile prostitution and depression.¹⁶⁸

In total, the team met with nine men aged from 18 to 34 years who described themselves as MSM; some identified themselves as “short hair” or “long hair”. All were currently resident in Phnom Penh. All but one had experienced sexual abuse as a child. Some also shared stories of abuse and rape as adults that provide an insight into a previously hidden phenomenon.

Where older boys and adult men are concerned, there is often a blurring of boundaries and confusion about exploitation and consent. Perhaps it is easier to discriminate and see MSM as “other”, somehow not vulnerable and maybe even deserving of abuse. Some of the men we spoke to are actively engaged in selling sex, but in the following stories, there is clearly nothing consensual about their experiences, as either children or adults. Parallels exist with the now well-documented experiences of some women. Here is one boy’s story:

When I was 14 or 15, there were adults and young men, sometimes my friends, touching my penis and pulling down my trousers. It was playing, but it was really embarrassing.

Most of the boys who are victims of sexual abuse are school students from the age of 10 years. Some children are forced to have anal sex and suck the penis—if they don’t agree, they get beaten. Most of the abusers are using drugs and alcohol and watching video sex.

When I was 10 years old, I was abused by a monk. Later I was abused by another man who lived in the pagoda too ... When they abused me it was really painful and difficult to go to the toilet. When I was 12, there was a man in the village who took me to his house and abused me. I screamed out but the villagers did not help because they never think a man can have sex with a man; they just think it was for fun ... He was a married man as well.

He threatened me not to tell. Until now I never told my family. I’m still scared that someone will abuse me ... The pain still remains. People think that girls are more embarrassed than boys ... If they know about my issue I will never go back to my home village any more. Nowadays when I go back, I still meet the man who abused me and he wants to abuse as before. The villagers are not interested in it because they think it’s impossible for a man to have sex with a man.

My friend was also abused by a married man when the man got drunk; he’s not MSM. The people who abuse boys are not only foreigners; Khmers also do it and it’s happened since a long time ago. If I tell others, I am afraid they won’t believe it, because they don’t understand and don’t experience it. I have never had sexual desire for boys—but others want to mistreat me. It’s difficult to file a complaint with the police because they won’t believe us; therefore we cannot find justice.

Another reported:

168 Ratner. A. et al. (2003)

When I was 16 a married man asked me to do some coining for him, as he said he had a special spirit that would not allow him to have any physical contact with a woman. In a quiet room, when his wife and children were away, he put my hand on his penis and made me masturbate him until he ejaculated. I was very scared and felt very uncomfortable. It wasn't terrible compared to ghosts. I could stand doing this but not the ghost, so I didn't think it was abuse.

Research suggests that, once abused, boys may be more vulnerable to further victimisation.

One young man of 20 explained that he had spent much of his childhood being abused. His story illustrates that abuse can be considered so "normal" that a person's ability to protect themselves is reduced, leaving them more vulnerable. It also provides insight into some of the methods and strategies used by abusers. His responses suggest that some of the perpetrators may have targeted him because of his gentle and feminine characteristics. There appears to be very little subtlety used by many of the abusers: threats, anger and force were common. This identifies the need for more in-depth research into the behaviour of perpetrators, particularly local Cambodians.

When I was eight, a 12-year-old boy asked me to touch and play with his penis when we were playing hide and seek. He told me that if I didn't do it, he would tell the others where I was, so I just did as I was told. Later, my family life was very difficult and I left home. The man next door offered me food. He sat close to me and asked me to "help him". He undressed me; I was scared but couldn't cry ... He forced me to suck and masturbate him and warned me not to tell anyone. He made me do it many times in his home. Sometimes his wife came home and we pretended we weren't doing anything.

Another time I was at my brother's wedding ... A neighbour really forced me ... I wanted to go home but he didn't allow me ... We struggled and my aunty saw us and asked what he was doing. I was afraid that he would hurt me later, so I told her we were just playing. I wanted to avoid him but could not; he always came to find me. In other places I lived—many other men, young and old ... I would have to live with this. I can't escape this [abuse], by this time I did not care any more ...

I moved to many places, and everywhere I go I meet this problem. I am really ashamed of what has happened to me. Maybe in six years from the age of 13 to 19, maybe 35 or 40 men have raped me ... If people know about this they will blame me or see me as craving sex. I blamed myself: maybe I could have escaped ... but I was scared too. Some of the men were drunk, some of them said that they were hurt by women, and so wanted to try having sex with the same sex ...

Later, when I went home to see my family, I met the man who used to rape me. He raped me again in my home. This time my sister saw him. She told my father, and he was not allowed to come to the family home any more. My father didn't blame me much. However, it was very embarrassing; the whole village knew about this, so I had to leave home.

It was very painful and frightening ... It was forced and they had strength. They make me do this as if they were angry with me ... They saw me behaving like a gay, so they hate me. They do drugs so they were very powerful. My anus hurt ... I was overwhelmed with confusionIt was very painful in my heart ... emotionally ... I asked many questions ... Do I have bad karma? Did I do something wrong in a previous life? Why does this happen to me?

Impacts and Effects

Boys can't cry out. If we cry, they say we are weak, but they don't know how much hurt we have.

Heart beating fast.

Disgusted when they ask me to swallow the sperm.

After abuse, want to have sex with boys; don't feel attracted to girls.

Headache and sleep problems.

Difficult to go to the toilet, always have blood after I was abused ... it was very painful.

Being afraid others will abuse me again.

Scared—pain like girls too.

People discriminate so I dare not tell others.

I felt despair, didn't want to live and was angry but didn't want to express it because of the impact on others.

Ashamed and make the family ashamed too.

Ashamed but confused because I was also satisfied with sex.

Men get embarrassed and feel pain like women too.

Being scared, run away and hide when seeing men.

Being afraid of HIV.

Wanting to hide.

Being angry with the one who forced me to have sex.

Mother blamed me: why didn't I tell when it first happened?

Confusion, Vulnerability and Male Rape

Numerous research studies globally indicate that, once abused, many children are also vulnerable to abuse as adults. This is starkly illustrated in the following accounts, which reveal the virtually undocumented phenomenon of adult males experiencing violent rape and abuse. None of the following accounts identified the abusers as gay.

One "long hair" MSM stated that he had been abused by numerous men and boys as a child:

When I was eight years old, I wasn't attracted to girls. I liked boys and liked to make up like girls. I first had sex with my cousin when I was eight; he gave me cake and money. I had sex with him until I was 10 years old but I stopped because I was ashamed ... but I also felt satisfied when I had sex with him too ... It was confusing

When I was 16 I used to make up like a girl, and my family was very angry. They scolded me and I ran away to live with a friend and work selling sex. One day I was sitting in Chbar Ampov garden and the police came and said that I was "destroying society". I was arrested and he took me to the police station and threatened me that if I sucked his penis and made him happy he would allow me to go, but if not, I would have to go to prison. I was disgusted but had to force myself to suck his penis.

Whenever they have a celebration, they have thong-bas dancing¹⁶⁹ in the villages ... I always go to dance. After the dancing there was a group of young adults in the village who threatened the long-hair MSM to abuse them in the field or in a quiet place. One group of four young men put a knife to my neck and threatened me to have sex with them. I couldn't refuse but I begged them to use a condom and if they wouldn't, I would rather die. The four used a condom and raped me, it was very painful and I had tears rolling down my face.

He also described a horrific event that happened to another long-hair MSM:

He went to the dancing in the village. He was threatened by five or six young adults and raped in a field. When they finished raping him, they took a bottle of Coca-Cola with the top still on and inserted it into his anus and pulled it out, tearing his rectum. He bled to death. The villagers, village chief and police came, but they didn't really pay attention and they considered the case to be death by robbery, not murder.

If a woman is raped there are many people to help her and try to arrest the rapist, but for MSM being raped, no one cares. There are only people to scold them, laugh at them and consider it a normal thing. Ninety-nine percent of MSM have been raped in the villages by use of force and violence. It happens in every province in Cambodia. I still take risks to go there because I want to be happy. In the streets young adults threaten us to suck their penis, so we have to force ourselves to do it with tears falling down.

Another man shared a similar account:

When we go dancing in the village, many youngsters come and catch us. When I was 20 years old, about 10 males caught me and raped me in the field. When they came and took me, the villagers saw, but no one paid attention to this because they thought it was normal. They took me to the field, threatened me and wanted to beat me ... They

169 Thong-bas dancing takes place in many villages at celebrations and festivals—Khmer New Year, Phchum Ben etc. It often involves lots of loud music, dancing and alcohol and is a popular social event with MSM.

forced me to eat ice cream [oral sex] and forced me to have anal sex. I did not dare file a complaint because I was so ashamed.

Messages for Helpers and Supporters

My ideas are to have a nice place of safety, private—so people outside can not see inside—with practical education in order to help boys protect themselves and to help them stop thinking about that issue.

Have a programme for boys to meet and talk about their problems with a facilitator.

We need to speak out to get better.

Sponsorship for education.

The staff working with boys need to have knowledge of psychology and pay attention to children ... gentle staff who don't insult or blame them ...

Provide physical healing and counselling related to sexual health and sexual exploitation and abuse.

If you have a telephone hotline, a lot of people will call.

Need to widely broadcast about boys' abuse in order to let everyone know that it's painful like girls' abuse too.

Provide them with accommodation and food.

Allow boys to live with their parents, but have staff visit frequently to observe boys.

There needs to be a centre for men, with counsellors to help with mental problems and discuss what to do. We also need help finding jobs to help us concentrate on rebuilding our lives.

Help us make our parents understand and be able to accept us. We have made mistakes but we can change to be a good person so they will forgive us and accept us. If we have a job they will accept us happily. We want our community not to be angry with us.

All staff who work with boys, whether they are men or women, need to have counselling skills and be gentle, kind and friendly.

Voices

Men need help too!

Please see that boys are weak too because we also have minds and pain after we are sexually abused.

Don't gossip about boys, discriminate and look down on them.

Government: Pay attention and protect boys.

Don't abuse boys or MSM any more!

Boys' abuse is like girls' abuse; it causes both physical and mental pain. Please do not think this kind of abuse is different from girls'.

If girls are abused, they make a complaint, arrest the abuser and send him to jail, but if someone abuses MSM, no one files a complaint to have the abuser arrested. No one helps MSM, no one is surprised, and they consider it a normal thing.

I want every body to know that boys and MSM are being abused; please help and rescue them like you help girls!

To the public—mothers, helpers, NGOs and others—help crack down on the abusers and get rid of them. Report abuse to NGOs and the authorities.

Abusers: Please don't hurt boys. We are young; don't destroy our future; go sleep with your wives!

Boys: Please be brave—dare to report this to adults, parents, NGOs. Don't hide this any more!

Police, community, authorities: Believe the reports of victims. Go to training about this, be aware and understand these matters; then you will be capable of helping boys

Whilst our study did not meet any male participants who had been sexually abused as children by women or girls, anecdotal accounts from some staff of NGOs suggest that this is not unknown and also very harmful. These accounts will be included in the part of the report sharing data from staff participants. It seems apparent that abuse by women does occur but is more hidden, less likely to be reported or detected and often not considered as abuse by either the victim or others. Several participants shared accounts of women buying sex from boys and young men, often the wives of high-ranking officials but also younger women—Cambodians and Japanese were mentioned. One high school student interviewed also stated that many of his fellow students, both male and female, are involved in selling and buying sex from each other. This suggests the need for further exploration of the patterns of sexual relationships within youth culture in Cambodia to explore the dynamics, perceptions and boundaries between consenting sexual relationships and those which are exploitative and abusive.

Sexual Abuse in Prisons

This study did not plan to investigate sexual abuse within prisons, which for a variety of logistical reasons was not possible. There are up to 500 children and young boys under the age of 18 currently in prisons in Cambodia. The official position is that sexual abuse does not happen. A common initiation ritual when boys and young men are taken to prison is to receive a beating from the gang controlling the cells of 30 to 60 prisoners. We also learned that it is common for males in the youth prison to be “strongly encouraged” to have plastic or glass implants sewn underneath the skin of their penis, or have their penis injected with hair oil or other oil-based substances to increase its size. If prisoners refuse, they may be beaten. We did not receive confirmation from any prisoners about the purpose of this. However, sources elsewhere suggest that these kinds of practices are used to increase the size of the penis and enhance sex. This suggests that sexual abuse and rape are very likely occurring, although not being reported.

Research globally indicates that sexual abuse and rape are common within prisons. In the USA juveniles incarcerated with adults are five times more likely to be victims of sexual assault than youth in juvenile facilities, while overcrowding and insufficient staffing are key contributors to increased vulnerability. Rates of HIV are five to 10 times as high inside prison as outside, making forced sex—where prevention methods are virtually non-existent—a deadly proposition.¹⁷⁰ Prisoners contracting HIV within prisons in Cambodia often state that it is a result of sharing blades or toothbrushes. Prisoner rape victims are typically among the most vulnerable members of the prison population—often young, non-violent first-time offenders who are small, weak, shy, gay or effeminate and inexperienced in the ways of prison life.¹⁷¹

Other research suggests that a typical male prison rapist chooses a victim on the basis of “the weakness and the inability of the victim to defend himself”. Many prisoners consent to sexual acts to avoid violence, accepting long-term sexual enslavement in order to survive, and may be forced into servitude that includes prostitution arrangements with other male prisoners.¹⁷² The implications for the physical and mental health, well-being and human rights of incarcerated males of any age are considerable. There are high numbers of sexual offenders in Cambodian prisons and an urgent need for research and initiatives for the prevention of further abuse, as well as choices and appropriate support for victims.

Additional Summary and Analysis of Emerging Themes

It may prove useful later to compare responses and data in relation to boys with those of staff to identify areas of similarity or difference between experiences of the boys and perceptions of adults.

The backgrounds, subsequent risk factors and acts perpetrated by abusers have already been discussed in some detail and may provide useful insight into the potential for prevention of abuse. Evidence from this study reveals that the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys are serious issues that potentially affect large numbers of boys. The idea that sexual abuse of boys is perpetrated primarily by foreigners and gay men is not substantiated, since our study reveals that heterosexual Cambodian men, as well as other children and young people, are also perpetrators. Foreign perpetrators receive more attention and are more visible than locals. Emerging issues and the words of boys also point the way towards issues that those planning work with male victims and survivors need to take into account.

Genital Touching by Adults

Many of the boys were familiar with the practice, and it seems that it is done by family members and sometimes neighbours, both male and female. Those who spoke of it considered that it was perhaps a “normal” way for adults to show affection to boys up to a certain age. However, the vast majority of boys expressed dislike, annoyance and anger, embarrassment and shame; most seem powerless to stop adults doing it. It is a very common occurrence, and appears to have become normalised as part of Cambodian culture.

170 Stop Prisoner Rape (2007)

171 Human Rights Watch (2001)

172 Man, C.D. and Cronan, J. P. (2002)

The team's observation of media output during the course of the study noted two events in relation to this particular issue. In June 2007, researchers observed two programmes broadcast on Cambodian national TV in which boys on stage were exposed to jokes relating to their genitals for the purpose of entertainment. One involved the grabbing of two boys' genitals on several occasions by an adult male performer,¹⁷³ while another featured the show's host pulling down a boy's shorts to reveal his naked body, much to the shock and embarrassment of the boy and amusement of some members the studio audience.¹⁷⁴

The team reflected that prior to the research, they may not have noticed or considered such behaviour as anything other than normal, but listening to the participants' views throughout the study led to a considerable increase of awareness. Some readers may interpret these comments as critical of Khmer culture, but it remains important to listen to what the boys are saying about this.

Impacts and Effects

It is clear that, whatever cultural views exist in relation to boys, their vulnerability and potential for being damaged or coping, sexual abuse has the potential to turn their lives completely upside down, profoundly affecting their physical and mental health, relationships and self-perceptions. No aspect of their lives, it seems, remains untouched. Because this study is retrospective rather than following the boys over time, we can only speculate as to the long-term impacts. However, comments by many and the contributions of older boys and men indicate that the effects are both profound and long lasting. Many spoke of the abuse having the capacity to "destroy their future".

Perhaps the most common and recurring theme, reported by the vast majority of participants, was intense shame, fear, embarrassment and loss of honour as a result of abuse. These led boys to hide, run away from home and in some cases consider suicide. Their despair is sometimes combined with anger—at the abuser, themselves and others. In many respects, anger is a more socially sanctioned expression than many other emotions the boys are struggling to come to terms with.

Many reported being the subject of jokes relating to their sexuality and abuse, often implying that they were not in fact victims of abuse or exploitation, but willing and consenting partners. They remain silent, isolated and lonely—fearful of disclosing their encounters due to threats by the perpetrators, shame and fear of ridicule or punishment and being blamed by those closest to them. Their experiences appear to impact severely upon their perceptions and identity as males, confounding the expectations of both themselves and others. This is exacerbated by the fact that the predominant view of girls as "cotton" and boys as "gold", therefore untainted by sexual experiences, informs the social scripts of both the boys and those around them. Despite the fact that many identified having pain like girls and women, these beliefs provide them with absolutely no protection or recognition for their anguish, resulting in the denial of their victim status, reinforcing their isolation.

Many told of serious physical injuries, especially anal cuts and tears, having problems going to the toilet and passing blood when they did and/or stomach and abdomen pains and soreness of the genitals. Most of the boys were not able to ask for or receive medical care. Few perpetrators use condoms, the results of which could be life-threatening, and it

173 *Pteab Lek Dopmuoy* (House Number 11), Apsara channel

174 *Dontrey Sroksre*, Channel Bayon

is likely that their experiences may leave them with other serious long-term physical problems not evident at this stage.

Another significant theme to emerge is that even if the physical wounds heal, the long-term implications for mental health, confidence and self-esteem are very serious. Many talked of sleep problems, nightmares, difficulties eating and difficulty studying—the latter often explained as “day dreaming” and inability to concentrate, similar to that experienced by individuals with a diagnosis of dissociation, possibly related to PTSD.

Confusion and Fear in Relation to Sex, Sexuality and Gender Identification

Clearly for children in a society where heterosexual relationships are considered the norm, sexual abuse of boys by men is likely to create confusion and uncertainty in the minds of victims, and also in many of those around them. Some boys expressed fears of being or becoming gay, seeing their experiences as sexual acts with gay men rather than an adult abusing power in a sexual way. Others had been teased and ridiculed by others about their experiences, as if they were taking part in consenting relationships. One boy explained that he thought he was a girl and that’s why he was abused.

In regard to the participants identifying as MSM, while many of them stated that they knew they were “different” from other boys at an early age, it is not known how many of them who were abused as boys link their abuse to sexual identity, although one participant did state that a friend of his changed his sexual orientation due to abuse. Further in-depth and specific research is needed in this area.

Confusion and Guilt about Arousal

For many of the boys, being abused was their first sexual experience of any kind. Many expressed confusion when they were stimulated, gained erections and were subsequently masturbated, or had oral sex performed, resulting in ejaculation. The boundaries between abuse and consent can be especially blurred for boys with little sexual knowledge, who are victims of grooming and are also responding physiologically. One boy remarked that he wasn’t sure if what happened was abuse or not because he enjoyed it; this is consistent with findings from other research in the field.

Abused to Abuser?

As described in the literature summary, the “cycle of abuse” theory receives support in the minds of many. Conversations about sexual abuse of boys, victims and survivors invariably include that debate. During the course of our research, we met two young men who identified themselves as abusers of other children and young people. While we were clear with staff of organisations that the study was being carried out in relation to victims and not perpetrators, it is interesting to note that they were suggested as participants. In both cases, the boys concerned stated that they had not been sexually abused themselves, one stating that he abused other children after reading pornographic materials.

Two boys in the study stated that it was possible that boys may become abusers in the future, or it had been suggested by others. For one at least, there seemed to be a real confusion about sexual feelings and desire. His experiences of sexual desire had always taken place as a result of abuse; therefore he considered that feeling desire may result in abuse. It is clear that in this case, and probably many others, the boundaries between consenting and abusive relationships are blurred, suggesting the need for this to be addressed as a component of support.

Specific local research initiatives in this field are urgently required to gain a greater understanding into the nature of existing perpetration, predisposing factors to abuse and,

importantly, the reasons that other boys do not go on to abuse others. Research with non-offending survivors globally is conspicuous by its absence. The responses to other questions of the survivors who took part in this study suggest that they are concerned with preventing abuse rather than repeating it.

Family Responses

The vast majority of the participants were too scared to tell their families about their abuse due to overwhelming shame and/or fear of being blamed and beaten, as they had already experienced in their lives. In most cases where a disclosure was made, it was due to the intervention of child protection staff from NGOs in Sihanoukville and Phnom Penh, who subsequently supported the boys and families throughout court proceedings. Many stated that they would have preferred staff not to tell their parents. Some boys talked of parents (usually mothers) being tearful, especially when they had accepted money from the boys given to them by the perpetrator, while for some, the fear of being beaten became reality. At least one boy said that his initial disclosure was not believed by his mother because she thought it was impossible for a man to have sex with a boy.

One participant suggested that some boys' parents are happy to accept money if their boys are abused. Another explained that his parents did not blame him for what happened; in his case, the perpetrator had developed a long-term relationship with his parents that involved the supply of "material goods". It is not known if they were aware of the abuse at the time and turned a blind eye to it, or were supportive because they placed the responsibility elsewhere.

For a variety of reasons, the research team did not interview any parents of boys. Future research is needed to gain a better understanding of the risk factors, signs of safety and needs of parents in relation to understanding abuse and supporting their children. Parents also lack awareness of the issues for boys and are affected by the same cultural values as the rest of the population. One staff member of a human rights NGO remembered one mother's response to the abuse of her son: she was "relieved it wasn't my daughter", because that would have brought shame and dishonour to the family.

There is every reason to believe that the cultural view of boys as not adversely affected in terms of reputation and honour by consenting sexual relationships also applies in the case of abusive relationships, given that abuse of boys itself is often considered or reframed as initiation or consenting sex. Notions of masculinity, portraying boys as invulnerable and self-reliant, undoubtedly also play a powerful role here, similar to other countries and cultures. Qualities often ascribed to one gender are usually denied the other—in this case, vulnerability and victim status. Interestingly, some boys commented on this, identifying and wanting to share messages with families and parents indicating that boys are also vulnerable and need protection—a clear challenge to predominant cultural views and expectations of males.

Future initiatives will need to place importance on supporting both parents and children following disclosure, to develop awareness, understanding and the capacity to support all victims of sexual violence. Research elsewhere identifies support from families and significant others as playing a vital part in the recovery of survivors of rape and abuse, and that is also likely to be the case here.

Social Responses

Many of the boys expressed fear of others knowing about their experiences and shared accounts of being taunted, mocked and "looked down on" when their abuse became public knowledge. Some of the remarks were related to being seen as gay or focused on

the acts that others assumed they had committed voluntarily with the perpetrators. Other remarks suggest others see boys as “less than” boys and men; the language used to criticise them when they show vulnerability and tearful emotions is feminised.¹⁷⁵ Empathy, sympathy and understanding were generally absent, while it also appears that anonymity and confidentiality are very hard to achieve and maintain.

While specific questions in relation to services such as the police and courts were not asked, some commented that the legal process is often frustrating because it takes so long, but also frightening. Some were worried about making mistakes in court, while others were fearful of facing the perpetrator in open court. Few boys commented on the behaviour of the police and judiciary, although one boy said that when he was questioned by the police, they spoke to him in a “normal” way and did not appear to think that he experienced any shame. It is clear that boys and perhaps all victims attending court may benefit from specific research to identify ways of improving that experience. Others expressed concern at having their photographs taken by members of the press when attending court.

A majority of the participants were or had been in regular contact with some sort of service, although not specifically in relation to sexual abuse support. In Sihanoukville, the boys we met received help from NGOs throughout the court process and/or had contact with outreach teams or those at drop-in or day centres for street children. In Phnom Penh, the majority of boys had contact with similar court support services, and/or lived in centres or small group homes and settings described as foster care. It was difficult for boys to answer in detail specific questions relating to help already received, because in many places staff were sometimes present in the interviews, while others had never been asked before.

In Sihanoukville, there are relatively few resources, and support is offered in most cases by one of two NGOs working closely in partnership. Detail and discussion in relation to their work is included in the following chapter. While specific data in relation to support provided were hard to gain, it was observed that generally the boys had healthy and trusting relationships with staff from both NGOs. Few boys commented in detail on specific support or counselling they had received after their abuse; this element is still very much being developed. It would be useful for future longitudinal studies to combine training, counselling and other interventions with ongoing supervision and evaluation to assess their effectiveness.

In Phnom Penh, the sample of boys came from a wider variety of NGOs, some focusing on child protection and legal support, others on street or centre-based assistance for street-living children, with the remainder providing residential care and accommodation. Counselling services and support for this particular group were not provided in all settings, so relatively few were able to comment upon their usefulness or otherwise. Lack of safety and exposure to bullying and violence within some residential settings were remarked upon by several participants, as well as incidents of sexual abuse by other young people within care settings, and both must be viewed with serious concern.

Most had either never had the opportunity to speak about their experiences or were never asked. While many recognised and indicated both the value and need of having someone to listen and help them understand, some also said that they were told not to talk about the events, to forget what had happened or not to think too much about them by staff. Unfortunately, it appeared that in at least one setting, some boys were also

175 “Kom sak gni” and “chnol”—terms that relate to female and cowardly animals.

fearful of talking to some carers and staff, because they were not confident that their rights to confidentiality would be respected. In some cases it appears that the boys' confidentiality was breached and they felt that they had become the subject of gossip, with distressing consequences. Considering the emphasis that they placed on shame, this is most unfortunate and indicates that greater care and commitment by adults to confidentiality are required.

Stated Needs

The suggestions of participants in relation to their stated needs (and also what they don't need), also reveal much about current experiences. On several occasions throughout the field research, the team noted the isolation and loneliness experienced by the boys. One researcher commented that there was a sense that the boys were "walking alone", while another remarked on a feeling that no one was really that interested in this issue and that the boys were "hungry for help". Ultimately, listening to the boys left the impression that their opinions, behaviours and needs were generally not understood. While many of their basic needs for shelter and food were met, most had received little or no meaningful emotional support.

Many participants found it difficult to express what they needed, because they had never been asked before, particularly in relation to sexual abuse. Many of the responses therefore appeared to reflect the setting in which they already lived, particularly if that was a centre or group home, particularly in Phnom Penh. The questions were asked in a very open manner, and some responses indicated a desire to live peaceful and happy lives with family or friends focusing on their basic needs for shelter, food, warmth, friendship and education or work.

Safety, confidentiality, privacy, respect, love and loving relationships emerged as crucial themes, whatever the ages of the boys and setting—family, foster care or centre. The need to be believed and have others ask about feelings, listen and understand without criticising or judging, was clearly expressed. Recognising that sexual abuse of boys occurs and is harmful and that boys are also vulnerable and experience pain, great shame and loss of honour and require protection, was stressed. The need to be accepted and be treated like normal people is also clear. Some of the older participants who had received more education were able to expand on their ideas, identifying that staff need to be knowledgeable about counselling, psychology and sexual abuse of boys. Many participants simply asked that they have the chance to live "normal" lives free of abuse, to laugh and have fun with friends.

Importantly, comments by boys in relation to what they don't want perhaps shed some light on their current or past experiences of care within families and institutions. A significant number of participants said that they needed peaceful and calm places to live that were free of "chaos", violence and bullying. Many experiencing care and support in group settings identified the need for staff not to use harsh words or violence to threaten children, and for staff not to gossip, discriminate or break confidentiality.

The data also suggest that there are significantly high numbers of abused young and adult men who are currently living beyond the reach of services for children. None of the older boys and young men had received either recognition of their abuse or meaningful support. Their lives continue to be dominated by their experiences, and future plans for services must not ignore their needs. It is likely that there are generations of men in Cambodia who have experienced sexual abuse as boys, and the implications of this are far reaching. One researcher commented: "There is a sense that they are still occupied by

their experiences”. It is clear that services for males will have to have a long-term component. There are no quick fixes.

The Perpetrators

While many of the boys were abused by foreigners, the study also found that sexual abuse by other children, young people and adult Cambodians is a significant problem. Similar to findings of global research, the vast majority of abusers were known to the victims. Family members, relatives, neighbours and known adults in positions of trust and authority were invariably responsible. It appears, at least on the basis of this small-scale study, that many of the Cambodian adult male abusers were heterosexual men, with wives and families of their own. The view that perpetrators against Cambodian boys are predominantly foreign (western) “paedophiles” and/or gay men is therefore not supported by the data. Perhaps the nature of same-sex abuse leads us to make assumptions as we seek to find answers and understand it. Clearly there is a need for more research in this area to further inform this debate.

One difference between the behaviour of western and local Khmer perpetrators that emerges in this study is that the abuse by foreigners often takes place in the company of other boys, while our data suggest that boys are often abused by Cambodians in isolation. While the sample was too small for the findings to be significant, this also indicates the need for future research with perpetrators, whether adults, children or young people, male or female, Cambodian or foreign. The growing body of knowledge may then enable future generations of boys to receive adequate protection and support.

Child Sexual Abuse and the Rape of Adult Men

The interviews with men identifying as MSM also provided valuable insight into the abuse of boys, particularly in community settings. However, an unexpected finding was evidence that many adult MSM, particularly “long hair”, are also victims of brutal and violent sexual assaults and rape in a variety of settings. The evidence indicates that groups of men, identified as heterosexual, take part in gang rapes of MSM, similar to scenarios of female sex workers, previously well documented and identified as *bank*. Several other anecdotal accounts were shared by participants, including the sexual abuse of one young man by soldiers.

The limited information available indicates the need for more research but also the raising of awareness and development of services for this specific group of boys and men. One participant—a peer educator working with MSM, familiar with this problem—described how anger, hatred and aggression, possibly fuelled by alcohol, are a feature of these attacks. He stated, “They despise us—that’s why they do it”. This must be viewed with great concern and all efforts made to protect the rights of all men and boys in future service proposals.

One question that remained unanswered after discovering the experiences of MSM is why the organisations working with MSM have so far largely failed to publicise the issue of sexual abuse. It could be that their experiences are normalised in a climate where discrimination is the norm. One researcher, after interviewing MSM, reflected that their self-esteem was so low that it appeared that they accepted abuse as a normal and inevitable part of their lives. However, this does not explain the silence of those supporting and acting as their advocates.

How Do Boys and Young Men in Cambodia Compare with Boys Elsewhere?

Attempts were made to identify and contact projects providing services to male survivors of sexual abuse in other countries in the region. Enquiries and searches were conducted regarding Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, with little or no response. It appears that few services exist and recognition is low. However, a project in Hong Kong working with adult male survivors of child sexual abuse and several specialist organisations in the UK, contacted via the Survivors Trust,¹⁷⁶ responded to our call for assistance. We wanted to explore some of the important similarities and differences between males in different contexts, identifying contemporary and useful ideas in relation to services and support. In some cases, staff responded based on their experiences, while in others, survivors' group members also contributed.

A brief summary of the most common themes is presented in the tables below and compared with those of the boys in our study. They may be expressed differently, but many similarities exist.

176 A coalition of hundreds of organisations working with male and female survivors of sexual abuse and rape, based in the UK. Details can be found in the bibliography.

MOST COMMON PROBLEMS FOR BOYS		
HONG KONG	CAMBODIA	UK
<p>Being overwhelmed by shamefulness</p> <p>Feeling vulnerable when telling others</p> <p>Difficulties handling strong emotions such as anger, fear, guilt and helplessness</p> <p>Anxiety, emotional numbing, depression and low self-confidence</p> <p>Trouble getting in touch with own emotions</p> <p>Unable to build and maintain trust and close relationships</p> <p>Indulging in sex to get feelings of comfort, love, safety and excitement.</p> <p>Confusion—sexual abuse, sexual relationships and body experiences</p>	<p>Overpowering sense of shame & loss of honour</p> <p>Fear of others knowing about them</p> <p>Anger with the abuser, themselves and others</p> <p>Serious anal and genital injuries</p> <p>Guilt and self-blame for allowing it to happen</p> <p>Feeling isolated & alone</p> <p>Fear of telling, due to retribution by the abuser or punishment by parents</p> <p>Lack of confidence & low self-esteem</p> <p>Hard to talk about it</p> <p>Difficulties concentrating, particularly in studies</p> <p>Being vulnerable to further abuse</p> <p>Confusion about sexual feelings & sexual identity</p> <p>Feeling that no one cares because it doesn't happen to boys</p>	<p>Feeling ashamed, mixed up and dirty</p> <p>Withdrawn, because they can't express how they feel</p> <p>Anger and aggression</p> <p>Isolation, low self-esteem</p> <p>Guilt and self-blame</p> <p>Mental health problems</p> <p>Hard to share with friends, afraid they will be made fun of</p> <p>Confusion about sexuality and why they were chosen</p> <p>Difficult to trust adults again</p> <p>Problems with drugs and alcohol</p> <p>Vulnerable to other abuse</p> <p>Being robbed of masculinity, can't or shouldn't cry—hard to express emotions.</p>

PROBLEMS OF OLDER BOYS AND YOUNG MEN		
HONG KONG	CAMBODIA	UK
<p>Unable to build and maintain close and intimate relationships</p> <p>Sexual relationships in marriage</p> <p>Low confidence</p> <p>Confusion relating to sexuality</p>	<p>Shame, fear of others knowing & being mocked and accused of being gay or sleeping with <i>barang</i></p> <p>Continued drug use to escape from feelings</p> <p>Powerful and lingering feelings of sadness</p>	<p>Fear of others knowing and/or thinking they are gay</p> <p>Low self-esteem</p> <p>Drugs and alcohol</p> <p>Risk-taking behaviour</p> <p>Confusion about sexual and gender identity</p>

Continued difficulties with strong emotions such as anger, fear, guilt and shame Depression and other mental health problems	Being angry with self and others Low self-esteem and suicidal thoughts Emotional and physical pain Continued confusion about sex & sexuality, gender identity, consent and abuse, safety and vulnerability Expectations of being a man or boy Problems with eating and sleeping Being more vulnerable to continued sexual exploitation and abuse	Anger management Sexual problems and addictions Relationship problems Criminal behaviour Longer term mental health problems Longer term physical health problems
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WHAT MALE SURVIVORS SAY THEY WANT FROM HELPERS, SUPPORTERS AND SERVICES		
HONG KONG	CAMBODIA	UK
Safety and acceptance Confidentiality Someone to trust and listen Easy access to services without others knowing Not to judge what we say Accept the boy as a whole Counselling and therapy Confidential street-based counselling and life skills Help to deal with fear Education, because some boys may not realise that what happened is abuse Disseminate information about the issue/service widely Use media to talk about prevention and helping victims	Safety Confidentiality Empathy Not to be judged or blamed To be believed To be loved Staff not to use harsh words or violence Protection from abuse Staff to have skills in psychology and counselling Encouragement Trust Help with education and finding jobs Activities and sports A calm, safe place to stay, free of violence and bullying	Safety & security Confidentiality Compassion & empathy Anonymity To be believed, listened to and not condemned for their actions before they seek help Not to be judged Highlight acceptance and hope A friendly welcome from all staff Trust & trusting relationships Professionals and others to be aware, approachable and well trained Choices Want to feel less isolated

Helpline and online services for those who dare not see a counsellor in person Practical assistance Involve survivors who have recovered to share their experiences A place to feel relaxed which helps me express myself without limitation Medical and nutritional help and guidelines More documentation of people's experiences to break the silence	Parents and staff to be patient and gentle Respect for our rights Someone to ask about our feelings and listen Broadcast widely about this problem Friends, fun and laughter Help with our health Groups with a facilitator	Boys need to feel that they are not alone and that their fears and experiences are going to be taken seriously Community styles are best rather than traditional health settings Drop-in services Not to be passed on all the time to other services Services available when they are needed—in a crisis Help us have a greater sense of self worth Services that promote independence and personal empowerment Support groups to reduce isolation
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Some of the similarities between the groups are striking. The respondents were also asked about what methods or models of counselling are effective with male survivors. Most from the UK said that “person- or client-centred” methods were most effective; others highlighted the importance of keeping an open mind and being eclectic and flexible according to the needs of the child or young person. Art and play therapy were identified as very effective with children and young people. Also stressed was the importance of being encouraging throughout the process, as well as having sensitivity to the worker-client relationship, including gender issues. The survivors’ group in Hong Kong identified the need to tell the story and create new meanings for their experiences.

Participants were also asked to comment on the role that families may be able to play in helping boys and young men recover from sexual abuse and exploitation. The majority of respondents from the UK identified involvement of (non-offending) family members as either essential or very important, because it can help boys feel supported, leading to more positive outcomes. One experienced practitioner commented, “Those boys who have at least one supportive family member seem to progress more quickly”. Others identified that it was essential to support families too, accepting their perspectives and helping them deal with potential feelings of guilt or denial. It was suggested that a different worker or counsellor should work with the family to preserve the relationship of trust and confidentiality with the child and that groups for parents might be helpful. One note of caution: families can be a very useful source of support but also quite damaging if they deny abuse or are unable to provide support.

It therefore seems crucial to assess carefully the potential of family members to offer support, rather than assume that it is present, and help them develop that capacity where possible.

The Hong Kong survivors' group also believed that the family can play a very important role in recovery. One participant commented, "Sometimes, just listening from the family can be enough". Another remarked that "the involvement of someone trustworthy in the family is very helpful". The group also identified the importance of offering the family support and practical help in relation to prevention and the aftermath of abuse. Another participant said, "The role of families is very important ... Hong Kong is a city 99 percent Chinese; we seldom discuss sex or sexual abuse ... Most of the time their parents or other adults became panicked in front of them because they don't know how to deal with it."

Recent western research, to be discussed later, identifies the importance and benefits of support from families and significant others in risk and harm reduction, the increasing of self-value and resilience, in relation to sexual abuse,¹⁷⁷ while reduction of relapse and stress in relation to female rape victims have also been noted.¹⁷⁸ Others have suggested that when helping Asian trauma survivors, involvement of families can have beneficial effects, including the minimisation of shame.¹⁷⁹ It is clear that in the context explored in this research, many of the boy's fears, hopes and concerns are inextricably linked to notions of family, honour and acceptance in the wider community. This suggests that potential interventions need to be targeted at a range of beneficiaries and would clearly benefit from further and continued exploration and evaluation.

Ultimately, in settings elsewhere, evidence shows that families and significant others are often caught up in the "ripples" created by the abuse and therefore also need help. While this may be an obvious point, it is also important to note that, in the experience of this consultant at least, recognition of their needs does not always result in support being made available.

177 Bentovim, A. (2002)

178 Emm, D. and McKenry, P.C. (1988)

179 Tummala – Narra, P. (2001)

CHAPTER **FOUR**: PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM STAFF

There were three field sites, and data from each will be presented below. The purpose of this triangulation is to identify any specific differences and similarities in relation to staff and NGOs. These might prove a useful indicator of need when planning support, development and capacity-building initiatives. Several focus group discussions were also carried out in Phnom Penh with groups and teams of staff with varying levels of responsibility and contact with children.

In total, the views of more than 100 individuals were sought in the three sites, as well as a further 50 in focus group settings. The team was interested in exploring the attitudes, opinions and underlying influences on the behaviour of the adults charged with the care of boys, and from where they emerge. We wanted to find out what sort of recognition there was of the problem, and also what levels of support boys could expect to find, within a range of settings. We hoped that the research would draw out the similarities and differences in perceptions between staff and boys and also identify support, training and resource needs of staff and NGOs. An important feature was that all participants took part voluntarily and were assured that their identities would remain confidential. We hoped that this would enable participants to talk openly and honestly, leading to a deeper understanding.

The specific subject areas covered in interviews can be explored in Appendix 5. Similar to the boys' data, responses will be presented in relation to specific themes, illustrated where appropriate by quotes from individuals. Ongoing analysis and summaries are provided.

Data from Sihanoukville

There are relatively few NGOs working in Sihanoukville, so the research team spent 10 days in meetings, interviews and observations with staff of two organisations supporting boys. One provides a range of social, welfare, child protection and educational services to children living in communities and those living or spending time on the streets. The team interviewed eight staff in total: two teachers, a social worker, a counsellor, a project coordinator, a child protection team leader, an outreach team leader and the director of that NGO.

In addition, five individual interviews were carried out with staff from an NGO providing child protection and legal support. These were the coordinator, a social worker, counsellor, investigations coordinator and lawyer. In addition, two group meetings were held with investigators. In total, 25 staff had the opportunity to share their experiences, knowledge and opinions. It was observed that the relationship between the two organisations was very close and that their work was well coordinated; cooperation and mutual support were high, which had clear benefits for all concerned.

The field research resulted in huge amounts of data being produced. Presented below is a summary of the key themes to emerge. The most common responses are given first.

Awareness of Sexual Abuse of Boys

We learned that because of the high profile of sexual abuse of children by foreigners, many staff had reasonable to high levels of awareness of the problem for boys. The lack of prosecutions (and therefore visibility) of Cambodian perpetrators did leave some with the impression that abuse of boys by Khmers was either rare or non-existent, indicating

the need for further research and awareness raising. Some of the responses illustrating these points can be examined below:

It's a big problem for boys and girls, foreigners and Khmers, possibly women too but less likely. The abusers of boys can be married men and those with children too.

Foreigners mostly ... never have Khmer abusers.

Seems to be mostly foreigners here ... very well organised networks ... Cambodians seem to abuse girls; most Cambodians don't know about male-male sex.

Mostly heard about foreigners, never heard about Khmer abusers ... I have awareness through working here, but most Cambodians don't think it's a problem and do not care so much for boys ... If a boy is raped, it's seen as normal.

Poor families and street-living children. Boys with better living conditions are not abused.

It's a huge problem here ... Cambodian law is not good at protecting boys. The new visa laws in Thailand mean that a lot of sex tourists are moving here ... The majority of perpetrators that we are aware of are foreign ... Most boys are abused with others; pornography is involved and they make them abuse other boys.

Attitudes to the Touching of Boys' Genitals

All respondents were aware of this practice, identifying it as a “habit” or “cultural practice” that is difficult to challenge or change. Feelings about the potential harm, for some, appeared to be related to the nationality or identity of the person doing it, or the individual perception and response of the boy. It appears that this practice is mainly considered to be a genuine and gender-specific way of showing affection. We know from our data that boys also generally consider it to be “normal”, but most also dislike it and find it humiliating. However, the range of responses here, illustrates that there is no consensus:

It's a habit—OK for Khmer but not foreigners. As a way showing affection in the family, it's OK.

It affects their feelings. If it's a stranger and the boy gets angry, then it is abuse ... If boys don't mind, it's not abuse. It's abuse if the boys cry.

It makes boys feel really angry. They are shy and hate it; they feel insulted and walk away. I know from my own experience ... they feel humiliated

Before working here I thought it was OK ... to show love ... normal for Khmer society, but now I don't feel comfortable with it. It's hard to tell people not to do it because Cambodian's don't like to say what they feel.

Most Khmer don't think it is abuse. It's to comfort and show affection, but the child can't differentiate. It blurs the boundaries—doesn't teach children about OK and not OK touching and safe and unsafe. People

who are abusing are essentially doing [to the boys] what many people have done all their lives.

Tradition is difficult to change.

Awareness of Problems and Impacts Related to Abuse of Boys

Some of the staff of both NGOs appeared to have quite high levels of awareness of the problems, based on experiences of working with, observing and listening to the boys. They were able to provide numerous and detailed accounts of physical, psychological, social and behavioural problems following abuse, similar to the data provided by boys. This is related in part to existing training and awareness-raising but also sharing of experiences among and between team members of the two organisations. Less experienced staff were less clear, indicating some important support and development needs that are identified below.

The need for boys to hide their pain emerged as a significant theme. This was related to shame, but linked by some participants specifically to notions of male identity, masculinity and cultural expectations and their influence on behaviour, particularly in relation to seeking help. These selected remarks provide valuable insight and expand our understanding of how many boys respond, also providing clues as to potential future training and awareness content for community, staff and interventions with boys.

Sometimes the boys cover up with humour, laughing and joking to hide their true feelings. There is a lack of trust in adults, so they act as if they don't care about anything. There can also be a lack of self-care, and they say that what happened to them is just "normal".

Boys act tough to cover up and must not complain but "be a man" ... People accuse him of being lazy if he is ill or has problems.

It's not easy for boys to ask for help at all, especially in the countryside. They think you complain too much or that you are weak if you ask for help.

Boys are seen as a lot tougher, not seen as victims, and are left to fend for themselves.

One participant explained that many boys' experiences lead them into a spiral of vulnerability and isolation, fuelled by discrimination, leading to marginalisation, with little or no obvious way out. These comments indicate that future interventions need to be targeted in a number of areas, not just focused on boys but helping others to see beyond the image of boys who are regarded not as victims but as a "problem":

The first time it happens, they blame themselves. Their self-esteem is already low, but this drives it lower ... They totally devalue themselves and experience shock and self-blame. It often occurs in a group ... Others may lead them to it, and soon it becomes considered "normal". When other children and families find out, they feel even more degraded ... It becomes worse: they get teased, laughed at, so the boys who sleep with a foreigner cling to each other more and become even more marginalised and isolated within the street community ... They are not seen as victims by the authorities but as active sex workers, and their experiences re-traumatise them and make them feel even lower. They feel more vulnerable and think that abuse is less

destructive in some ways, less traumatic, and they normalise it more. They are not seen as human beings by others. Their self-value is often so low that their only form of acceptance is to be with other boys in a similar situation.

Other significant responses from staff indicate that the boys' experiences can lead them to sniff solvents and glue or increase existing use, as they seek to escape and numb themselves. Injuries and pain to the anus and genitals are commonly reported by children. Several staff commented that family members often struggle with a range of problems that may influence boys' vulnerability, such as domestic violence, poverty, alcohol misuse and their own mental health problems (previously identified in the boy's data).

Many families in the aftermath of abuse have difficulties that need addressing; some find it hard to believe it is possible for boys to be abused at all, or assume that it is not serious. We know from the boys' stories that some parents are distressed but find it hard to know what to do to help. Some may be aware but turn a blind eye, especially if they are receiving money from their sons. Some poor families are also targeted by abusers who adopt a "godfather" role towards the family, providing material benefits or repairing the roof for example, in order to obtain access to children. One participant observed that foreigners are often seen as "gods" by local people; they have power, wealth, money, status and influence—everything that many parents do not.

We did not hear of the abusers targeting middle-class, educated or relatively prosperous families and children, which is not to say it doesn't happen, but this is no coincidence. Many of the parents were also children during the Pol Pot regime and may be dealing with or suppressing their own trauma and may not have experiences of positive parenting or receiving support and empathy for their own problems. It is no surprise therefore that many may struggle to provide support to their children.

Challenges and Difficulties of Working with Sexually Abused Boys

We wanted to find out about successful interventions and also what they considered to be the obstacles to working effectively with boys; this informs our understanding but possibly identifies indirectly some key issues for developing approaches and training. The emerging data suggest that many difficulties are directly related to shame, street lifestyle, sexual abuse dynamics and impacts, masculinity issues and levels of community and family support.

Stigma and shame prevents boys from asking for help.

They are afraid their friends will laugh and their parents will beat them.

Street-living culture makes it hard to get them to take up services, and you can't plan a meeting with street children!

Boys are not seen as victims—left to fend for themselves.

Family cooperation and understanding of the seriousness of abuse of boys can be limited.

Hard to see how it has affected them due to masculinity issues—lots of joking and bravado.

Boys see themselves as invincible.

Harder to work with boys in many ways—some see themselves as invulnerable; others use drugs, which makes cooperation hard.

Some see sexual abuse as normal because they get sexual satisfaction and/or money.

Grooming behaviours confuse the boys.

Other responses suggested uncertainty and a perceived lack of skills and confidence with boys that also make it hard for staff to connect with them. This may lead to the development of what may be called “deficit models”, in which their behaviour may be interpreted as anti-social, difficult or challenging rather than a common response to traumatic events. As has been identified in the literature review, boys often externalise their feelings, contradicting previous expectations and stereotypes of victims (usually female) as meek and vulnerable. This is not to suggest that staff are not committed, for in most cases the opposite is clearly true, but merely recognition that this is a very difficult job. These discussions also led to staff being able to assess and identify important training and development needs.

Working with groups of children, and boys in particular, can be rewarding but also very challenging and frustrating. Some participants appeared to find it very difficult, sometimes identifying a need for more staff and/or resources. One of the most common responses was to compare boys with girls, and boys often suffer in comparison. Some participants complained that boys don’t listen to advice, would not do as they were told, and are “not quiet” like girls. Some female staff in particular felt that boys don’t listen to them because they are women. Others explained that boys are too aggressive and that staff don’t know what to do in those circumstances. This indicates the need for the development of specialist skills for all staff, but female staff may benefit from additional training and support initiatives to increase their confidence and ease concerns.

Other participants observed that older boys sometimes get less attention than younger ones, which may be an indication that younger boys are easier to relate to. Either way, if it results in some older boys being marginalised, it suggests the need for strategies to engage all boys. Some participants felt that it takes longer to build relationships of trust with boys and that boys don’t talk. This was frustrating for some because they were not able to analyse this in terms of the boy’s difficulties and felt as if they were lacking or failing in their work. One staff member commented on this, and we observed that her frustration might lead to a blurring of the boundaries of confidentiality, which we know from boys themselves is one of their major concerns:

Working with boys and girls is different. Boys sometimes don’t tell the truth, and it takes time to get deeper. Only two weeks into the relationship, girls talk, but boys are shy and don’t want to speak out, so we ask for the information from their friends.

It is clear that this work is stressful and demanding, and the potential is high for staff to feel isolated and inadequate. There is a clear need for the continued development of knowledge and specialist skills for working with boys, supported by intensive supervision.

Boys, Virginity and Honour

One of the themes that emerged in discussions with a significant number of participants was “virginity and honour”. It appears that, for the vast majority of people in Cambodia, notions of virginity apply exclusively to females, incorporating as they do ideas of purity

and intactness related to the vagina. This relationship, encapsulated in the proverb relating to “gold and cotton”, also appears to deny males the victim status and loss of honour previously identified by them as hugely significant.

The notion that boys are abused is very hard for many to grasp. Discussions about sex and honour with males are usually restricted to consenting relationships, where males are not judged in those terms. The double standards applied in relation to consenting sexual behaviour works against them when they are victims of abuse. For many, there is nowhere to place this argument, no visible context or explanatory framework. The only choice is to try to make it fit with what is already known about sexual abuse and violence, and it doesn’t make sense to many people.

This denial of victim status to males has been described elsewhere as the “feminisation of victimisation” but perhaps could be described in Cambodia more accurately as the “feminisation of victimisation, shame and honour”. It is rare that males are considered in these terms, and this would appear to present a major stumbling block to raising awareness and providing meaningful support for male victims and survivors. As a result, although many staff are aware of the distress and impact of sexual abuse on boys, a significant number also reduced its seriousness when considering it in terms of the male-female abuse-honour paradigm.

The comments below represent the views of some staff and indicate how this cultural belief can deny or at least reduce empathy for boys. Alongside masculinity and notions of strength, self-reliance, invulnerability and manhood, the common view that sex for males cannot be abusive provides a powerful barrier to understanding and suggests a starting point for changing attitudes and behaviour. In essence, a number of participants were unable or reluctant to accept that abuse of boys is always serious.

Boys have no virginity. It’s shameful if the neighbours know, but not so serious. It’s worse for girls. Boys who are abused a lot can become normal and then there will be no effects.

It takes boys a long time to tell. In the last regime there was no abuse of boys ... There is some pain but no virginity issue; they can still marry.

Abuse of girls is more serious; they have honour and virginity. It’s normal for boys to have sex before marriage.

Many of these opinions are contradicted by the reality, found in the responses of victims and survivors earlier in the report, but demonstrate the influence of cultural beliefs on contemporary thinking and behaviour.

One participant provided a variation upon the theme of “gold and cotton”, further illustrating the strength of cultural beliefs in relation to males, strength and vulnerability:

I have gained awareness through working here, but many Cambodians don’t think it’s a problem. They believe that boys are like the rice before it is threshed—if it falls into the water it can still grow. Girls are considered like the white rice—if you drop it, it will die. So Cambodians do not care so much if the boy has a problem.

Comments on Social Responses

Some respondents were critical of the attitude to and treatment of boys by some local authority staff, identifying discriminatory practices. It is clear that future training and

development will require the attendance of staff from a wide range of services, working together to develop inclusive and sensitive services.

There is often poor practice from the police, and the boys are blamed. There is no will to process cases, and sometimes they will not let social workers sit in on the interviews with the child.

Medical examiners at hospital refuse to examine boys. They say they don't know how to, as girls are raped but not boys, because they have no vagina. Boys have injuries but they refuse to help. It's an injustice: they are victims but get no help!

Court processes are long, and often we do not get a good result—it's very frustrating.

The legal system is completely flawed: recurring victims are blamed, police are not sympathetic ... Many forms of abuse are not even seen as abuse: a man performing oral sex on a boy, leading to ejaculation, is seen as abuse, but without ejaculation—not abuse.¹⁸⁰

Boys are seen as dirty and teased and joked about. They are seen not as victims but as troublemakers. I remember one court official who came to interview a boy ... He walked into the room and said, "You stink!" The boy just got up and left

What Works and Will Help Boys?

Staff shared what they considered to be the most useful and successful initiatives, strategies, ideas and approaches in their work with boys. One interesting point to emerge is the need for a wide-ranging and holistic approach but also the similarities between what many boys identified as their needs and staff responses. Key themes are safety, acceptance and flexibility.

Twenty-four-hour drop-in services that are always open, non-judgmental and safe. Children must never feel unwelcome.

Somewhere safe where children can get a meal, have showers and be safe from immediate and further sexual abuse.

Staff need to be patient and show love, affection, care and encouragement to the boys.

Most people around the boys blame them. It's important to let them know you value them and know it's not their fault.

180 The notion of ejaculation equating with abuse (and therefore lack of ejaculation not being abuse) is not an uncommon response. Several staff in another site indicated that ejaculation determined whether they considered an act to be abusive or not. The team also noted that it is not uncommon for press reports to refer to the rape of women as "successful or unsuccessful"; this often appears to be dependent upon ejaculation. This suggests that some consider "successful" sex (and therefore sexual offences) from a particularly male perspective, where sex always ends in ejaculation and satisfaction of the male. The absence of ejaculation appears to critically influence the attitudes and behaviour of many towards male victims and warrants further exploration and inclusion in training. For boys who have clearly been abused and experience fear, shame and confusion, the denial of their abuse and their rights has significant consequences.

Not to be judgmental—the key is to understand the situation the boys are in. Staff are in a very powerful position; their words are very powerful.

Close coordination of services that are child-centred and sensitive to the issue.

Building of trusting relationships is crucial.

If you want to help boys, don't blame them but help them understand it's not their fault. That will help them release their pain and feelings.

Recognise that children have many other problems that they need help with; sexual abuse is just one of them.

Flexibility is vitally important. Avoid an all-or-nothing approach—the thought of having to commit to something straight away is a barrier for many.

Be accessible and offer choices.

Many boys worry about their families, so work with families can help them to solve their problems.

Working with families and children to promote safety and prevention is vital.

Time away from the street to spend with a social worker.

Having a named social worker helps, someone the boy can relate to.

Have a personal plan for each child, coordinating education, outreach and drop-in services ... with personal goals. Focus on strengths, achievements and empowerment.

Need a drop-in service providing activities and games.

Understanding from communities and family through raised awareness.

Counsellors and staff need to understand and not blame boys. The quality of the staff around the boys is very important, and they must keep confidentiality.

Working with parents is very important as well as counselling for boys.

We need to help boys speak ... They have problems but they do not tell anyone about it ... for example, blood in the urine ... You must build trust ... if you have that, the boys will tell you what they need.

The boy's friends are very important. You need to build relationships of trust with boys and their friends, identify their needs and likes and focus on that. Activities and games are useful because sometimes they tell you about their abuse in different ways.

One outreach worker shared his recipe for building trusting relationships with boys:

It is difficult ... but if you want to get boys involved, spend time with them where they live and where they spend their time ... Explain what you do, but leave the choice up to them ... Do not disturb what they do, and show them respect ... Treat them as equals ... Many street children are afraid of adults ... And don't make promises that you can't keep.

The Needs of Staff

It is clear that, in Sihanoukville, despite limited resources, the two NGOs and staff who were interviewed are achieving a great deal, which is testament to their professionalism and cooperation, often under challenging circumstances. Their knowledge is based on some training, but their capacity to feed the lessons from their work back into practice is evident and clearly benefiting all concerned. We asked what their needs were in relation to their work. The responses were wide ranging, thoughtful and impressive, generally falling under one of four categories: sexual abuse of boys, working with children and boys, developing work with families and communities and collaboration with others.

A brief summary of the expressed training requirements is given below. Data from all field sites will be collated and used to inform the development of further courses by SSC, but will also be of use to others in identifying steps that need to be taken prior to and after the development of services.

Sexual abuse: emotional impacts and honour; helping and understanding boys; healing boys and girls who have been abused; how abusers work; exploring sexual abuse in the wider context (risk factors such as poverty etc.); basic training in relation to therapy and counselling skills; what works and doesn't work with boys; methods and resources for working with male survivors. Many of the staff also identified the need for more regular individual supervision and support to inform their work.

Working with children and boys: communicating and working with boys; working with anger and aggression; child-friendly approaches and resources; emotional needs of children and child development; understanding boys' feelings and attitudes; methods that bring success; how to talk to boys and girls; general social work skills; resources for working with boys—games and activities; drug misuse and health problems.

Families and community: help talking to families and communities about sexual abuse issues; domestic violence and alcohol misuse in families; income generation for families; helping others outside understand our work.

Collaboration with others: helping hospital staff work with boys more effectively; police—helping them interview children about sexual abuse; increasing awareness of government and local authorities; working together to ensure children are protected and abusers arrested.

This work is both tiring and very stressful. One participant stated that staff feel as if they have failed if a boy is abused; another remarked, "It's very difficult for staff, destructive and draining". Workers in this field in many other countries also report feelings of isolation, alienation and despair often linked to the nature of abuse, lack of awareness of the issue and inadequate training, support and supervision. In many respects, Cambodian social workers and other supporters are no different. They also require access to special knowledge and support. Adequate time for reflection is not an optional extra, and training, consultation and skilled supervision are also important.¹⁸¹

181 Walker, M. (1992)

Summary

A significant problem exists in relation to sexual abuse of children in this setting. Where boys are concerned, the previously identified risk factors appear to act as a significant “push” factor for many, particularly those from poor back grounds. One participant explained that some boys were abused and received as little as 100–500 riels (2.5–12.5 US cents) from the perpetrator. While Sihanoukville appears to attract significant numbers of foreign sex tourists and others who wish to entrap, exploit and abuse children, little is known about sexual abuse and exploitation of boys by the local population, and future research will need to address this. It has been observed elsewhere that poverty and subsequent vulnerability to offers of financial support play a significant role, as well as creating a culture of impunity where local authorities are concerned.¹⁸²

The work of the two NGOs at this site has led to great progress in the four years since they began work in this area. Without their presence and clearly very effective cooperation, protection, prevention and support initiatives would be almost non-existent in Sihanoukville and virtually all child abuse would go unnoticed. Concerns were expressed in relation to the responses of some local authorities, and there is clearly significant room for improvement. They are in many respects operating within a context in which sexual abuse of boys is significant, but this is not matched by awareness or concern within the local community. One respondent remarked that “reporting sexual abuse is a nightmare”. It appears to be a constant battle to have the issue taken seriously.

Commitment was strong and awareness among many staff was relatively high, although the influence of cultural norms, in negating or diluting boys’ experiences, was a significant factor for many. Some less experienced staff was able to identify important and wide-ranging learning needs for all concerned. Importantly, some female staff identified additional needs to develop more confidence in relation to working with boys.

The high levels of cooperation and mutual respect between the two NGOs are seen as an influential factor in the success of their work. The emphasis on the development of community-based, flexible, non-stigmatising and inclusive initiatives, supporting children and their families in their real needs, provides a firm foundation and is a model that others would do well to learn from.

Data from Battambang

Existing research and documentation provided by NGOs in the area suggest that there are significant numbers of children who experience migration or being trafficked for labour purposes to Thailand. That documentation also identifies that significant numbers of children are at risk or are victims of sexual abuse.¹⁸³ It was anticipated that data from this area would provide an alternate source of valuable information to the largely tourist site that is Sihanoukville and the urban site of Phnom Penh.

Our experiences in Battambang were very different compared to Sihanoukville. The vast majority of participants initially indicated that they had never worked, and did not currently work, with boys who had been abused. A number of reasons were suggested for this, including that it didn’t happen in that province, but only elsewhere, such as Poipet and Thailand. Other explanations included that that the NGO worked only with children trafficked for labour purposes, or that the director had told them that this was not their area of work. It was confusing for the research team, because early responses

¹⁸² Keane, K. (2006)

¹⁸³ IOM (2005)

gave the impression that many participants believed that Battambang was a province completely free of sexual exploitation or abuse of boys.

The interview questions were therefore modified to ask about the types of problems and difficulties experienced by the boys they knew. Further probing revealed that many of the staff had and still were working with victims and survivors of sexual abuse, but that they were either not recognising it or did not consider it to be serious. Awareness of this issue among the majority interviewed was generally extremely low. As a result, the capacity of the staff to both protect boys or support them following abuse is limited.

Awareness of Sexual Abuse of Boys

It soon became clear that the majority of participants believed that the boys they work with have not experienced sexual abuse or exploitation, because they were mostly caring for children exploited for labour purposes or, as one person described them, “vagrants”. Further probing revealed that staff generally have little awareness of what sexual abuse of boys is, are confused and therefore find it hard to define or recognise it. Those who had heard about it generally assumed that it happens elsewhere but seldom or rarely in Battambang or their workplaces. Participants rarely knew how to respond to abuse when it was discovered. Following a team discussion, on ethical grounds it was decided not to interview boys in this field site, because the likelihood of them receiving appropriate support following disclosure was very slim.

I have never met a sexually abused boy. It only happens in Thailand and Poipet; they are referred to centres in Battambang through IOM. It is rarely mentioned in the community because people only pay attention to girls. We don't know about this, but child centres might. Personally, I think it might be a big problem.

There are no sexually abused boys here. I never ask them but I just know from observation.

In 10 years, I've never worked with a boy who was sexually abused ... I've heard about boys being abused in Poipet ... boys here talk about their friends being abused or oral and anal sex ... I was surprised to hear about it.

I would have to see it with my own eyes to believe it.

If boys come here, I have to call the head office to ask them what to do—I don't believe it.

I tell my manager about problems with boys, sexual behaviour and abuse, but they say there are no abused boys here.

I've never met a sexually abused boy ... never heard about it—gays are responsible.

I've never worked with a sexually abused boy. Parents never tell us about it, but I've heard it is foreigners and gays who do it.

Not here ... Before one boy showed me his anus and he had a STI, but now he's dead. He was abused by foreigners and Khmers.

Most boys here are trafficked to Thailand for labour and come from Poipet. The violence the boys experience is very great ... I've never

thought to ask about sexual abuse before ... I asked my director and he said that our work is not related to that; he says that there are no children here who have been abused—girls or boys ... I sometimes see boys playing with each other's genitals ... I think that maybe some of them have been abused, but I've had no training; I don't know what to do or how to react.

Khmer society does not empathise with boys ... Girls' rights are promoted, and we are struggling to come to terms with this.

As interviews probed deeper, some participants remembered situations in which it was clear that sexual abuse had in fact taken place. The following examples highlight that lack of awareness is not restricted to individual staff but affects organisational forums. The assumption appears to be that it happens elsewhere.

At meetings of NGOs and government, we rarely discuss this issue ... I've heard it happens in Poipet and Thailand. We get few referrals of boys here; organisations have their own counsellors, and if they have problems, they refer to us. Boys tend to be referred if they have behaviour problems such as not wanting to work or study, or if they are stubborn and disobedient, or playing with their own genitals. They tell boys to stop, but it's not effective. I don't generally do counselling with boys, because they do that at the centres. I work more with females.

I remember that one boy did tell me that he was abused. The first time he didn't want to talk—he was very shy, afraid, hesitant and worried about revealing ... I was surprised; I had never heard directly about this before, just in newspapers and magazines ... If we compare boys with girls, it's more difficult for boys because they don't accept that they have problems. Culturally they are considered strong, and they cannot cry or talk about their problems because it's a sign of weakness.

Some respondents were open to the possibility but were unable to recognise potentially abusive situations when they were encountered and found the whole idea very confusing:

I asked the staff about it ... There is no history of boys with sexual abuse here ... We do see boys play with each other in a sexual way. Many of the girls here were raped when they were in Thailand by both Khmers and Thais. Male staff usually work with boys but perhaps they lack information regarding boys' abuse.

The thing is that there are no boys abused here; it's new, and because so far we focus only on labour abuse, we never ask about sexual abuse ... One night very late I heard a boy shouting and I saw a big boy on top of him. When I arrived he had run away and the small boy was crying ... He told me the big boy had been on top of him but then I didn't know what else to ask.

Maybe some boys have been abused who live here ... Some boys tell us that they see other boys playing with their genitals, sometimes staff see big boys on top of small boys ... We asked and they said it was just playing and wanted to know how it was ... We had one boy who was

reintegrated already ... When we followed up after his return home, he told us that when he was staying here, there was a boy who had raped him ... The other boy had left the centre already

When other staff of the same NGO were interviewed later, they indicated that they had discovered a teenage boy “having sex” with a boy half his age. Their responses suggest that there may also be cultural practices that underlie the stated values of NGOs:

One was on top of the other boy ... I beat them with a stick one time, scolded them and asked them why they were doing this. These boys were victims of labour abuse in Thailand; maybe they did this because they had seen others doing it. I sent the boys to the social worker to solve the problem, but I don't know what they did to those boys; they didn't tell us. I told the director that I beat them ... They said that was okay, as long as it wasn't too hard.

Another participant's response starkly illustrates the struggle that many untrained staff has believing and responding appropriately to boys, even when they do disclose that abuse is taking place:

Some small boys tell about the older boys being nasty, playing rough games, and the small boys become sad ... It's hard to know about sexual abuse, if it's play or sexual abuse. Five or six boys complained to my colleague about being touched on the genitals by two older boys; they dealt with that. If girls are touched, it's sexual abuse but boys ... I'm not sure ... If it happens once, maybe they were dreaming. Three or four times and then it's abuse. If one boy came and told me, I might not believe it, but if many, then I will.

When researchers asked the colleague how he responded to reports by several boys of potential abuse, he told us that they were too busy with other work to do anything and that someone else offered to speak to the alleged perpetrators. When interviewed later, the director of this NGO was adamant that there were no boys who had experienced sexual abuse staying there. It appears, in this case at least, that information relating to potential abuse and child protection issues is not being passed on. The reasons for this appeared to be lack of clear lines of communication and responsibility, but fundamentally the fact that the sexual abuse of boys is neither recognised as a problem nor taken seriously when it is reported. In other settings directors or team managers often stated categorically that they did not work with abused boys, while interviews with staff often contradicted these accounts.

Child Protection—Policies, Issues and Concerns

Numerous NGOs work with vulnerable children in this area. However, one concern for the team was that many appeared to be operating without adequate staff awareness of child protection procedures, policies or protocols. One large and seemingly prosperous NGO, caring for the needs of dozens of children from impoverished and abusive backgrounds, had no child protection policy or procedures for checking on visitors. The team observed a number of volunteers and visitors, including some who lived at the centre. They did not employ any social workers or counsellors and seemed unclear about the backgrounds of individual children, although they were certain that they were not working with any who were abused, despite observing the highly sexualised behaviour of some in their care. A member of staff commented that it was not a problem if the boys

were touched on the genitals “occasionally”. One researcher commented on a sense that this NGO was “using children to attract donors” rather than existing to meet their needs.

Another NGO had recently introduced a code of conduct for staff, although this did not cover visitors’ or children’s behaviour. (At this NGO several boys had been complaining of sexual assaults by other boys). Another organisation was caring for 28 children (16 boys) without child protection procedures, while difficulties obtaining funding resulted in just one staff member being employed. In circumstances like these, it is highly unlikely that children will receive the protection or support they require in the event of sexual abuse.

In other settings, staff appeared to be unclear about exactly what sexual abuse is in relation to boys, having never heard about it before. They did describe to researchers seeing boys playing sexualised games within the centre but also assumed that the boys were all abused overseas, not in Cambodia. Labels such as “crazy, drug using, street children and gays” were used to describe abused boys, indicating the need for more accurate and less discriminatory information. Some staff had so little understanding of boys in general and sexual abuse in particular that interventions including “educating them and telling them to stop” and “hygiene and morality” were considered the only way to address the issue. One respondent told of a girl going to stay at an NGO with her small brother, but because the NGO wanted to take only girls, he had to stay with the guard.

One participant working with another NGO supporting MSM in Battambang told of a young man who had been violently raped by a group of 17 men, in similar circumstances to accounts shared by MSM in Phnom Penh.

Effects

Awareness of the potential impact of sexual abuse was limited among the majority of participants. Some had observed sexualised behaviour of boys and other behaviours that might suggest that abuse had taken place, but did not consider the possibility that it might be related to abuse. It was invariably seen as “messing around” or “boys playing”. One participant stated, “I have never asked them, so I cannot tell”.

Other respondents were able to identify that sexual abuse was harmful in a number of ways. But most explained that they had not worked with boys, and it seemed that they often considered it serious because it was against the law, culture and tradition rather than because of its impact upon the victim’s physical and mental health. A few respondents thought that abused boys would go on to abuse other boys, while one person contradicted that, stating, “They will not abuse others because they know about the pain it causes”.

One participant knew a boy from another province who was abused for many years. His account suggests that the boy had serious long-term problems and difficulties being believed by those closest to him:

I knew a boy in Pursat province; he was abused when he was nine years old. He was scared of his past, fearful of men and had nightmares—he wanted to run away from everything that happened to him. He tried to tell his parents but they didn’t believe him. They said that he was crazy and beat him sometimes too ... I tried to explain to the boy’s family ... so they stopped beating him and I took him to hospital to meet a psychiatrist in Phnom Penh ... He was given medicine and counselling. The boy’s family still doesn’t believe he was

abused and think he's crazy because he has bad dreams and cries out every night.

Another reported how sexual abuse affected a friend:

He told me that he was abused in 1972 by a monk. He said that he would never be able to forget it ... It was "worse than Pol Pot times".

Honour and Shame

The dominance of cultural perspectives and assumptions in relation to virginity and honour were present in many responses, most considering that it was not a significant issue for boys. Some participants offered some interesting notions that provide useful insight. The example below is not representative of all but demonstrates the confusion that the sexual abuse of males may create in the minds of potential helpers who are used to hearing predominantly about girls and women. Current frameworks for understanding harm and perceived loss of honour and reputation struggle to accommodate the abuse of males.

One participant suggested that boys would lose some honour, because sexual abuse was against Khmer culture, adding that because it wasn't a "natural event", it wasn't too serious. They (boys) could be "accepted and forgiven – it is serious for the victim but not for society". (This seems to suggest that victims are perhaps considered responsible for their abuse and does not address issues of physical or psychological harm). They remarked that if a girl is raped, it is seen as a "natural event" and therefore more serious for society.

The common practice of "compromise" being reached with perpetrators of abuse against females, involving the payment of money as compensation, is therefore in their words "better for society". In the "unnatural event" of a boy's abuse "compromise" is not possible. They considered that "anger will linger" in the boy's mind as a result, whilst in the case of females "everyone is happy". This illustrates that for some at least "compromise" is seen as an acceptable solution after the fact, reducing scandal and to a certain extent responding to the need to compensate for soiled reputation. It also appears to make the incorrect assumption that that because compromise makes society feel better, the impact upon the victim is minimal.

By denying the rights of victims and effectively favouring the perpetrator (who will avoid prosecution), this view demonstrates some of the complexities of achieving social justice where females are concerned, especially in settings where notions of honour and family reputation appear to overshadow the needs of individual victims.

Another participant remarked that honour and reputation are often linked to biological capabilities:

Most Cambodians have a different perception about boys. They cannot become pregnant and so the people don't care about their reputations ...

Another social worker was one of few to suggest an alternative perspective:

Deep down, there is a huge stigma. Boys are abused in Thailand when looking for labour ... After being raped, they still need true love. I tell people and they laugh ... I tell them it's not like the proverb [cotton and gold] ... Boys also have shame. I heard a boy say, "Tricked in the body ... not as painful as the mind".

Successes and Challenges of Working with Boys

The staff interviewed were committed to the well-being of the children in their care and generally met the basic needs of the children. However, it was observed that the awareness and skills needed to explore beyond children's obvious needs were often lacking. In most cases the emotional and psycho-social needs of boys are neither recognised nor responded to.

Few respondents were able to give examples of successful interventions with boys who had been sexually abused, for obvious reasons. It is clear that many of the staff have had little or no training and therefore struggle to identify and understand these boys' more complex needs and work effectively with them. The support staff receives from managers and directors in many cases is unhelpful because they also appear to lack awareness and to be at a loss as to know how to help.

Some boys' behaviour is very difficult for staff to understand, interpret and respond to, often resulting in their needs not being adequately assessed and their being labelled as "difficult". Their externalised behaviour is rarely interpreted as a sign that they need help, and they suffer in comparison to girls. Many participants complained that boys don't listen or do as they are told, with the result that they are often seen as "bad" rather than in need of understanding. Many responses illustrate the frustrations of carers. One researcher commented that people are not looking "beyond the outside, beneath the skin".

Boys are more difficult. They are nastier and lazy about study.

Boys go out more, are able to protect themselves and not vulnerable.

They tell lies at first.

They don't listen to advice.

They are aggressive and get angry with people criticising them.

They sit alone.

They don't like discipline, so they leave; it's a problem for all NGO's

It's very difficult to change them.

They don't accept that they have problems.

One experienced social worker, however, did have some positive ideas about caring for boys:

They are also like girls; they need support, encouragement and understanding. It's no use telling them they are bad and criticising them ... Boys believe that people look down on them and that they are outside society, so they don't value themselves ... If you want to help, let them express their thoughts and feelings. People think "boys won't change", they are bad and useless—but we need to advocate for boys and get more support and training.

Needs of Staff

As identified above, NGO staff clearly find boys very difficult to understand, connect with and relate to; this leads to boys being seen as a problem. Traditional methods of working with boys highlight the need for good behaviour, conformity, being a "good

Cambodian boy” who behaves, studies hard and is quiet. The reality is that, even if these boys have not been sexually abused, many of their experiences prior to accommodation in residential centres involved physical and emotional abuse and other forms of exploitation; they often come from poor backgrounds in which survival is the primary goal in life. Evidence emerged that many may be currently be experiencing sexual abuse. Many staff are ill equipped to help or understand. The consequences are potentially damaging for all concerned.

Few staff received regular individual supervision of their work. Those who did received it from managers or directors who invariably did not have the experience, knowledge or training to help staff with many of the specific problems they face. Some appear to be aware that sexual abuse may be a problem, but they have little ability or opportunity to change perceptions in what amount to organisational cultures of denial. Support for staff is usually offered in group meetings, where administrative tasks are often given priority; staff reported that meetings related to work with children are often problem-focused rather than addressing staff needs and development.

Some participants reported receiving training from a range of well known NGOs in relation to child care and mental health. These courses did not appear to be useful in helping them understand or develop the skills to work with boys, and mostly did not consider issues for boys at all. Their content was fairly “general”, which often means that boys are not considered. Training is rarely backed up with the subsequent supervision required to reinforce learning and continue development.

One member of staff (who was clearly very committed), working exclusively with groups of boys who had been trafficked to Thailand, identified that many boys had drug problems and often experienced violent beatings from parents and exploiters. He had observed sexualised behaviour among boys but was told by his director that there were no sexually abused children at the centre and this was not their area of work. The training he had received was related to birth spacing and sexual health. He had received some concerning sexual abuse, which, as he remembered, emphasised the “importance of forgiving the perpetrator”, rather than identifying abuse and helping victims and survivors. While the need for forgiveness and reconciliation in relation to sexual abuse has received greater attention in recent years in some western countries, it should not be considered a priority of intervention. This also illustrates that training is not appropriate or fulfilling the needs of staff.

In many respects, it appears that many social work and care staff are also neglected and unsupported, and feel a great sense of isolation and/or failure. This should be viewed with seriousness by all concerned. Some specific responses below indicate a significant need for basic skills and awareness, continued specialist development and ongoing support:

I feel uncomfortable when boys cry; the five-hudt chest man doesn't cry ... Working with strong emotions is hard. If boys say what happened is “normal” it's not a problem... but if they cry ...

I'm too shy to talk with boys.

I find it hard it hard to know how to build good relationships.

Supervisors need training to be counsellors too.

Working with boys is very stressful.

It's stressful. I blame myself for not being able to help and ask myself, why can I not help?

How do we begin to solve their problems?

Training for foster carers—anything. We don't know what to study!

I'm scared to talk about sexual abuse—worried about it happening if I do.

I've had lots of training about biology, drugs, counselling, suicide—but nothing about boys!

Identified training needs generally fell into two main categories; fairly evenly split in relation to working with boys and children in general, and the sexual abuse of boys. Some of these are summarised below; they will be collated and fed into the development of future training initiatives by SSC and other providers. One clear difference in this province compared to Sihanoukville was the repeatedly stressed need of virtually all participants for even very basic information about boys and sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse: What is sexual abuse of boys? How are boys abused? Ways of assessing and finding out about abuse—what are the signs? What is okay/not okay? Effects? Recovery and ways to help? Defining abuse of boys—what is it?

Working with boys: Emotional needs of children, managing children without shouting, helping boys change behaviour from negative to positive; caring for children; making children like us, follow us and listen to us; methods of working with boys; building good relationships with boys; boys' development and differences of boys.

Summary and Analysis

The research team's experiences were markedly different from those in the other field sites. Awareness of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys was observed to be generally far lower than in other sites in our study. It was a strange experience for the team because we had become used to people acknowledging its existence in higher numbers. Initially, in Battambang awareness and incidents seemed virtually non-existent. Research suggests that up to 2006, there have been very few cases of sexual abuse of boys recorded in Battambang and that attempts to pursue justice were thwarted.¹⁸⁴ Of those who expressed an opinion, most considered foreigners and gays as responsible, usually in other places in Cambodia or Thailand, not Battambang.

Further probing revealed that some participants had actually known boys or men who had been abused; one account dating back 35 years, while others gave accounts of clearly abusive behaviour that had gone unnoticed, was not considered abuse or was ignored. Most staff do not know how to recognise signs of sexual abuse of boys or know what to do when it is discovered. Contradictory evidence exists in some settings, where directors and managers denied the existence of abuse, while others in the same NGO reported abuse taking place. We can only speculate about why this occurred—a lack of communication within and between organisations; low levels of awareness, procedures and protocol; a focus on the stated aims of the NGO at the expense of other important needs; possibly a deliberate attempt to hide the issue; or a combination of all.

184 Renault, R. (2006) p. 18, remarked on two cases of boys abused by foreign nationals in Battambang in which authorities and shelter staff failed to respond. She comments that there is a deep-seated resistance to taking action among some official bodies and child care professionals.

In any case, the true scale of the problem is not being recognised or acknowledged, and abuse is therefore rarely taken seriously when it is reported. One clear difference in this field site was the absence of an NGO like APLE, which has done so much elsewhere to raise the profile of abuse of boys, albeit predominantly by foreign perpetrators. It is also clear that abuse of boys by Cambodians is only rarely considered as a possibility. The powerful cultural beliefs and stereotypes of boys being invulnerable also influence perceptions. Evidence and anecdotal accounts from elsewhere suggest that many Cambodians find it hard to believe that males can have sex with each other and think anal sex is impossible.

Recent documentary evidence, albeit limited, suggests that significant numbers of boys trafficked to Thailand for “labour abuse”, as it was referred to, are also victimised and exploited sexually.¹⁸⁵ Many of these boys are referred from transit centres and organisations in the Poipet area to NGOs in Battambang. It may be that this issue is not being recognised at source in Poipet and therefore not being passed on to NGOs receiving referrals in other settings.

One participant with experience in the north-west of Cambodia shared the following thoughts:

Information is “lost”. Knowledge of sexual abuse exists, but it doesn’t reach the shelters. There is no monitoring of programmes; it’s very chaotic, and genuine accountability is limited ... I saw clear cases involving boys who were sexually abused, but staff were not acknowledging it. It’s traumatising to be aware of this and see that nothing is being done ...

In many respects, an encounter the consultant had in 2006 may provide some clues and suggests that low recognition is not limited to Battambang province. When discussing the sexual abuse of women and girls in another rural province, with the manager of a human rights organisation, I asked if there were any reports of boys. The reply: “We don’t have any big hotels in this province; it only happens in Phnom Penh and only foreigners abuse boys”. My suggestion that, if that were true, Cambodia would be the only country in the world in which the local population did not abuse boys, was greeted with disbelief. It would seem highly likely that the recognition of sexual abuse of boys in other rural areas is also low.

This situation and the resulting lack of protection and support suggest that boys currently have very little to gain from disclosure. These are exactly the environmental conditions that provide fertile ground for abuse to take place unchecked. It is not a comment on the commitment of individual staff but merely an acknowledgement of the combination of individual, cultural, structural and systematic factors that ensure that abused boys are a hidden and high risk population.

The identified needs of staff also indicate that many struggle to understand, build relationships and “connect” with boys, even if they are not sexually abused. Much of boys’ behaviour is misunderstood. Ultimately, recognition of abuse and the likelihood that boys are going to be protected from it are very low; available support options are unlikely to meet their needs.

185 IOM (2005); Guillin, N.J. (2006)

Data from Phnom Penh

Interviews with staff from a range of NGOs took place throughout the study, from April to mid-June 2007. In all, the opinions of 50 individuals, representing 23 organisations, were sought. The organisations worked in child care, child protection, human rights and law, social work, counselling, psychology and therapeutic services, sexual health, youth justice, anti-trafficking and supporting MSM. A significant number specialised in supporting the homeless or street-living communities. Two additional interviews were carried out by email with expatriate advisers, currently based overseas but with experience working in Cambodia.

The team sought to interview as wide a range of individuals as possible, from foster carers and house parents (arguably individuals who spend most time with boys), to social workers, counsellors and psychologists, lawyers with specialist experience in the field, project coordinators, team leaders, directors and a representative of a prominent Buddhist organisation with a history of community involvement. It was hoped that by reaching out to a variety of participants within one organisation, we could scratch below the surface and explore the issues in more depth. The vast majority of the interviews took place at the premises of the organisation or NGO.

The team also carried out an additional five focus group discussions with staff from organisations either working with street children or supporting children in residential centres, seeking the opinions of a further 50 individuals (see Appendix 8). Therefore the total number of people in Phnom Penh who had the opportunity to share their views with the team exceeded 100.

Presentation of the data will focus on will focus on the most common themes emerging from the interviews. Where exceptional differences in viewpoints and experiences occur, they are included.

Awareness of Sexual Abuse of Boys

In contrast to the team's experience in Battambang, virtually all participants were aware to some degree of the sexual abuse of boys, from either direct experience or news media. However, responses did show emerging patterns. When asked who they thought was responsible for the abuse and exploitation of boys, the overwhelming majority identified foreigners. This is not surprising considering that many of the organisations work with street-living and other boys who often come to the attention of services as a result of abuse by foreigners. Press reports also predominantly report court appearances of foreign perpetrators, and most of the limited resources, such as posters and tools for working with children, identify foreign males as perpetrators, excluding other possibilities.

The next most common responses were gay men or MSM (or as some described them, *ketey*). For most, this was an assumption based on the male-male sexual act rather than specific knowledge. This assumption does little for boys or MSM, because many boys may not be protected from others more likely to abuse them. Very few respondents had sufficient knowledge or experience of MSM, gay or homosexual communities to know for certain. Some said that "other boys" living in centres abuse, which was based on work experiences. Anecdotal accounts were shared indicating that women are also capable of abuse.

A smaller number of participants considered the possibility that Khmers may also abuse boys, but usually qualified their remarks by suggesting that it was either high-ranking Khmers, police officers, people who copied or were influenced by foreigners' behaviour

and culture or those influenced by pornography. Few thought that the sexual abuse of boys occurs within Cambodian communities, or involved heterosexual males or females. This was often related to notions of Khmer culture being very different from others, somehow “separate” and, for some, not as “immoral”. Future training and awareness raising may benefit from addressing notions of culture and the development of perceptions as a foundation for greater understanding and analysis of this issue. One respondent was aware of Khmer nationals abusing boys in educational institutions, and others were aware of older boys abusing younger ones in children’s centres; others suggested that some monks in pagodas are also responsible.

It also became clear that many people are genuinely confused about what sexual abuse and exploitation are. This is illustrated by conversations often moving seamlessly from abuse to consenting male sexual relationships, to the “abused to abuser” cycle hypothesis; discussion often included references to boys “messing about” or being attracted to each other and being confused about sexuality, and then returned to the perceived problem caused by foreigners and gays as if it was all the same thing. Some participants also considered boys to be “selling sex”, implying choice, rather than viewing them as exploited or abused, which in the opinion of the team often diluted the seriousness with which the issue was considered.

Some participants, albeit a minority, with experience of working with sexually exploited and abused street children, considered that an apparent lack of force (often in cases where children were groomed and money was exchanged) equated with the boys’ experiences not being harmful.

Several NGOs stated that they referred abused boys to other organisations for counselling. When this was followed up, it appeared that the named individuals involved invariably could not remember receiving the referrals, suggested that they had not worked with abused boys or declined to mention previous work they had carried out. The reason for this is not known, but it does indicate a level of organisational confusion and perhaps ambivalence where boys are concerned. It was not possible to establish what had happened to those referrals.

The issue of boys and sexual abuse appears to be characterised by genuine confusion and lack of information and communication. One joint interview with a manager and staff member of a residential centre for street children illustrates the point. The manager expressed great interest in the research but stated that there were no sexually exploited or abused boys in their centre, which was immediately contradicted by the staff member, because they were working with several.

A minority demonstrated a wider and deeper understanding, recognising that anyone can potentially be an abuser or exploiter of male children, including females and Cambodians. No clear pattern emerged, respondents from the same organisation or team often holding vastly different viewpoints. In other settings, some managers’ and directors’ responses suggested that awareness and training were high, but it was clear that this information was not passed on, because in many cases their staff had minimal knowledge and ability to respond to the needs of boys in their care.

One team manager of a large NGO working with children, many of whom are victims of sexual abuse, commented, “We occasionally discuss this individually, but never as a team or organisation”. For many respondents, the research interview was the first time they have been asked about this. The lack of information and awareness led to genuine confusion, illustrating the need for future training to help people understand the context of both consensual and non-consensual relationships for males and the specific dynamics related to abuse.

Most respondents are clearly committed to caring, and some have sound basic knowledge of children's needs but sometimes struggle to apply it to work with boys. Responses from the same people were often contradictory; some individuals demonstrating genuine concern and compassion for female victims but also struggling to appreciate the seriousness of the issue in relation to boys. Individuals with knowledge are often isolated within organisations and from each other. There was little evidence that boys are discussed at many existing partnership forums despite numerous member organisations working with abused boys.

The comments below illustrate the wide range of opinions:

Most of the time foreigners rape the boys and sometimes Cambodian gays.

The boys I work with are abused by foreigners. Khmers abuse girls ... rarely boys.

Most foreigners who come to Cambodia have the paedophile illness.

Most of the abusers are foreign, but some Khmers too—they copy the foreigners.

Foreigners—Khmers don't do it. I couldn't imagine a woman abusing a boy ... What kind of sexual act could she do with a boy?

Abusers are foreigners and high-level Khmers.

I've only heard about girls.

Only men who are MSM ... Heterosexual men don't do this

Foreigners abuse boys and other boys do too, but not Cambodian adults ... It's against our culture.

Abusers can be anyone, mostly those in a position of trust who are known to the child.

Sexual abuse of boys in Cambodia is not alarming yet ... It's very new ... It happens, but I'm not sure if it's serious or not.

It's mostly foreigners and gays, foreign women too, but not in Khmer culture ... it's not like that. Some poor boys sell sex, but if he doesn't want to have sex, he won't.

Khmers abuse boys in rural areas, but the information is hidden.

We need to face the reality that it's foreigners and Khmers who abuse boys.

Some Khmers abuse children—when I meet children, they tell me it's a problem for girls and boys ... Initially I was shocked ... The government and community just don't know how to respond to this ...

Most people have the idea that it's only girls ... Cases of boys are unreported, services for boys not known ... Boys are not considered as victims. We hear stories but they are not reported; boys are left alone ... People don't know what to say ... so they do nothing.

Touching Boys' Genitals

All participants were aware of this practice, and opinions were varied. Many considered that it was an acceptable and harmless way for adults to show affection to boys up to a certain age (usually two to three years). A few suggested it was just old people who did this or those who lived in rural areas, not in the city. For some there was a contradiction between culture, which tells people it is acceptable, and (unspecified) training which instructs them that it's not. A small number of participants stated that it was okay, but if the boy ejaculated then it would be considered abuse, another that if the boy cried it would be abuse, while one more suggested that it was okay for Cambodians to do but could be considered abuse if a foreigner did it.

Others were convinced that touching a boy's genitals by anyone is generally not a healthy thing, but the reasons were varied. One believed that the penis would stop working, another suggested that a doctor had told him it makes boys sensitive to sex and sick, while others said that it can cause inappropriate sexual feelings, make boys feel angry and/or ashamed and be the cause of problems when they grow older. Emerging themes throughout the research indicate that children's perspectives relating to this are not often considered. One participant hinted at the usefulness of training but also the gap that exists between some adults' and children's views:

Before training I used to think it was normal, but after, I started to question it ... Children feel ashamed and get scared and don't get pleasure in the way that adults think.

One Cambodian parent explained how difficult it is to protect their own child:

It's a problem ... Boys can learn from adults and think that doing that is normal. I don't like it if someone touches my son's genitals, but it's hard to stop them, even people in my own family ... They say they only do it because they love him ... Older people do it but children are not happy ... My son gets extremely angry.

Another with considerable experience of working with sexually abused children believed that this practice contributes to the risk of abuse:

There are very few or no boundaries for themselves or anyone who may want to abuse them ... The implications of this are very serious ... Boys are fondled and humiliated in front of their friends and neighbours ... They grow up thinking that people can do what they like and that they can too.

Awareness of the Impacts and Effects of Sexual Abuse

Participants were prompted by questions about thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Responses were primarily based on observations in work experiences. Some had received occasional training within organisations or from other NGOs, including some based overseas. Most respondents who had knowledge shared accounts based on observations and experience and indicated that significant numbers of boys struggle with a range of serious physical, psychological and behavioural issues, leaving few aspects of their lives untouched:

Not speaking.

Self-blame and confusion about who is responsible.

Injuries to the anus and genitals.

Feeling like they are the only one who is abused.

Being angry and irritated.

May have confused feelings about sex and sexuality.

Not realising that what happened was abuse.

Denial of what happened.

Feelings of embarrassment and shame.

Confused by sexual arousal.

Sexualised behaviour.

Wanting to abuse and rape others.

Will become gay or act like a female.

However, a number of responses were clearly assumptions that appeared to be based on guesses or incomplete information rather than fact. Some respondents expressed the opinion that money given by abusers motivated boys to be more concerned with money and material goods (*plert plern*). It was observed that, in the absence of adequate training and support, a vacuum exists that is often filled with inaccurate information and interpretations that may become accepted as fact and “common sense”. In a pattern repeated elsewhere, even when training is received, often the most memorable fact that people recall is related to the cycle of abuse hypothesis. This is a complex area, and it appears that a lot of currently available training is not exploring these issues in sufficient depth or breadth to prepare staff adequately for working with boys.

I have not met a boy like this yet. I was told in training that they may want to have sex with the same sex and become abusers.

If boys are abused for a long time by foreigners, they will abuse other boys.

In some organisations, boys who were sexually exploited or abused were often described by participants as “selling sex”. One team manager considered that abusers were either foreign or gay and suggested that boys have two main feelings when abused: either wanting to stay with the *ketny* or thinking about making money. The impression gained was that these boys were somehow responsible for continuation of the abuse, which contradicted the views of his colleagues, suggesting that information sharing is not taking place to any great extent within that organisation.

One participant shared what one boy had told her about being sexually abused, which addresses the issue of powerlessness:

I am like a little musk deer that is the adult’s food. I am unable to fight back or respond ... I am like a kitten or puppy that can be thrown wherever ... I am lower than them and cannot say anything back.

Honour and Shame

While some participants were able to recognise that shame and loss of honour are significant barriers to be overcome by boys, other responses indicated, similarly to other

sites, that boys tend to suffer less than girls. This was not restricted to those with limited training or lower status within organisations; overall, boys' abusive experiences are likely to be seen as less harmful.

As described earlier, perceptions of many Cambodians related to sexual abuse and females and its association with virginity, honour and family reputation contribute to male victimisation not being taken seriously or acknowledged. In relation to victims and survivors of either sex it may also create an effective barrier to the development of an empathetic understanding and appreciation of their needs as victims of sexual trauma in their own right.

Some respondents also equated boys' being offered money, or an apparent lack of violence or physical force, with the event not being harmful. A small minority found it hard to believe that boys can be sexually abused at all. This was linked to the perception that men can't have sex with each other, or that anal sex is impossible. This illustrates the view of many that "real sex" is heterosexual, involving a sexual script featuring penetration of the vagina by the penis; anything else is either impossible or "less than" legitimate.¹⁸⁶ It appears that these hetero-centric notions about consenting sexual relationships strongly influence views of victimisation, contributing to the denial of boys' experiences.

It is clear from data gained from the boys that this is a major concern for them. The significant gap between their experiences and the perceptions of many staff, suggests that opportunities for boys to express their feelings are limited and that they are not being heard. It also indicates that an in-depth exploration of this issue should be an essential part of future training if male survivors are to be provided with the understanding, care and support they need.

Boys in general have no shame; girls have honour and virginity.

Boys don't have it much compared to girls; there is little shame.

If this happens to girls, they lose their future and virginity ... It's painful for the body and mind, and no one will love them anymore. Boys are still boys and can forget it.

Boys also lose honour like girls. They are also victims and lose virginity, but there is nothing written about this ... Boys' issues are not heard, and no one pays attention, no one knows ... Parents regard boys as pure gold ... They don't listen to the boys and don't care for them.

If the people around the boys are supportive, it can help them feel less shame.

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation by Women

As identified in the literature summary, boys' abuse and exploitation by females is even less likely to be considered abusive, disclosed or taken seriously when it is. Several participants suggested that some boys and young men with whom they worked were involved in "selling sex" to older, richer and high-status women. It appears that they are

186 Evidence from elsewhere (field work and training) suggests that many Cambodians have either never heard of anal sex, and/or believe sex between males to be impossible; others believe that lack of physical force or violence equates with lack of pain, suggesting consent.

approached in parks or at Wat Phnom; sometimes intermediaries are involved, and they meet at pre-arranged destinations such as hotels or guesthouses. Several of the boys and staff in our study confirmed this activity, although little is known and it warrants further exploration.

Throughout the study, we did not meet any boys who reported that they were sexually abused as children by women. However, in Phnom Penh two social workers shared their knowledge based on working experiences. Both accounts suggest that abuse by women exists, has the capacity to have significant long-term impacts upon the lives of victims and survivors and should be taken seriously.

I worked with a young man who was abused by his female neighbour. He was young and she was in her 20s ... She would take children, both girls and boys, to her house and get them to play with each other sexually and sexually abuse the children too ... It had a big impact on him later ... He felt that he was different from everyone else, a “broken person”, that he was destroyed and could never be good again. He was so ashamed, and it affected him for years afterwards.

I knew two men who were abused as children by women. I think in terms of effects, it was just the same as for females ... They were very confused; in some ways they thought it was normal but they were so ashamed, they could not talk or share their feelings ... They were very angry with the abuser and felt guilt and self-blame ... They were confused about relationships and sex ... They tried to deny it but still felt scared. As adults they still feel these things but minimise it due to lack of awareness and support ... In Cambodia men are viewed as strong and powerful ... If they are in a situation where they are forced, they feel powerless, inferior, and may be seen by others as weak ... It turns their world upside down, and they are reluctant to ask for help.

Sexual Abuse of Boys in Vietnamese Communities

As identified in the limitations of the study, the snowballing sample utilised did not lead to any boys from ethnic Vietnamese communities being interviewed. Few staff participants mentioned this as an issue in their work. However, one with extensive experience within this community was able to share information. We learned that when asked, large numbers of boys disclose abuse and exploitation under similar circumstances to those elsewhere; boys earning money by shining shoes, for example, may be approached by foreign perpetrators, or families are targeted by individuals regularly visiting Cambodia who adopt a “godfather” role, where material support is provided as a way of gaining access to both male and female children.

It was acknowledged that girls are known to be high risk but that lack of awareness results in abuse of boys being more hidden. Boys are also witnessing or aware of abuse of female siblings taking place. Less is known about sexual abuse of boys by local perpetrators; boys are often reluctant to talk about it, and staff rarely ask. Similarly to other cultures and communities, Vietnamese boys experience significant problems following abuse, including physical and mental health problems, anger, frustration and pain. Cultural beliefs relating to gender identity, masculinity and expression of feelings also contribute to their difficulties. A community-based and specific research project to explore this issue and develop culturally appropriate responses needs to be undertaken as a matter of urgency. This should also explore how negative attitudes and discrimination

towards the Vietnamese community play a part in further marginalisation and isolation of victims of sexual abuse.

Concerns in Relation to Social Responses

Several participants commented on the behaviour of others towards boys who had been abused, within both the community and organisational settings. Several noted that boys are often mocked and humiliated in communities when others find out about their abuse, supporting the comments made by some boys.

One experienced lawyer explained that her job protecting boys was often made more difficult by the treatment they receive from the authorities, identifying clearly discriminatory and hostile behaviour. While this is not representative of all staff of government institutions, it does demonstrate the difficulties of working in partnership with others, particularly when they have considerable power and authority:

The judge asked the boy rude and mocking questions. He said, “You are a boy—you have no virginity to lose! Tell me the truth: are you doing this for money?” ... They don’t see boys as victims because they don’t have a vagina and don’t think he has serious problems. The doctors mock the boy, saying, “Why should I examine you? You are not a girl—you have no vagina!” ... Then they laugh at them ... I would like to say to them ... lawyers, doctors, judges and the police—please don’t victimise the boys again!

Another participant with experience of working with abused and exploited children said that the roots of discrimination are not always addressed by available training:

Police, lawyers, judges, prosecutors and court clerks blame the children. They tell us: “If children want to do it and earn money, let them do it”, and they blame the NGOs for not protecting them ... This attitude is held by people who are trained and educated ... Training and workshops are not changing a lot of attitudes in the criminal justice system ... You can have all the legal knowledge in the world, but if your core beliefs don’t change, child protection will not improve ... There is a lack of accountability of government employees ... Complaints are made, but they are allowed to get away with it; there are no repercussions for bad practice ... no incentives to improve

The lack of understanding of issues related to abuse may result in vulnerable children being placed at greater risk by well meaning staff; one participant explained how one small boy who “wanted to abuse” was moved to live with older boys, as it was perceived that he would not be able to abuse them. While this may be true, it was clear that the boy might also have been placed in a situation where he was at risk of being abused himself. At many sites, the carers who spent the majority of the time with the children were not given adequate information in relation to them, not enabling them to be able to identify the signs of abusive behaviour and protect other children from potential abuse.

Difficulties, Successes and Ideas for Helping Boys

Similarly to the other sites, the majority of participants identified working with boys, whether abused or not, as a significant challenge. Many compared them to girls, who are often, though not always, seen as being more compliant and well behaved. Many view boys as a problem to be corrected, educated or “fixed” rather than understood. In these circumstances, their behaviour is not always viewed as a result of their abuse or other life

experiences. One researcher with experience in fieldwork and training suggested that many staff find it hard to see beyond the outside and look deeper, in order to understand the root causes of problems in relation to many boys. The benefits of developing these skills and awareness have been noted elsewhere.¹⁸⁷

Boys were identified by a considerable number as not willing to listen to advice or do as they are told, being ill disciplined and/or aggressive. They are often perceived as being harder to talk to and reluctant to express feelings. Others remarked that drug misuse makes it hard for boys to participate and concentrate, while some participants considered boys as being *plert plern* and more concerned with money. These factors lead to feelings including frustration, fear and lack of confidence, as they feel unsure how to respond.

Many found it hard to understand and “connect” with boys. Some female staff said that they find boys difficult, feeling overwhelmed and intimidated. In some cases they blame themselves, often assuming that men have greater rapport, ability and authority. When working with groups of children, the balance between care and control is often a delicate one. These factors led some to regret that they were not allowed to punish children physically, and some carers felt that they too were neglected and undervalued:

They don’t want to talk to staff ... It’s hard to help them; they hide their feelings ... Girls can speak out, so we can help them.

They don’t listen to us!

I feel afraid when boys get angry.

Sometimes I feel like I want to stop working with boys.

It’s more difficult than girls because they easily get angry and irritated.

Boys don’t like living in the centre, so they go back to the street.

While many of the NGOs and staff have undoubtedly achieved success in relation to many aspects of their work, few could share specific or detailed examples of success in relation to working with sexually abused boys. There is a sense that organisations are fulfilling many of the boys’ basic needs but that teams are “stuck” for answers or solutions and struggling to know what to do beyond that in relation to sexual abuse and related problems. However, there was no shortage of commitment and potentially helpful ideas, some demonstrating a deeper understanding and empathy for boys. One of the difficulties identified in the research is that in many cases these individuals are lone voices within their work setting and their opinions are not always shared by other colleagues and incorporated into practice. There is little evidence of organisational policy, plans or initiatives and few resources available.

What Helps?

One participant with substantial experience of working within street communities stressed that sexual abuse or exploitation may be just one of many difficulties that boys have and that a range of responses are needed when planning supports:

187 In a recent evaluation of SSC’s training courses, students said that they enabled them to identify the underlying causes of problems, by developing deeper analysis of social issues on personal, cultural and structural levels. Many noted profound changes in awareness, increased confidence and ability as well as a reduction of fear as a result of training. Roberts, J. (2007).

The big priority is to provide safety, so they can be in a situation where they will not be abused again ... Educational and vocational skills ... outreach is effective but it must be provided in a clearly demonstrated empathic way ... Games and activities can help children express their experiences and feelings and open up in their own time. I don't think that they need an institutional setting unless they have learning or physical disabilities or profound mental health problems.

Other messages provide a firm foundation for the development of good practice:

Time and trust ... When they trust us, they will gradually tell us their problems.

Do not decide for them. They have to make their own choices.

We need to find out what they really need and encourage them to speak out.

Fieldworkers need to understand how and when to talk to children. If we ask them directly, they will not talk ... It takes time and patience.

Boys need emotional support.

They need a safe place to stay, and we need to provide information to them and their families.

We need to let carers know more about boys' problems and reduce the number of boys they look after.

Involving the family would be an important way forward.

We need to listen!

Provide warmth and comfort.

Raise awareness in the community and among local authorities, but do this separately with children because adults dominate.

Schooling and educational skills.

Most importantly, offer them warmth and be patient.

One Cambodian NGO director with great experience of working with a range of NGOs offered a critical perspective on some common difficulties:

Some NGOs get children to study, but the skills they teach are not what are always needed. Adults think they know best ... Rehabilitation is not always successful due to discrimination within the community; people say to children, "You are the same as the abuser" ... Skilled counsellors are important, but there are very few good ones in Cambodia ... Sometimes students on placement provide this, but they are often middle class or rich people; they can't relate to the children and are not effective ... Peer education and counsellors would be better.

Training and Support for Staff

While organisations in Phnom Penh appear to benefit from relatively easier accessibility of training, few participants had attended training in which abuse of boys was discussed in any detail, and they therefore struggled to relate previous learning to this subject. Within the same NGOs, knowledge among staff varied greatly, and responses suggested that, while sexual abuse may be considered a significant problem, this concern is not matched by adequate and coordinated support and training. Sharing of important information within many organisations was minimal. Some limited training and resources do exist that touch on this issue. However, the scenarios involving boys always depict abusers as foreigners, which does not tell the complete story.

Training received in many organisations is often incomplete and does not often meet staff needs. While many talked about “counselling” boys, it was clear that in many cases the basic skills and awareness were insufficient for this to be very effective. What some described was in effect giving advice, often aimed at getting boys to “forget” or improve behaviour, telling them to “be good Cambodian boys” or “not to think about it or worry any more”. Interventions in relation to sexualised behaviour indicated considerable confusion that needs addressing.

The impression gained from the majority of staff and carers is that they are very committed to their work; many appear to have sound basic skills but are often confused about training received and how to apply it in practice. They are generally put into impossible positions, in which few receive adequate information, ongoing support, supervision and training to meet their needs. Many feel overwhelmed by this issue and are, in many respects, like the boys they are striving to support: grappling in the dark, neglected, isolated and vulnerable. This is potentially dangerous for all.

There are not enough staff, resources, or support networks.

I have very little experience of boys and do not have enough knowledge ... I am not sure what to do to help.

Sometimes I just want to stop working with boys.

Lack of communication and information was noted as a specific problem by some:

It's very difficult for me because the managers don't tell me anything ... They ask me to look after boys but do not tell me how to help them ... I think that we must know about these issues so that it will be easier for us to help them recover.

Another expressed worries that speaking out would result in the loss of the job but was also concerned that keeping silent would result in children not getting help:

I never have any kind of support or information from the manager ... I think I need information about the boys' problems ... I work closely with children and can help them get better ... I should have a chance to join in training to develop my knowledge of how to work with boys.

At times the support and advice that staff receives is not very helpful:

If boys want to have sex a lot, I take them to the doctor. He advised me that at mealtimes I was not to give him healthy food [sic] and get him to play lots of sport and exercise.

The Cambodian director of one NGO working with children provided a very honest evaluation of how lack of awareness can have a significant impact upon staff morale:

It's very hard for staff too ... We don't know how to help and also feel regretful when children sell sex, get AIDS and die ... Sometimes boys tell us they are worried ... I ask "How can I help?" and they say, "You cannot help me" ... We also feel upset ... Staff don't know what to do.

Many reported that individual clinical supervision and support are generally not provided, and in places where it was available, participants often said that that it did not meet their needs. Opportunities for ongoing specialist consultation were rarely provided, and many described support meetings as "problem-focused" rather than developmental and supportive.

Several creative suggestions emerged when participants were asked about the way forward:

We need to get together with others doing this and share ideas to improve our work.

We cannot depend on foreign solutions for this work ... We need to look at developing specialist and joint solutions for Cambodia, incorporating ideas from other places.

Training needs to include Cambodian perspectives—some training doesn't and is not effective at all.

I need to be more self-aware so that when I hear about these things, I can prepare myself.

In order to do things successfully, we have to do it together. Individuals cannot do it alone.

Training and other needs identified by staff can be divided into three main categories. It is interesting that general "work with boys" is also identified as a significant priority, as well as specialist training in relation to sexual abuse, similarly to other field sites:

Sexual abuse and boys: what is sexual abuse of boys? the difference between consenting sex and abuse between boys; prevention, protection and reducing risk; impacts and effects; how to help and recovery issues; helping boys in crisis; sexualised behaviour; what are the needs of boys?

Working with boys in general: how to work with boys? How to help staff and boys communicate and build relationships? Overcoming fear of working with boys; counselling and connecting with boys; group skills with boys; helping boys to talk and express themselves; how to support boys and help them help each other.

Other: regular supervision meetings; helping staff with personal issues that arise as a result of working with sexual abuse; someone to listen and help us too—we don't want advice, we want help; a forum for support; books and resources for working with boys; counselling training; carer training to help develop knowledge of working with boys.

Summary and Analysis—Phnom Penh

In many respects data from Phnom Penh were very difficult to analyse because responses were often contradictory within the same setting and often even within the same interview. The sexual abuse and exploitation of boys is a significant issue, but awareness

is varied. The majority of reports coming to the attention of authorities involve foreigners sexually exploiting and abusing boys in street-based scenarios. Abuse by Cambodians is very rarely reported, and this may give the impression that Cambodians are not a risk. This is also reinforced by the availability of materials, posters and other resources which highlight only foreigners as dangers. In this scenario, it is unlikely that abuse by non-foreigners will be interpreted as such, and children and staff are not equipped to respond.

It is therefore no surprise that many participants failed to identify anyone other than foreigners or “gays” as responsible. The lack of awareness is likely to contribute to a great deal of abuse going unnoticed publicly, despite accounts revealing that boys are indeed abused by Cambodians in a number of community and institutional settings.

The void created by the lack of accurate information is often filled by so-called “common sense”, which results in the minimisation or denial of this problem at personal, organisational and structural levels. Solutions will need to address this. Many NGO staff defines sexual exploitation as “selling sex”. While that may on the surface appear to be what is happening, this terminology does not adequately describe the dynamics, underlying causes and “push and pull” factors and appears to dilute the seriousness with which abuse is viewed. Some children and young people may also believe they have chosen and take responsibility for their abuse, and may need working with in a different way than others. Poverty, lack of educational opportunities, other forms of abuse and the discrimination that many victims experience also contribute to their marginalisation.

Others view abuse as not harmful if money is exchanged or if a boy does not ejaculate. In comparison to girls, they are not always considered as experiencing shame or loss of honour, and their needs are subsequently misunderstood. The belief that the sexual abuse of boys is less serious than that of girls, also partly informed by cultural notions and expectations, underlies many responses. It is a concern that in a few cases participants did not consider the sexual abuse of boys as serious, indicating that some are not providing opportunities for boys to speak or not listening to what they are saying.

Some boys are mocked, disbelieved or blamed by those around them, while even the most committed and caring individuals express difficulties understanding and relating to boys. They are seen as invulnerable and/or difficult, and behaviour following abuse is often viewed as troublesome, a challenge to the authority of staff, and is very different from the expectations that many have of victims.

There are pockets of awareness and good practice but care is generally partial or poor in many settings and characterised by confusion, lack of communication and misinformation. Staff who do have knowledge often feel isolated within their own organisations and from others with similar experiences. Others with both knowledge and status do not appear to pass on what they know to their staff, while little evidence exists that sexual abuse of boys is formally discussed within teams or many existing forums addressing child protection and trafficking. Established routes for boys to receive counselling do not appear to exist, although some participants indicated they occasionally make referrals to other NGOs and individuals. However, our enquiries revealed that agencies do not always remember receiving the boys or providing services. It seems that boys are slipping through the net.

Current training related to this issue is very limited and incomplete. Supervision and support are in most cases either not provided or not meeting staff needs. Many expressed a lack of confidence because they are asked to do a difficult job with limited support and resources. Individuals often feel overwhelmed and unsure of what to do, and the issue is

therefore largely ignored. There appears to be a lack of ability and confidence among many in working with boys in general and sexual abuse in particular.

Abused to Abuser?

A significant number of participants expressed the belief that boys who have been abused will go on to become abusers. Experiences were shared of boys acting out sexually, using sexual language, masturbating excessively, being confused about abusive and consenting relationships, being sexually attracted to other boys or girls and/or being curious about sexuality and sexual activity. Some talked of boys who are known to have abused other children, usually in residential centres where staff awareness of the issues and supervision of children were not always high. In many cases there seemed to be little differentiation made between most of the behaviours described above (common effects but not necessarily abusive behaviour) and actual abuse, while knowledge and confidence relating to healthy sexual development were limited.

While there is no doubt that some children and young people (who may or may not have experienced sexual abuse) do abuse others, few participants recognised that previous sexual abuse is just one of a number of risk factors. It is important to identify any child or young person at risk of abusing and provide appropriate support, but that needs to be based on a broader appreciation of the issue, sound empirical evidence and appropriate assessments. To date there has not been any research carried out in Cambodia in relation to perpetrators of sexual abuse of any age, nor, specifically, the links between sexually abusive experiences and later abusive behaviour.

Graham Fordham's important research revealed that many young people in Cambodia are exposed to extreme forms of hard-core pornography that teach violent and abusive sexual scripts. He stresses the need for research with incarcerated offenders to explore the extent to which this is implicated in their offences.¹⁸⁸ I propose that research is urgently needed to explore the whole range of factors influencing offending behaviour, so that preventive and protective measures can be developed in addition to coordinated programmes for the treatment of sexual offenders, including adults, juveniles and other children.

In the absence of accurate information and informed debate, a danger exists that the abused to abuser hypothesis will become considered a universal truth. In such an environment, there is a risk exists that the needs of male survivors would be inaccurately assessed and understood and therefore unlikely to be met. It would be a mistake to provide support and services that are driven by incomplete knowledge.

Neither of the two participants we met who had been involved in abusing others disclosed that they had been sexually abused. While they are not necessarily representative of the abuser population and we were not assessing the risk status of participants, the majority of boys and men we listened to presented as being far more concerned with receiving help and contributing to the protection of others. It remains crucial that victims not be demonised and further isolated. Those working with boys could make a start by providing safe opportunities for them to speak so that we can listen and learn more about them.

Organisational Barriers to Progress

A number of very experienced professionals identified additional and powerful barriers that prevent the development of responses and progress. Several participants said that

¹⁸⁸ Fordham, G. (2006)

many NGOs seek funding from similar sources, resulting in competition rather than cooperation, while some also noted a lack of collaboration and trust between faith-based and secular organisations. The evidence also suggests that communication about this issue is limited within and between organisations and teams.

Another identified issues that may be described as “donor colonialism”:

Donors also need educating. There is often a focus on quantity, not quality, and a lack of understanding of what change really means ... There is a huge need for cultural awareness and understanding ... Sometimes Cambodian staff are forced to do things that are not appropriate for Cambodians ... Donors’ approaches can limit creativity and flexibility ... Cambodian staff are hesitant to question donors and so give in to the higher power.

Another participant identified donor education, political perspectives, power imbalances and NGO culture as key issues that need addressing:

The feminist agenda is adopted for the right reasons, but it has developed into a culture of not wanting to hear from men ... We are like puppets. Donors in effect run programmes, and we are driven by the agenda of someone in the USA or Europe with no sense of the reality of the situation. We perpetuate the cycle by staying silent ... and nothing changes. We do research and say that government and community are not addressing issues ... What we don’t say is that we are responsible too ... The donor and NGO subculture is perpetuating the cycle.

Another participant said that many overseas organisations set up orphanages in Cambodia with little acknowledgement of, or preparation for, the problems they will encounter, repeating mistakes often made in their own countries:

There is never any inclusion of psycho-social support in the budgeting ... When abuse is discovered, it’s too big to handle ... Supporting organisations would stop funding if they knew about it, so it remains hidden ... They “close down” and turn their backs rather than seek or accept help ... there is a denial of abuse and a lack of responsibility ... It’s a conspiracy of silence, and the consequences are very serious.

Sexual abuse is a devastating experience for anyone and presents considerable personal and psychological barriers for individuals to overcome. It would appear that there are also significant organisational barriers encountered by those seeking to help survivors in their search for support and social justice. The power imbalances described above have a familiar ring. Efforts to challenge ignorance and discrimination are clearly needed.

These problems must be addressed if initiatives are to be given any chance of succeeding. It is unlikely that one NGO operating on its own can meet the variety of complex needs presented by this population, so collaborative approaches are paramount. Research and practice elsewhere identify that sexually exploited young people are supported most effectively through coordinated inter-agency work.¹⁸⁹ Survivors and victims need both powerful and empowering allies who work together.

189 Swann, S. et al. (1998)

General Summary of Data

Relatively few incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation of boys are reported to the authorities in Cambodia, and reported incidents can not be considered the most reliable source of information. Victims currently have little to gain from making public their experiences. However, there can be little doubt that abuse is a significant problem. Although this study has revealed a great deal, there are still many unanswered questions. This study should be seen as the first step in what will be a long journey of discovery.

The issue is characterised by lack of awareness, confusion, disbelief and denial that render most victims silent, vulnerable, isolated and unsupported. Where recognition does exist, informed and coordinated responses are hard to find; staff often lack appropriate training, while lack of opportunities for discussion and support leaves many feeling isolated and deskilled. Experiences elsewhere suggest that these are exactly the circumstances in which exploitation and abuse can thrive undetected in the community, institutions and other environments.

The visibility of exploitation and abuse by foreign nationals is understandable, given that many staff and NGOs work with victims where foreigners have been involved. Far less is known about Khmer abusers, although accounts and anecdotal evidence suggest that they are not a new phenomenon nor necessarily influenced by foreign cultures.

Boys often suffer in comparison to girls and are not considered as vulnerable or negatively affected. In many cases, they are viewed as a problem.

It is clear from listening to the boys and young men in this study that a range of underlying and immediate vulnerability or risk factors exist for sexual abuse and exploitation. In many a history of abuse, disadvantage and lack of safety are the norm. This comment is not intended to stigmatise poor families or exclude better off and middle-class boys from the possibility of being victims, but is merely an observation. The need for more research is clear.

It is not easy to separate sexual abuse from commercial exploitation in many cases. There exists what can be viewed as a spectrum ranging from what is generally called “child abuse” at one end to more formal “sexual exploitation” at the other. Initially many boys have no idea that involvement with adults will result in them being drawn into abuse or exploitation, and once they are, it is very difficult to extract themselves from it. Existing and future initiatives, if they are to be effective will need to take account of underlying and immediate factors.

Underlying vulnerability factors:

- **neglect and emotional abuse;**
- **physical and sexual abuse;**
- **family problems, including domestic violence and family breakdown;**
- **poverty and powerlessness;**
- **lack of education and opportunities for sustainable income;**
- **alcohol or drug misuse within families;**
- **low awareness of sexual issues and protective knowledge;**

- perceptions of boys as invulnerable and not able to be abused;
- perceptions and myths perpetuating beliefs that abuse of boys is neither serious nor harmful.

Immediate vulnerability factors:

- attention from potential abusers is attractive and effective;
- poverty and powerlessness;
- street-based lifestyles and/or homelessness;
- disengagement from or lack of access to education;
- low self-esteem and expectations;
- drug misuse and addictions;
- peers' involvement in sexual exploitation;
- confusion related to sex, sexuality and identity;
- social support in relation to sexual abuse that fails to understand their situation or meet their needs.

There are major challenges for those attempting to develop routes out of sexual exploitation. We need to understand the potent and variable combination of factors at play. Boys often do not recognise their own exploitation in the initial stages and their previous life experiences ensure that many of them have low self-esteem, little confidence and a need for the attention and “love” that abusers provide. Many have little experience of reliable, trustworthy and supportive adults, and our research revealed a fear of disclosure influenced in part by intense and overwhelming shame and/or fear of the repercussions. Grooming behaviours lead some children and young people to believe that they have chosen this lifestyle.

Some abused boys provide financial support to their families; for others, exploitation provides a much better lifestyle than is otherwise possible. This is interpreted by some as boys being *plert plern*; their needs are often misunderstood, leading to blame and further marginalisation. Exploitation may offer some possibility of independence from family or institutional care, while coercion by procurers, peers and abusers may be accompanied by a confused sense of loyalty to them.¹⁹⁰ The sense of belonging to a community, coupled with the stigma of involvement in sexual exploitation, can also play a role in keeping boys locked into abuse and exploitation. Another significant factor for many is addiction to and misuse of drugs. They may feel responsible for their own abuse and will therefore need working with in different ways than others.

The lack of “connection” between many boys and the adults responsible for their care may leave some feeling that they are better off looking after themselves. Many adult participants verbalised a commitment and desire for the boys to “change”. It is abundantly clear that, in order to achieve that, they must be prepared to do the same.

190 Keane, K. (2006) noted that some boys regretted the prosecution of the perpetrators due to loss of potential income or because they felt sorry for them.

Recent research has found that victimised children are at greater risk of re-victimisation in the following year, as much as 6.9 times greater than non-abused control groups. Victims of multiple forms of abuse and neglect were at particularly high risk; reduction of victimisation was closely linked to having more friends and supportive environments. These findings support the need to identify high-risk children and make them priority targets for intervention.¹⁹¹

In the absence of adequate information about boys' abuse, it is inevitable that comparisons are made between male and females. The predominance of information and expectations that girls and women are victimised means that boys are considered as unusual or rare victims. It has been noted previously that many consider the sexual act between males impossible, have never heard of it and/or do not consider it to be harmful. The fact that many consider that boys have little or no shame and do not experience loss of honour further illustrates this view. It is clear that in a society where heterosexuality is dominant and the male body is by definition the "penetrator" and not the "penetrated", abuse of males involving penetration is more difficult to understand. In particular, the penetration of the anus may be problematic because the anus is an orifice common to males and females.¹⁹²

The view that abuse is committed only by foreigners and/or gay men is not substantiated by the data; much evidence exists to the contrary. It is also important to challenge the potentially damaging and unhelpful myth that only gay males are abused and gay men or boys are the perpetrators. Failure to do so will result in a lack of protection from other likely sources of abuse. The lack of understanding and the discrimination against males who identify as gay or MSM suggest that non-heterosexual victims may be considered as even less deserving of attention and protection.

Some NGOs may need to review policies and underlying discriminatory attitudes towards boys or men who are unsure of their sexual identity or who do not identify as heterosexual. All victims, irrespective of their identity, have a right to protection and support. In an unexpected finding, the team discovered that some adult males, many of whom are identified as MSM, have also experienced sexual assaults and rape as well as childhood sexual abuse. Further research is needed to understand and inform the development of appropriate support for non-heterosexual victims.

While further research is needed, on the basis of this small study it appears that Cambodia is essentially no different from other places: abuse of boys is most often perpetrated by people known to the victim, males and females, other children and young people, irrespective of nationality or cultural background or sexual identity. Comparison with global research (and also the data provided from Hong Kong and UK services) identifies more similarities than differences between boys in Cambodia and in other places, indicating that similar helping strategies, modified to suit Cambodia, may be useful.

Similarities and Differences across Three Sites

Choosing three sites for our study enabled us to triangulate and compare, observing differences and similarities. In Battambang, awareness of the possibility of abuse was considerably lower than in other sites. We can speculate as to why. It may be linked in part to the lack of presence of NGOs such as APLE, which are involved in identifying

191 Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R.K. and Turner, H.A. (2007)

192 Graham, R. (2006)

abuse of boys in the other settings and have done so much to raise consciousness. Many of the NGOs also had a very narrow view of their work, focusing on children exploited for “labour” purposes and not regarding sexual abuse issues as part of their responsibility.

Staff are also greatly influenced by the underlying dominant cultural beliefs in relation to males, sexuality and masculinity, which also contribute to the invisibility of this issue. Overall, the likelihood of male survivors receiving recognition of and support for their problems is very low. Referring organisations from north-west Cambodia do not appear to be detecting signs of abuse and passing on relevant information to Battambang agencies receiving referrals, suggesting that this lack of awareness is not restricted to this province. It is highly likely that many other rural provinces would demonstrate equally low levels of awareness. In circumstances where abuse is apparent within organisations, it is a simple fact that most of the adults around the boys do not interpret behaviour as being abusive or arising from abuse and feel unwilling or unable to do anything about it, even when it is reported. It is therefore largely ignored. Many organisations do not have child protection policies or strategies in place to help children develop their awareness or self-protective behaviours.

The high number of relatively well-resourced NGOs in Phnom Penh working with sexually abused and exploited children does not necessarily equate to a dramatically different scenario. It can not be assumed that the greater awareness demonstrated by many individuals in the capital results in significantly different or more positive outcomes for children. In many respects a sense of inertia exists; many staff demonstrated great commitment but struggle to identify a way forward. It appears that in many cases a lack of organisational will, communication and awareness exists among senior staff; training is minimal and does not appear to prepare staff adequately for supporting boys.

Therefore little evidence emerged that any of the organisations we encountered are meeting many of the complex needs of these boys. Pockets of awareness and good practice exist, but staff are invariably isolated from support, insufficiently trained or too busy, or organisations are not cooperating closely enough to benefit. There is a sense that some are waiting for something to happen, while others are paying little attention to the issue. Safety, privacy and confidentiality were identified as particularly important by boys, and in many cases there appears to be a significant gap between what boys say they need and what is provided.

Relatively few NGOs are based in Sihanoukville, while a significant problem exists there of children at risk of abuse. The two organisations visited have worked for just four years in that setting. They demonstrated high levels of cooperation, communication, sharing of resources, information, training and respect that others elsewhere would do well to replicate. Their focus on outreach and community-based interventions working alongside families appears to have significant merit and benefits.

The belief that boys will move from being abused to becoming abusers was in some cases based on knowledge of some boys in centres abusing other children, but more often than not was related to unspecified “training”. A clear and urgent need exists to develop awareness, strategies and research in relation to perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Evidence from research and from older boys and adult men indicates that major short- and long-term problems are experienced in relation to a wide range of physical and mental health issues. This identifies the need for immediate and future support for the generations of male survivors that undoubtedly exist. Failure to provide this would have serious implications; both men and women who are victims of child sexual abuse are vulnerable to substance misuse, mental illness and family and relationship problems

during adulthood.¹⁹³ Other studies have also shown a link between sexual abuse, mental health problems and HIV risk behaviours in a variety of populations;¹⁹⁴ the implications for a range of physicians and mental health and social welfare professionals are clear.¹⁹⁵

Masculinity as a Barrier to Progress

Unravelling and making sense of the victimisation of males challenges perceptions that are almost set in stone. Organisational cultures and the individuals within them are of course influenced by the same factors that affect society at large. Powerful myths, beliefs and stereotypes related to males, power, invulnerability, masculinity, victimisation, honour and sexuality obscure the male victim's experiences. They combine to shroud this issue in silence, isolate victims and ultimately protect perpetrators. Training that includes analysis of how these factors relate and influence organisational cultures, policies, individual practice and behaviour may help to lay a foundation for change. The feminisation of victimisation (and consequent masculinisation of perpetration) is just one significant part of the problem. In earlier work, Fordham identified the need to develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the relationship between masculinity and male violence.¹⁹⁶

That remains true, while this study has also identified the need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between masculinity and sexual victimisation of boys and men. If all victims of sexual abuse are to be afforded the recognition, protection and support that is their right, then this process must continue. The development of services and support has profound resource implications that will require a dramatic shift in thinking and culture. Raising awareness is only the first step, and a clear need exists for donors, directors, researchers and managers to embrace change if longer term needs are to be met.

We also need to understand more about how biological, genetic and environmental factors interact to influence boys' behaviour and recognise that a great deal of the socialisation of males is not good for boys or those around them. Many struggle to identify their emotions and manage them, while the need to be independent and self-reliant and live up to the expectations of the man with a *five-hudt* chest contribute to their difficulties, as many in our study identified. Collectively these have the potential to dramatically influence help-seeking behaviour and are a huge impediment to health, well-being and recovery. At other times boys' behaviour is often ignored, misunderstood or punished.

There is a clear need to resolve these issues, requiring us to grapple with complex views of masculinity and consider what it means to us and to them. If we are to do anything about the sexual abuse, exploitation and rape of boys and men, we must first recognise and accept that they exist, and doing that may require us to explore and redefine what it means to be male.

Final Remarks

Prior to beginning the training and research, I asked the Khmer members of the team for their impressions of this issue. Some were not sure if it was really possible for boys to be

193 Dube, R.S., Anda, R.F. et al. (2005)

194 Auslander, W.F. et al. (2002); Ratner, P.A. et al. (2003); O'Leary, A. et al. (2003)

195 Warwick, I. (2003)

196 Fordham, G. (2005)

abused and had not given the topic a great deal of thought. However, all were prepared to keep an open mind. In keeping with the team and capacity-building ethic and the commitment to sharing “voices”, they were later asked to write a short contribution to be included in the final report. These personal insights reveal the benefits of learning and sharing and how they can lead to positive change:

Long Vibol: Before the research, I was not quite sure what sexual abuse and exploitation meant exactly; I was confused between being abused and not being abused. My mind was full of questions ... As a result of hearing boys talking and staff contributing information, I have learned so much. Now I feel more confident in explaining this issue to people ... I want to help boys and feel motivated to contribute what I can to increase people’s awareness, develop staff capacity and improve future research, so that boys can be supported physically, emotionally and spiritually.

This research also helped me change my attitude towards MSM and increased my concerns for all boys, whether they have experienced sexual abuse or not. Boys are sexually abused by foreigners and Cambodians, women, men and other boys ... so staff of all levels need to be offered sufficient training so that they can support survivors effectively. Donors, government and the public also need information so that people’s awareness can be raised.

Please remember to open not just your ears and eyes ... but also your mind and heart to help our boys who have been sexually abused and exploited. They need us, they need to be cared for, loved, to be offered warmth, empathy and to be believed.

Sok Channy: Before, I never thought that boys could be victims of sexual abuse. I had just heard a little through the newspapers ... I thought they were the ones who abuse children. The research made me aware of many things. The pain and the vulnerability of boys ... I never realised that MSM also got raped and that it’s not so different to women. The problems are not only happening to boys but it affects their families too. The abuse is painful for all who are victims ... boys, girls and MSM. This issue is not the responsibility of just one person or group to solve, but everyone. The sexual abuse of boys is not new but it seems like it at times because we are not interested in listening or believing.

Teng Ponarry: I never thought that it could happen, but now I realise that it’s true. I have gained understanding and awareness of the impact and effects, boy’s feelings, the silence of their hearts and their need for support and for others to care. Most people think that sexual abuse of boys is the “normal” thing, but it’s not and there is far less support for them. Even though I was not working directly with them, it made me really sad when I was translating the field notes ...

I hope that after this research is published; you can read it and it will lead to a change in your thoughts and ideas so boys can get support, encouragement and care to help them to survive. Parents, please take responsibility and take care of your children because they all need

love, attention and care from you all. I want to say to abusers, please stop abusing children and treating them like animals because they also have feelings and pain like yours. Imagine if the person that you love was abused: what would you feel? So please don't get enjoyment from others' sorrow.

Seoung Sothearwat: Before, I thought that sexual abuse happened but that it was not a big problem and was only perpetrated by gay men. I never thought that sexual abuse had such extreme effects until I listened to the life stories of the boys. It really surprised me; I never realised that all those boys experience so much pain. This study helped me know a lot about humans and especially children to summarise my own thoughts ... I think that many adults have forgotten their childhood ... Many traditional beliefs and values of our society do not help us to motivate and give empowerment and compassion to boys who are victims. So if you want to help boys, you need to ask yourself questions about traditional values and beliefs.

Nong Socheat: There seems to be a barrier that blocks relationship building between some staff and boys, and it seems to isolate them from us ... People usually see things from the outer cover ... but pain, shame and hopelessness in life generally stay deep inside their heart because it's not easy for them to express it ...

Boys lack solutions, care and opportunities to disclose; they are not confident in the people around them; they feel shame and regret, blame themselves and dare not express emotions to others because they are supposed to be future men, to be strong (not soft and tearful). This seems to make them hide what has happened even more, and their problems are not solved. Working with boys is also really difficult, especially things to do with boys' behaviour. That is why many people get tired of them and become impatient when building relationships with them and instead, power is used ...

I hope that society and particularly all the organisations working with children, as well as adults, focus on these issue... all victims of sexual abuse - men or women, boys or girls - have pain and honour which can be lost and they need to be cared for and loved equally.

Oung Syphat: Before working for the research, I thought that it might not happen because they were boys; they could not get abused like girls. I wondered how they could get abused and what factors caused abuse. I wanted to see what the truth was! As a result, I can see that it is true ... Many boys in Cambodia experience sexual abuse and exploitation. I want people and society to accept, to know, and to be ready to help them urgently. I hope that in future Khmer society will help protect and care for both boys and girls and recognise the importance of having compassion for vulnerable boys and understand that it is not their fault.

Alastair Hilton: Perhaps boys in Cambodia are not so different to boys in other places in the world. The masks they wear, fixed in place by cultural expectations and stereotypes, hide many realities. Boys are

not always easy to relate to and can be a challenge to understand ... It's not easy to predict what they are like.

The external image of calmness, often personified by a smile, may mask the "warrior" within. The boy who "doesn't listen" may also be the boy who longs for someone to hear his voice. The boy who avoids school may also dream of being a scholar. The boy who teases, bullies and fights could also be the boy who cries alone and considers taking his own life. Some boys seek sexual relationships with girls, some with other boys, while others seek no sexual relationships at all. The boy who has learned that he must obey and respect adults might also wonder why some adults beat him, abuse him or laugh at his misfortune.

The "lazy" boy who sleeps a lot may also be the one who is emotionally numb and who can't understand why he feels this way. The boy, who is now a grown man, might feel as vulnerable as he was when he was twelve. The boy who courageously tells of his pain and shameful secret may also be the one who is confused by the lack of others' concern ... for he is "gold" after all.

Kong Sokhem: During the research, there were many things going on in my brain and heart ... sometimes I was horrified and felt regret, pain and confusion when listening to boys' stories. It is not easy to help them express what's in their mind. Most people think that boys cannot be shy or scared to talk like girls, but they are wrong. The research helped me to understand many things ... the reasons these things happen to boys, that it is not their choice and is not the result of them being *plert plern* ...

I learned that they struggle to hide their emotions and have to try to "act like a man", which is expected by family and society. They need support and attention from people around them ... They want and need to speak out, to cry and show their pain and sorrow. Are they able to do this? Can society accept this? Can you as parents, brothers, sisters and carers show them respect? Can you give them value, listen and believe what boys say?

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to giving recommendations, it may be useful to consider what others in this field regard as key elements in service provision. Finding so-called models of care that respond to boys' needs is not easy because of the shortage of services, particularly in this region. Internationally few obvious examples of specialist support exist. This is not an exhaustive summary, and those wishing to learn more can refer to the reference section of this report. It may be useful to consider how some of these ideas might be incorporated into programme design, service development and personal practice in Cambodia, merging with previously identified good practice and suggestions from staff in the three sites. Future developments should integrate evaluation and dissemination of successful outcomes as a basis of future practice, for the benefit of all concerned.

Residential and Community Care as Options

Research suggests that it is extremely rare to find a residential institution for children that fully respects children's rights and offers adequate conditions for child development. While they may be necessary in some instances, they tend to lead to segregation from communities, discrimination and stigma; contact with parents (where they exist) decays over time, while child abuse of all kinds is common.¹⁹⁷ Residential institutions are often criticised for failing to respond adequately to the psychological needs of children, many of whom experience considerable problems adjusting to life outside.

David Tolfree identifies the need for the development of more preventive approaches designed to help children remain in their own or extended families, preventing separation, or to be placed with an alternative family within the community.¹⁹⁸ Preventive approaches may include material support, provision of day-care facilities or clubs, educational support and the raising of community awareness. Experiences in alternative care suggest that placement within a family setting is almost always preferable to institutional care. Residential care, where it is suitable, needs to avoid the pitfalls of breeding dependence. To be effective, residential centres need to have clear admission procedures, be time-limited and integrated with other programmes.

Fostering and Kinship Care Programmes

Large centres in Cambodia are commonly built to respond to a variety of social problems, although a number of fostering or alternative care programmes have also been developed. They include schemes in which children are fostered within institutions, more like group care homes, and fostering within families in the community. Kinship care schemes may be a similar arrangement worth exploring, involving members of a child's existing family supported by staff. Fostering and kinship care in itself may not be appropriate in all cases, because failure rates can be high and risks of exploitation exist. However, research in developing countries suggests that it can be successful when firmly embedded in the community and a shared commitment towards protection and care is present. Adequate preparation and support of carers and inclusion of children in the process also enhance the possibility of success. A recent overview of foster care programmes in Cambodia did not identify a specific model but found that, in the short

197 Save the Children (2003)

198 Tolfree, D.K. (2003)

term at least, such programmes provide a range of benefits, including to former victims of trafficking and street children, when compared with institutional care.¹⁹⁹

There may be a reluctance to foster boys in some cases, which may be overcome by specialist training and ongoing support, as identified elsewhere in this report. Some older boys and young men may prefer to live alone or in small groups, supported by sympathetic adults within the community and/or staff attached to NGOs.

Existing Models of Care for Sexually Exploited and Abused Boys

Research confirms that sexually exploited young people have a range of needs in common with other disadvantaged youngsters, including those who are homeless, living in poverty, have issues of substance misuse or whose health is at risk through lack of awareness.²⁰⁰

Therefore care needs to be taken when developing approaches that are not specific to sexual exploitation that they not stigmatise and isolate individuals, resulting in under-use. Shaw and Butler argue for a holistic response to a variety of needs in order to avoid this stigma.²⁰¹ For organisations, this indicates the importance of developing collaborative relationships.

Existing services in the UK promote confidentiality and a commitment to partnership with children. Safety, empowerment and early intervention are described as core values, while flexibility in providing a range of individual and group interventions, including effective use of outreach, has proved successful.²⁰² Key features of effective programmes include easy access, special attention, assertive outreach and advocacy.²⁰³ It may be possible to use elements of such approaches to suit Cambodia. It is also clear that appropriate interventions need to be made based upon thorough and accurate assessments, including a distinction between ongoing street-based sexual exploitation and familial or other forms of abuse; some needs will overlap, but specific differences exist. Other themes that emerge from successful work elsewhere highlight the importance of participatory approaches, safety, privacy, private spaces, flexibility and non-judgmental attitudes of staff, mirroring the stated needs of boys in our study.

Engaging Boys and Young Men

The diversity of boys' experiences means that prevention and support programmes will have to be equally diverse and creative. Commenting on the situation in the UK, Durham suggests that existing unprofessional and unhelpful responses require a radical rethink. He identifies a range of prevention initiatives that need developing to reflect the reality of boys' situations and also suggests that telephone help lines may be a useful way for males to access help.²⁰⁴

The value of help lines in attracting males, due to the anonymity and confidentiality, has long been accepted in other settings. In relation to physical and mental health issues, Lloyd identified that specific targeting of males and private and discreet services can be

199 Dork, V. and Mel, S. (2006)

200 Pearce, J. et al. (2003); Melrose, M. and Barret, D. (2004)

201 Shaw, I. and Butler, I. (1998)

202 Barnardo's Young Men's Project. London, UK.

203 Scott, S. and Skidmore, P. (2006)

204 Durham, A. (2003)

very effective.²⁰⁵ He also suggests that males are often more receptive to help when they are in crisis, so services may need to be flexible. At a recent presentation in Phnom Penh, the merit of help lines was also confirmed by a local NGO providing HIV/AIDS support services, 79 percent of its calls identified as coming from males aged 15–24.²⁰⁶

Considering the difficulties that many staff participants in the study expressed about connecting with or understanding boys, lessons may be learned from specialists working in related fields and adapted for use. In a variety of sites, including south-east Asia, the effectiveness of high energy activities, focusing on self-care and prevention, are noted, while stand-alone services and separate hours for adolescent boys proved effective in some settings.²⁰⁷

The WHO also identified that boys often approach services in relation to other issues. An emerging trend was the realisation of the hidden nature of many boys' needs and problems, which often become known only after months of contact, suggesting that patience, openness to longer term approaches, flexibility and creativity are important in effective programme design. Echoing our findings, specific difficulties working with boys included lack of awareness of boys' needs by programmes, communities and families, a lack of resources and trained staff and limited ideas. All regions noted the need for support programmes for victims of sexual assault.

Key Themes in Recovery

Many contributions identify the importance of support services reflecting that there is no quick fix, simple formula or linear model to recovery. There is a need for easily accessed services and opportunities to leave and return for help at significant times. Many note the importance of long-term availability of services and the unhelpfulness of time-limited responses. Other suggestions include a diversity of user-friendly services that are non-stigmatising and which avoid pathologising individuals. True flexibility requires that support should be based on survivors' needs, not those of the organisation or staff.

The need for longer term options is also noted by Crowder, as well as the importance of a theoretically diverse approach rather than relying on one therapeutic model. Her research with 41 specialist therapists identified the importance of client-focused, client-paced work that recognises the survivors as the experts in their experiences, thus empowering them to make choices.²⁰⁸ She also asserts the importance of self-care strategies for helpers, carers and supporters, including supervision and peer support.

Safety and empowerment are described as the “guiding principles” of recovery by Cresswell,²⁰⁹ while safety is described as the central task of the first stage of recovery in the classic text of Judith Herman.²¹⁰ In relation to both the provision and the perception of safety, she proposes that “no other therapeutic work can possibly succeed if safety has not been adequately secured”. Safety and trust within the therapeutic relationship are also taken up by Spiegel, who suggests that helpers must not rely merely upon reassurances,

205 Lloyd, T. (1995)

206 Presentation by Inthanou, “Needs Assessment Survey Report” for a child help line in Cambodia, consultation meeting, 31 May 2007.

207 WHO (2000). Research sites included Thailand, Malaysia and China.

208 Crowder, A. (1995)

209 Cresswell, M. (1998)

210 Herman, J. L. (1992)

but are required to “furnish the survivor with the experience of it”. He also identifies it as imperative for helpers have a working knowledge of the dynamics and effects most commonly associated with sexually abused boys.²¹¹ These are important principles that should form the basis of helpers’ and supporters’ approaches, whether individually or institutionally based.

Many other specialists’ work shares similar themes, specifically in relation to counselling and therapy for male survivors. Nyman and Svensson describe important “stepping stones” in their work with boys, including “describing the abuse”, “expressing feelings”, “saying no and setting boundaries” and “acceptance”.²¹² They echo the work of Lew, describing the “components of recovery”, which include “breaking silence”, “learning to set and achieve reasonable goals”, the “learning of positive coping skills” (including ending addictive behaviours) and “mobilisation of social support”. He also describes one of the cornerstones of recovery as self-appreciation, a rare characteristic of abused boys.

Resilience, Recovery and Prevention

The benefit of developing resilience in children²¹³ by offering prevention programmes in schools and other settings has been noted.²¹⁴ Initiatives currently operating in the UK include the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme, including materials such as “Don’t Suffer In Silence”.²¹⁵ While it does not cover sexual abuse, it could easily be modified or merged with existing resources such as those developed by local NGOs M’lop Tapang, Friends International, Chab Dai and Hagar.²¹⁶ An evaluation of the SEAL programme found that, where it had been fully implemented, there was a major impact on children’s well-being, confidence, social and communication skills and relationships.²¹⁷

Fundamental building blocks that underpin resilience have been identified as a secure base (somewhere children feel secure and feel that they belong), self-esteem (feeling competent and an internal sense of worth) and self-efficacy (having an understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses and a sense of mastery and control). Protective factors within families include family interactions that are warm, cohesive and supportive.²¹⁸

211 Spiegel, J. (2003)

212 Nyman, A. and Svensson, B. (1997)

213 The everyday meaning of the word resilience extends to anything that “bounces back”. In psychology it describes springing back from serious adversity, like abuse, war or natural disasters. Resilience is demonstrated if a person copes with terrible misfortune and lives a relatively successful life as defined by mental health, including success in schooling, work and relationships.

214 Bouvier, P. (2003)

215 SEAL (2007)

216 M’lop Tapang has developed books, games and a short film addressing sexual exploitation. The Friends International Child Safe® programme has developed a range of tools for use with children, while Chab Dai, in partnership with the Stairway Foundation, has the “Good Boy” film and tools. In the light of findings from this research, future resources will need to be amended and/or developed to include the possibility of abuse by non-foreign perpetrators, women and other children. The Hagar “Protective Behaviours Programme”, which addresses child protection and safety related to both adults and children, is also available.

217 Hallam, S. et al. (2006)

218 Daniel, B. et al. (1999)

Essential Elements of Recovery



their life with whom to discuss issues, strong and positive self-esteem and several real friends in one's peer group.²¹⁹ In recent years, biological science has proposed a new hypothesis, identifying resilience as created by an interaction of the environment and particular genes.²²⁰

It can appear quite confusing for helpers and supporters, faced with so many potential difficulties and choices of how to help boys and young men. Whatever the preferred model or approach, it remains important not to lose sight of what the boys from this study identified as the most important things they needed from helpers:

Safety and protection; empowerment and choices; empathy; confidentiality and trusting relationships; to be accepted, believed, listened to and not judged; to be loved and encouraged; for others to respect our rights and to be cared for by patient and gentle people; a voice.

Descriptions of Models and Recommendations

The diverse experiences of boys and young men affected by sexual abuse ensure that development of a range of appropriate and sensitive responses presents considerable challenges for all concerned. It demands a long-term commitment to and must be built on a foundation of core principles and good practice. While a clear need exists for the growth of specialist skills and support, consideration needs to be given to how that may be incorporated within or developed alongside currently available services. There is no need to develop new and separate services in many instances. It may be better to expand and build on existing programmes that will also help address the range of issues specific to males. Therefore the continued involvement and cooperation of a range of existing service providers and NGOs remains paramount.

This study has identified a number of guiding principles and best practice guidelines to steer the development of services, which can be observed in the diagram below. Description is provided in the following pages.

Guiding Principles

Consistent messages emerged from the boys in the study regarding their needs. These should be recognised as fundamental to support and incorporated in a significant way as core values in policies, goals and actions within existing and future initiatives. This will require a consideration and exploration what they really mean and how they relate to each other when put into individual and organisational practice. Teams and individuals will need to reflect on each of these principles and consider what they will look like for them to guide work rather than be seen as optional extras:

- **safety**
- **empowerment and choices**
- **empathy**
- **confidentiality**

219 Prendergast, W. (1993)

220 Bazelon, E. (2006)

- **trusting relationships**
- **protection**
- **recognition**
- **respect**
- **a voice**
- **acceptance**
- **being non-judgmental**
- **love, belonging and affection**

Organisations need to be acutely aware of these themes to ensure that they are an integral part of services. For example, empowerment through individual and group support is vital, but so too is empowerment in organisational structure and decision making. Are survivors really involved in making decisions and encouraged to provide feedback? Are staff and carers enabled to do the same? The establishment of safety, both physical and psychological, is directly linked to empowerment. Boys in our study often experienced a huge gulf between their own power and that of adults. Our study shows that reliability and trustworthiness of adults are of paramount importance to them, so how are these key themes genuinely incorporated into practice? What do they look like and how are they communicated and demonstrated to children?

In regard to confidentiality, many organisations have policies, but comments of some boys suggest that its meaning is either misunderstood or not respected. In order for boys to be accepted and experience non-judgmental attitudes, organisations and staff need to explore and challenge beliefs and stereotypes about exploitation and abuse of boys and their relationship to “sex work” and “sex sellers” and develop genuine empathetic responses. Empathy is described as a cardinal component of therapy and support by Spiegel, who suggests that it can and should be sustained throughout the therapeutic process but also be employed as a preparatory measure in working with sexually abused males.²²¹ Embracing all these guiding principles will require self-reflection and an openness and personal commitment to learning and change. SSC’s experiences of providing a range of training initiatives highlights the immense benefits of developing personal and professional self-awareness and appreciation of core values.²²²

Best Practice Guidelines

Suggestions for future initiatives embrace best practice guidelines, incorporating ideas, suggestions and lessons from participants as well as ideas now enshrined within international child and human rights conventions.²²³ Similarly, teams and organisations may need to explore what these mean in practice in relation to boys and young men. They are briefly described below:

221 Spiegel, J. (2003) p. 333

222 Roberts, J. (2007)

223 Relevant UN CRC articles include Articles 19, 35, 39, 13, 12, 6, 3 and 2. A brief description can be found in Appendix 10.

Family and community-based where possible: Assistance is built upon the development of firm relationships within families and communities, incorporating client-centred and strength-based approaches, and related to reducing risk, prevention, protection and support within the family. Communities can also be involved in ownership and development of awareness, including schools, pagodas and other institutions. This approach challenges some of the root causes of sexual abuse and exploitation and strengthens children's resilience and integrity through child-friendly measures in the home, schools and wider community.

Seeing the whole person: This recognises that the boy has more about him than just abuse and is someone who has potential, strengths and rights to a normal life that is not categorised or defined by it. Boys in our study emphasised being able to get on with life at school or work, having friends and not being reduced to the state of victim, a point echoed in other important research.²²⁴

Client-centred and strength-based: Each boy has a unique history and needs. There is no "one size fits all" and no one intervention that should be considered as more effective than all others. Survivors should be considered as the experts in their recovery and actively encouraged and empowered to express their needs, receive support and achieve their potential with dignity.

Embracing child and human rights approaches: This requires the addressing of root causes through the development of participatory and enabling policies and procedures that place children at the heart, recognising them as rights holders and social actors, including their involvement in research and planning, development and monitoring of policies and programmes. It recognises governments as primary duty bearers, while viewing parents and families as the primary care givers and supporting them in that role.

Anti discriminatory practice: Services should not discriminate against individuals based on their identity, whether related to sex, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual preference, religion, lifestyle choices, educational background or other factors. Meaningful efforts should be made to address discriminatory and negative attitudes within staff teams and organisations, enabling all service users to have equal opportunities to access support.

Boy- and male-friendly techniques: The provision of safe, sensitive and appropriate services requires us to learn and appreciate how cultural and gender beliefs and stereotypes isolate boys from support and how these obstacles may be overcome. This requires the development of specialist skills, positive attitudes, inclusive and flexible approaches, confidence and tools that encourage the involvement of boys, in places and at times that they feel comfortable with, as an alternative to existing "deficit models".

Coordinated and collaborative approaches: Sexual abuse potentially affects all aspects of a boy's life. Initiatives will require a pooling of resources, ideas and solutions, involving donors, NGOs, government and individuals. Existing services have a considerable role to play, while there is also a need for specialist roles and initiatives that build on existing strengths. Donors will need encouragement to resource experimental and innovative projects both prior to and after abuse.

Staff training, supervision, capacity building, support and self-care: These are needed as a cornerstone of new and existing initiatives to build knowledge, skills and the

224 Save the Children Australia (2005). Ten recommendations from children included the need for help "getting things straight" but importantly that children don't "want to be labelled and want to get on with their lives".

confidence to use them. Continuing staff support and self-care strategies are required to strengthen the work.

Reflective practice, evaluation and action research: Because no specific services currently exist, any initiatives should incorporate evaluation and action research methods. Findings should be shared with donors, practitioners and the public to inform future services and policy

Types of Intervention to Meet Needs

Prevention

Raise awareness utilising existing and newly established methods and networks among communities and the public, children and families, donors, organisations, staff and government. A crucial element will be a focus on challenging prevalent myths and beliefs about boys and abuse, while building understanding of the reality. Additional measures should include:

- expanded self-protective work with boys, including use of peer education, support programmes and safe social activities that address issues specific to boys;
- development of realistic alternatives and routes to avoid the need to earn money through sexual exploitation;
- safe spaces available 24 hours a day for boys to escape abusive situations;
- family work to address child protection issues, encourage positive parenting of boys and identify and reduce risks related to abuse and exploitation;
- family work to address underlying structural causes of economic and social inequality and related problems;
- development of effective child protection policies in all institutions, including training staff to identify and intervene when risks are evident and guidelines in relation to potential abuse of boys by adults but also other children and young people;
- peer education and support in relation to sexual health, relationships, rights and responsibilities, including positive sexuality;
- NGOs' development of resources, publicity materials and tools in relation to sexual abuse of boys that depict the reality (not only focusing on foreign abusers), also utilising broadcasting and other media.
- expansion of local and international collaboration to identify and prevent perpetrators from abusing boys;
- easily accessible and anonymous information, support and referrals for boys and parents, e.g. helpline.

Recovery and Support

Following discovery of abuse and exploitation, every effort should be made to respond as quickly as possible, offering information about a range of flexible options. It is important that an all or nothing approach be avoided and boys have the time to think and opportunities to leave or return for support at any time. As a result of their experiences, many children do not trust or respect adults, and it will take time to earn that. Patience, choice, child-friendly approaches and easily accessible services are paramount, including:

- **accurate and comprehensive assessments of risk and need;**
- **sensitive medical support;**
- **support with legal issues;**
- **safe spaces with time to think and be listened to;**
- **client-centred and strength-based counselling options that respond to the expressed short- and long-term needs of the boy;**
- **plans for flexible therapeutic work;²²⁵**
- **a range of support groups and peer support;**
- **life skills for boys (assertiveness, decision making, coping skills);**
- **educational/vocational training and support to help boys develop realistic routes out of sexual exploitation;**
- **easily accessible places offering privacy and confidentiality;**
- **trained, motivated and skilled workers and carers;**
- **help with addictions;**
- **specialised and sensitive help with more acute physical and mental health problems;**
- **accurate information about abuse and recovery;**
- **family support to help parents understand and develop protective and supportive skills, promote confidentiality and help them with their own feelings;**
- **support and information groups for parents and carers;**

²²⁵ The purpose of this research was not to focus specifically on therapeutic tools or methods; useful resources are identified within the resource section. Some local and international NGOs have developed tools and approaches for working with sexually abused children, which may need modifying to incorporate specific issues for males. Whatever methods or tools are used, it is crucial to be guided by the needs of the child. Andrew Durham (2003) describes a “plan” for therapeutic work, based on a life story approach, which is described in Appendix 9.

- **anonymous helpline services.**

Advocacy to Ensure Best Practice

Advocacy is strongly associated with human rights and empowerment-based approaches to meeting needs.²²⁶ Having established that effective support for young people has to involve a range of agencies and NGOs, it is important to recognise that many children may have been failed or neglected by previous services; therefore a key role of staff and carers is to ensure that they can advocate for the support they need. Of course, this may lead to tension between organisations. However, an important part of the work is to develop and maintain effective protocols and practices that keep the needs and interests of the children at the heart of things. Advocacy can play a vital role in that. Involving children in the development of services and giving them a voice helps them build the skills and confidence necessary to become self-advocates in time.

Personal practice within social work and experiences elsewhere indicate that there may be significant turning points or “tipping points” in people’s lives, in which advocacy for the right kind of support at the right time can be particularly important. This may include advocacy for education, accommodation, health care, legal protection or against discrimination. In many respects, it is not possible to meet the needs of children, or indeed any disempowered person, without advocating on their behalf at some point. It will need to take place with the following:

- **the public;**
- **police and criminal justice system;**
- **professional groups (e.g. doctors, psychiatrists);**
- **donors;**
- **organisations and staff;**
- **coalitions, coordination forums and networks;**
- **children’s protection networks;**
- **educational institutions and authorities;**
- **government;**
- **media organisations (to ensure privacy, confidentiality and accurate presentation of the issue);**

Advocacy can also include education of these groups to understand the causes of sexual abuse and proposals on how their sector can respond.

Implications for Current Programmes

Boys involved in or at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation have multiple difficulties, and it is therefore no surprise that many are attracted to the attention provided by potential abusers. Therefore more is needed than just making services available. Services need to be flexible and responsive, provided in safe environments by people who take the time to

226 Coulshed, V. and Orme, J. (1998)

build strong relationships. Scott and Skidmore identify that services need to provide a different kind of attention, or an “antidote” to the attention offered by unsafe adults.²²⁷ They add that in situations where children are regularly exploited and abused, services need to offer a “hook” to tempt a young person out of unsafe relationships into safer ones. This requires a client-centred approach focusing on the issues that really matter to the boys. The recommendations below are not exhaustive but represent key steps in developing more awareness and male-friendly responses and services:

Make time to explore underlying attitudes, awareness and experiences in relation to sexual abuse of boys, identifying strengths, alliances and areas of need to develop current provision. Actively include all staff in this process, especially carers and others who spend most time with boys.

Review current practice in relation to boys and sexual abuse, utilising guiding principles related to boys’ needs and best practice to develop action plans that respond to identified gaps.

Carry out training and support needs assessments with staff and share these with donors and others concerned.

Develop case management systems with named workers who can coordinate and provide ongoing support for boys.

Develop well-resourced and effective ongoing **support and supervision for staff**, including that which identifies the different needs of men and women.

Expand training programmes to include specific male-related issues, providing opportunities for staff and management to develop skills in responding to boys’ stated needs—linked to supervision and support.

Broaden existing programmes and/or add programmes and/or specialist staff to address boys’ needs and drive the development of this work.

Provide opportunities for boys to have a voice and become involved in service development.

Provide time and nominate individuals to become part of a wider forum to inform the continual development of services for this group. This may be existing networks or new initiatives.

Initiate evaluation models to inform the development of new approaches and services, with a direct link to training, support and supervision.

Organisations currently providing therapeutic support or training in relation to boys may need to **enhance their services** based on the findings of this research.

Organisations currently utilising tools or information that reflect only abuse by foreign nationals will need to **amend and develop their resources** to include Cambodian perpetrators within communities, families and institutions.

New or Enhanced Programmes

While many of the needs of boys may be met by existing organisations, some specialised and new services have been identified. They incorporate ideas, suggestions and emerging themes from this study but also others relating to successful practice elsewhere. The guiding principles already outlined provide the foundation for these to be built or

227 Scott, S. and Skidmore, P. (2006)

enhanced. It will be important to provide a range of high quality options and choices for support and care that can be evaluated over time to discover the most effective. Some may be provided within existing settings where similar services may already operate. Management, staff and donors will need to be wholeheartedly committed to this flexible approach. In some instances it may be possible to pilot ideas in target provinces.

Generic drop-in centres in which staff are trained to respond to the needs of this group. They need to be easily accessible but also provide privacy and confidentiality.

Generic day programmes that offer access to a range of activities including education, vocational skills, recreation to broaden horizons, outward-bound retreats, social and life skills development, arts, drama etc.

Assertive outreach targeting boys on their home ground or where they feel comfortable; provide named workers to identify high-risk children and focus preventive and protective efforts on them. Additional resources to work with families where needs are identified.

Twenty-four-hour availability of safe spaces where boys may go to take time out, think, consider options and choices, have a meal, sleep etc.

Develop realistic alternatives to earning money through sexual exploitation once trusting relationships have been built, based on needs and strengths, including providing access to education and work.

Peer support opportunities with the involvement of boys and/or young men who have escaped abusive situations, including befriending programmes and forums to feed into all development and advocacy efforts

Drug misuse and addiction services in coordination with others, with intensive follow-up support post-detoxification, including relapse prevention programmes.

Telephone help line for boys to access crisis support, information, advice and referrals. This may involve new initiatives and/or take place in partnership with other current providers of such services. This needs to link up with NGOs and trained staff in all provinces to provide a range of similar community-based services. This should also be available to offer support to families and supporters of boys.

Specialist teams to provide counselling and group support to boys and ongoing training, supervision, consultation and evaluation of services for staff.

Multi-agency forums focusing on this issue to develop partnerships, practice and awareness and provide regular access to group supervision. Their brief should include the development of networks with regional (Asian) and international specialists and the Cambodian government.

Resource centres and libraries within existing settings for staff, developing a pool of specialised resources including Khmer language online resources

Following research, a range of service choices need to be developed for **older boys and men** living in the community who are beyond the reach of current services.

Early intervention with children, young people and adolescents with harmful sexual behaviours or who are perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Ongoing research programmes identified below under the subheading “Recommendations for Specific Research”

Residential Settings

A common response to social problems in Cambodia is to place a person within a “centre”. But where possible, community-based options are favoured. Decisions in relation to where a child lives should be based on several factors: an assessment of needs, balancing risk and protection from further abuse; choice; the stated and identified needs of boys; and best practice principles. Prolonged residential care negatively impacts on the ability of children to reintegrate into society. Therefore the following accommodation recommendations are made, in order of preference, taking into account all these elements.

At Home with Family or Extended Family

- a) Support to the child to enable him to be part of normal community activities (school, college etc.) or enabling him to learn skills that will help him earn money and have a valued role in the family and community. Help developing social skills, coping strategies and other identified needs.
- b) Support to the family to enable them to provide support and empathy to prevent abuse or following abuse. Respond to identified issues of need and risk, including underlying problems.
- c) Easy access to additional support services, which may be a combination of day centre drop-in centre, access to named case worker, counselling etc.

Specialist and Community-Based Foster Care

Where it is not possible for a child to live with his own family, either in the short or long term, specialist foster care programmes based (maximum two to four placements) in the community are recommended. Depending upon circumstances, this may provide short-term care—returning children to their own families—shared care at times of crisis or longer term options. Regular contact with families of origin should be promoted and facilitated unless there are significant child protection concerns.

- a) This will require specialist training and support to be developed for carers to enable them to respond with confidence to the range of boys’ problems. Carers will need specific and regular training and support. Regular reviews of placements and assessments of ongoing need should take place.
- b) Separate support workers for children and carers should be made available to promote the child’s needs while balancing those of carers.
- c) Support for the child to enable him to be part of normal community activities should be provided as described above.
- d) Separate placements for younger and older boys may need to be considered based on developmental needs, risk and vulnerability.
- e) Carers with specialist skills may be required for boys with specific needs such as severe traumatic responses, disability etc.
- f) Foster-care programmes should be monitored and evaluated regularly.

Small Supported Housing Projects for Older Boys and Young Men

It may be appropriate in some cases for older boys and young men to be provided with additional support beyond the age at which services would usually cease. Their needs may best be met by small shared housing options within the community, providing leaving

care and/or tenant support, independent living skills etc. This might be supported by a combination of community services and outreach, as described above.

Small Specialist Residential Homes or Carers

Placements within institutional settings should be avoided unless there are special emergency or acute needs that can not be met elsewhere. These may, for example relate to severe mental or physical health problems caused by sexual abuse or exploitation. Therefore small specialist places of safety may be required with clear admission criteria and possible return to the alternatives outlined above. Privacy and confidentiality would have to be stringent. The support provided would include:

- a) Crisis responses in a safe space, including access to sensitive medical and other services following abuse.
- b) Short-term support with the goal of returning to community-based life as soon as possible—to continue life as normal and to be as integrated as possible to avoid becoming institutionalised.
- c) Specialised and flexible support offered by named workers as described above: day centre, drop-in, counselling, and peer support
- d) Highly trained, motivated and supervised staff.

All services need an evaluative and action research component built in to feed continually back into the development of support for boys and staff. Information should be fed back through publications including online resources, training and supervision forums. This will inform practice on a wider scale and also act as a vehicle for further advocacy.

Additional Recommendations

Training, Awareness Raising and Support for Staff

Evidence-based training needs to be targeted and shared with those at all levels of responsibility and experience, including directors, managers, team leaders and others providing training, clinical supervision and support. A culture of awareness that addresses the broader issues of management as well as intervention responses needs to be encouraged at all levels—personal, cultural and systemic—if meaningful long-term change is to be achieved. While raising awareness can be viewed as the first step, staff needs continuing support to enable them to develop effective and meaningful ways of working with boys and their families and supporters, while more senior or experienced staff also needs help to develop their capacity to provide it. Training, support and supervision should be viewed as a vital prerequisite and fundamental cornerstone of creating a safe environment for staff and boys.

SSC trainers were included in the research team to play a key role in the development of new initiatives. Recommendations for training providers in relation to awareness, training and support:

- **Amend existing basic social work courses to include key elements from this study.**
- **Develop a range of specialist courses and modules for working with sexually abused boys. These might include: defining and identifying abuse; responding sensitively to disclosure; masculinity and cultural influences; sexual abuse, shame and honour; child protection work; impacts and effects; counselling**

skills, tools and plans for supporting male survivors; dealing with disbelief and denial; working with families of abused children; support and self-care strategies for staff; evaluating practice.

- Develop stand alone training for individual teams and NGOs, following a training needs assessment. This will include a significant “policy and practice development” element, incorporating organisational action plans and evaluations that can be followed up by the trainers at regular intervals
- Develop basic awareness-raising toolkits for use in organisations and communities. Previous participants of SSC’s basic social work course could be invited to return for preparatory training, so that they could learn how to use this material. The toolkits would be designed to stand alone but also prepare staff for further training
- Develop specific modules in relation to supervision and support for staff working with sexual abuse issues.
- In partnership with others, develop regular opportunities for group supervision and support programmes for staff in this area.
- In partnership with others, develop a range of specialist resources and research materials in libraries that can be easily accessed.
- In partnership with others, develop a Khmer-language web site on male survivor issues to support staff and organisations in their continued development.
- Develop a collaborative forum to drive the development of work with males among staff and awareness within local communities.
- In collaboration with others, contribute to training that increases understanding of child protection issues and policy development in the widest context, equipping staff to respond appropriately, effectively and confidently.
- Increase awareness and provide training in relation to working with adult males, including MSM who are survivors of sexual abuse.

Recommendations for Further Research

A clear need exists for more research into a range of issues relating to the sexual abuse and exploitation of males. This explorative study has answered some questions but identified many others in relation to Cambodia, which are identified below. The literature summary also provided insight into the range of studies carried out in other settings, some of which may be replicated to inform the growing body of knowledge and positively influence the development of prevention and support for all victims and

survivors. It is important that all children benefit from future research—that minorities, including children with disabilities, are not marginalised. Research needed includes:

- Risk factors, influences, the nature, prevalence and dynamics of sexual abuse of boys in a wider range of locations, including Poipet, Siem Reap and rural provinces. This should also include efforts to identify abuse within the middle class and other community settings.
- Prospective and longitudinal studies relating to impact and effects, including sexuality and gender confusion, recovery, development of positive coping strategies and resilience in boys experiencing abuse. Put simply: what helps them recover?
- Families following sexual abuse of boys to explore and enhance protective and preventive behaviours and support following abuse.
- The links between victimisation and subsequent abusive behaviour in children and young people and factors that reduce the likelihood of further abuse.
- The influences and dynamics in the perpetration of harmful sexual behaviours, sexual abuse and rape of children by other pre-adolescent children and older children and young people, leading to the development of strategies for protection, prevention and treatment of offenders.
- The influences and dynamics present in the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys by adults (Cambodian and foreign) including females.
- The sexual abuse of children with disabilities, protecting them and preventing abuse.
- The sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and young men living in Vietnamese and other minority communities.
- The prison population as victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The experiences, needs and implications for services to adult males following child sexual abuse or abuse as adults.
- The experiences, needs and implications for services of childhood sexual abuse and sexual abuse as adults within MSM communities.
- Consenting sexual behaviour in young people and adults in Cambodia and the implications for health and services development.

- **Long-term studies of the benefits, drawbacks and comparisons between a range of services and initiatives—for example, institutional, family and foster care.**

Additional Recommendations

In order to improve prevention efforts, NGOs need to need to develop a range of materials, games and resources for use with children, parents and staff that reflect the reality that abusers and perpetrators are not only foreigners but also Cambodians and other children and young people, in a variety of settings.

A systematic and creative strategy needs to be developed, utilising existing networks, effective methodologies and coalitions and involving government, NGOs, community leaders and the media to raise awareness of the key issues relating to the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in Cambodia.

This also needs to explore the possibility of developing an action plan to drive the development of consistent approaches within and between NGOs and government agencies.

Coalitions and NGOs need to consider how they can encourage members to raise this issue within their settings, encouraging discussion and debate and identifying related development goals.

APPENDIX 1: A DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING APPROACH TO RESEARCH

In addition to the goals set out in the terms of reference, a primary goal was to carry out and complete this study with the full participation of the research team, developing skills and confidence and building a firm base for future research and practice. The desire of this consultant to develop an inclusive, capacity-building and empowering approach to the research originated in his experiences as a social worker specialising in the development and delivery of therapeutic services, in which both social work and counselling theories play a central role in approaches.

Social work theories change and develop with time, but in the last 25 years or so have generally espoused the importance of anti-oppressive practice, empowerment, negotiation, choice, working in partnership, participation, “strength-based practice” and advocacy. It is important to combine theory and practice with personal behaviour, not merely in terms of clients, beneficiaries or service users but also colleagues. Previous work with grass-roots services for victims and survivors of abuse reinforced this view.

The belief that all people have skills, understanding and ability but also rights to be heard, participate and make choices and to define problems and action are prerequisites if true empowerment is to take place. Methods of work also need to be non-elitist and non-oppressive.²²⁸ Similarly, this research model embraces what have been described as the core conditions of person-centred counselling. Genuineness, unconditional positive regard and total acceptance—as well as feeling and communicating deep empathic understanding²²⁹—are considered essential elements of professional and personal relationships. In applying these values to the research team, and therefore personal behaviour, it was hoped that the conditions for personal growth in a team approach would be encouraged.

However, the consultant’s experience of working with local Cambodian staff for two years prior to the study also suggested that actually achieving this model presented significant challenges. I became aware that previous work experiences, lack of confidence and expectations of people in positions of authority frequently resulted in staff being worried about being blamed for making mistakes, sometimes restricting their creativity and contributions. The status afforded foreign staff, often based on identity alone, also has the potential to undermine empowerment and the development of an inclusive model of research.

Partial explanation for this is provided by O’Leary and Nee,²³⁰ suggesting that social order in Cambodia depends upon everyone respecting the social hierarchy and keeping his or her place in it. They identify that, from childhood, people are taught to obey and respect those with authority. Challenging, the holding of dissenting views and questioning are discouraged. Furthermore, it is stated that the Cambodian education system pays little attention to understanding and analysis. These were precisely the things I hoped to encourage in order to enrich the research. Traditional expectations of people who have knowledge, resources, power and high status is that they should advise, manage and control. Participation and empowerment, however, assume interdependence and equality. It was clear that the collision of two worlds and cultures had the capacity to

228 Mullender, A. and Ward, D. (1991)

229 Rogers, C.R. (1979)

230 O’Leary, M. and Nee, M. (2001)

greatly influence every act and would have to be both acknowledged and addressed throughout if personal and team goals were to be achieved.

The aforementioned work of O’Leary and Nee is of immense value, identifying strategies for positive change within Cambodia. They illustrate the need to create safety—liberating practitioners from their fears—and to redefine mistakes as opportunities for learning. They highlight the importance of acknowledging the value of each person’s contribution, encouraging the development of team spirit, thus echoing cornerstones of social work practice. They also describe the skilled practitioner as “the instrument of the development process” by bringing to the process him or herself, self-awareness, an ability to listen to others and the capacity to be empathetic.

Furthermore, similarities between theories of social work, development and qualitative research can also be observed. Janesick²³¹ describes the researcher as “the research instrument” and highlights the importance of developing trust and rapport. In later work, she identifies authenticity, the importance of ethical issues and the ability to know one’s self²³² as crucial components of qualitative research. It seems fortunate that in many respects, good practice—whether in relation to social work, counselling or qualitative research—shares a great deal of common ground. It was the intention of the consultant to draw on experiences and all theories in order to create a setting in which team members and research participants could flourish.

Team Development and Preparation for the Research

The team met for the first time in late January 2007. The team leader had worked alone for three weeks prior to that time, planning and meeting some key informants. The first few days together were largely spent in team building, exploring the idea of research and identifying learning needs. This created a number of challenges, not least that, once needs had been identified, relatively little time was left for preparation. The consultant’s lack of fluency in Khmer ensured that every interaction, however small, became an intellectual exercise, which proved exhausting at times for all concerned.

The process followed in the first two weeks or so is shared in some detail here. Some may consider that level of preparation unnecessary; however, I believe that the process set the scene for a deeper exploration of issues and created a sound foundation for the research. Others following in our footsteps may benefit from the team’s experiences.

The development of trusting relationships between all members of the team was likely to have a direct bearing upon the success or otherwise of the research. Time was spent building relationships and trust, sharing previous experiences of research, discussing ideas for a team approach, discussing the TOR (Appendix 2) and sharing hopes and fears in relation to the project. This revealed that some had previous experiences of research in which involvement and opportunities to share ideas were often minimal and training was often brief and did not always meet needs, while others remarked that they were not involved in research design and did not feel a sense of participation or ownership. One researcher commented that in the past it had felt like “being used” rather than involved.

Initial discussions, based on the TOR and related to the subject of sexual abuse and boys, raised some interesting remarks, identifying some training needs at an early stage. These included defining abuse and the need to develop a common understanding and language related to both consenting sexual relationships and abusive ones; expectations and

231 Janesick, V.J. (1994) pp. 211–212.

232 Janesick, V.J. (2004)

existing views of males and masculinity; assumptions regarding boys and their willingness (or otherwise) to talk; attitudes to child rearing; and the links between the power of culture, tradition and so-called common sense or opinion, to name but a few.

The sharing and participation continued throughout the first week. “Life story” exercises enabled the team to experience a potentially useful method of helping boys share their stories and, importantly, experience risk taking and sharing with relative strangers themselves.²³³ How could boys be expected to share, if we were not willing to do the same? Several things struck the consultant: the risks that the team were willing to take once safety had been established and the power of truth and of the stories shared. To hear of the sacrifices that others have made in Cambodia leaves one feeling very humble.

The team started to consider the key questions for the research after discussing the TOR. A variety of methods enabled core skills for the research to be identified, and a training schedule was planned. Modules included observation, listening, interviewing and writing skills.

The importance of the “researcher being the research instrument” requires the senses to be finely tuned, so experimental exercises were practised on a regular basis, involving observation of familiar and unfamiliar places, people, situations and animals, followed by writing of field notes and team debriefing. It was an enlightening process as the team started to explore and observe familiar places and things with “new eyes and ears”. It revealed that much is taken for granted and remains unnoticed in everyday life.

Field notes and team discussion revealed much about detail, perceptions, emerging reflections and thoughts on the subject of observations but also how familiar things can be seen in a different way. Some said that the exercises enabled them to tap into their imaginations, the ability to “wonder” and ask questions about people, places, things and events. Time-limited and focused interviews were also carried out with both friends and strangers, exploring friendship and people influential in the respondent’s lives. Again this was followed by writing of field notes and group and individual debriefings as the sharpening of skills continued.

To further develop writing and thinking skills, the team were encouraged to keep a reflective research journal throughout the study, making daily entries. This would encourage self-development and reflection by recording thoughts, feelings and facts and also serve as a useful source of data. Furthermore, journal writing helps researchers make sense of what they are doing; provides the groundwork for later analysis and enables individuals to get feedback from themselves.²³⁴

Selected journal writing tasks set the scene and revealed a rich depth of experiences and influences, enabling the team to discuss and be in touch with a range of issues, including vulnerability and strength, linking the past with the present, memories and hopes for the future and experiences of childhood. This moving process enabled the team to explore topics related to empathy, discrimination, consenting and abusive relationships, culture, honour, human rights and their relationship with qualitative research. As team ethos and relationships developed, so the depth of discussion and analysis grew.

By the end of the first week, a comprehensive list of training and learning needs had been developed. These needs were transformed into the training schedule. This was achieved

233 Life story approaches are a particularly useful research method, and are discussed in more detail in Durham, Andrew (2003).

234 Janesick, V.J. 2003.

in the traditional manner through asking about specific “learning needs” but importantly by also asking the team what qualities and core skills qualitative researchers needed—which produced a very different set of ideas. Additional needs were identified through observation, group and individual discussion of specific topics and also journal entries, illustrating the value of developing a variety of strategies. This also demonstrated to the team the usefulness of triangulating of inquiry in a practical and participatory manner.

The training also provided the starting point for the development of a research methodology, drawing on several theoretical frameworks with a concern for safety and ethical practice as its guiding principles. At some point in the future, the consultant will write a more detailed document relating to the training content and process, so that others wishing to carry out similar qualitative studies may benefit.

Training sessions from February to April included the following subjects and employed a variety of methods to develop knowledge:

- **Reflective journal writing skills, recording personal thoughts and their use in analysis.**
- **Observation, listening, interviewing and writing skills.**
- **Communication and presentation skills.**
- **Research and recording skills—use of field notes, literature reviews and media studies.**
- **Awareness, use and experience of research methodologies.**
- **Confidentiality, ethics, safety, informed consent and their relationship to research.**
- **Life story exercises.**
- **Facilitation of focus groups.**
- **Exploration of attitudes and issues relating to consenting sexual relationships in Cambodia.**
- **Definitions of sexual abuse and exploitation and their influence on research design.**
- **Exploring personal perceptions of the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys and the power of myths, prejudices, beliefs and culture.**
- **Findings from local and international research in relation to sexual abuse of children and their relevance to our study.**
- **Men, boys, masculinities and their relationship to sexual abuse.**
- **Sexual abuse and its relationship with socialisation, families and culture.**
- **The impact and effects of sexual abuse on males.**

- Similarities and differences between girls and boys and sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse and recovery—what can experience and research tell us?
- Cultural and religious perspectives and their relationship with recovery.
- Video presentation—“Male Rape”.
- Models of care: what are they?
- Boundaries, controlling our own feelings, safety and self-care in the research process.
- Research-related hopes, fears and concerns.
- Combining the TOR and new learning in the development of the research questions and interview guides.
- Interviewing skills.
- Developing safe and participative tools and games for research with children.
- Looking ahead and making plans for field research.

While this is an accurate and comprehensive list of the training and development programme, it does not describe the methods used for learning and sharing, many of which were to some extent experimental. The starting point for all activities was located within the framework of the team’s own professional and personal experiences. A methodology was developed that was fluid and flexible, balancing existing knowledge and beliefs with the sharing of new information. Discussion and reflection fostered the development of new ideas, understandings and concepts in an attempt to take a look at the ‘bigger picture’.

While I had a depth of knowledge in many areas that was new to the team, careful attention was paid to avoid placing myself in the position of “expert”; recognition of the team’s skills, knowledge and expertise in all things Cambodian created an important balance. This affirming approach encouraged safety and contributed to openness to learning and the building of a team spirit.

A combination of the subject matter, intensity of the process, depth of discovery and use of two languages ensured that the experience was at times intense and stressful for all involved. Daily debriefings in the field, individual and group meetings and opportunities for sharing were encouraged. It was a significant challenge, and we all negotiated steep professional and personal learning curves. Following completion of the project, the team took part in an evaluation facilitated by a third party, which indicated significant benefits of this approach in both personal and professional development. The consultant plans to produce a more detailed document relating to this model and its evaluation.

APPENDIX TWO: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Recommended Model of Care for Boys from Sexually Exploitative Situations

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

This research initiative will examine current practices in relation to support, availability and provision of services to boys from backgrounds of sexual abuse and exploitation in Cambodia. It will include detail in relation to accessibility and effectiveness of existing services. The research will, in particular, evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of existing services available as a means to develop a recommended model of care based on the Cambodian context. The purpose of this research is to obtain evidence to inform the Aftercare programme activities of Hagar Cambodia as well as other organizations engaged in the protection of children in Cambodia, and to inform public policy on the issue through the publication of findings, and catalyzing further action by partner organizations.

2. HAGAR'S EXPERIENCE

Since 1994, Hagar has established a reputation in Cambodia for its high quality programmes focusing on vulnerable women and children. In 2004, Hagar commissioned research to investigate and recommend a model of care specifically for young girls from sexually exploitative situations. Hagar's research in 2004 found that the limited number of supporting organizations to absorb the increasing number of rescued victims of sexual exploitation—particularly those who are very young with complex situations and who are difficult to reintegrate into society—ad left many rescued children inadequately supported in their recovery and reintegration. The research proposed that Hagar create Aftercare Centers for no more than 25 young girls per centre and, when appropriate, place the girls in Family Aftercare homes which house between 4 and 5 children per home.

Hagar's Aftercare Programme for girls from backgrounds of commercial sexual exploitation has already been recognized for the high quality of care it provides to all girls who enter the program. However, based on findings of the Aftercare management team and feedback from a variety of NGOs in the area it is clear that many child victims of sexual exploitation are indeed male and thus, fall beyond the scope of Hagar's current Aftercare Program's reach. Hagar is aware of the existence of boys already in need of care as they are the brothers of girls currently in Hagar's Aftercare Program or reside in Hagar's Foster Home. Additionally, an alarming amount of boys are identified and rescued by intermediary agencies but there exists a marked lack of aftercare programs tailored specifically to address the needs of boys. A limited number of organizations are known to currently offer varying levels of care in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Organizations identified offer care to relatively large numbers of children and none are known to address the needs of boys from backgrounds of sexual exploitation in a holistic long-term manner. For this reason, Hagar wishes to investigate and explore in detail the recovery and rehabilitative options available for boy victims from backgrounds of sexually exploitative situations (SES) through a research initiative which will ultimately inform the establishment for appropriate models of care for such boys.

3. GOAL OF STUDY

To develop Hagar's understanding of the recovery and rehabilitation options intended specifically for boy victims of sexual exploitation in Cambodia.

To develop recommendations for a holistic model of care which include effective and feasible strategies for long-term aftercare for boy victims of sexual exploitation in the identified target range of between 5 and 14 years of age—this should include recovery, rehabilitative care and the exploration of viable reintegration options.

4. METHODOLOGY ASPECTS

The proposed research will be utilized to develop programming interventions that will help protect boys, and also to assist communities in the development of care initiatives targeted specifically to address the needs of what to date has been an under-acknowledged extremely disadvantaged and vulnerable group of Khmer society.

It is proposed that the working methods for this evaluation involve desk study, interviews, focus-group discussions, and in-depth interviews. An important part of the research will be, where possible, to hold focus group discussions with respondents prior to, during and after the main body of research has taken place.

The research will primarily work with male victims of sexual exploitation and key staff employed by agencies working in this field. Boys will be invited to talk about what they have experienced, the perceived effectiveness of practices and procedures currently in place, and the research team will focus primarily on identifying and understanding the needs of boy victims of sexual exploitation in order to inform the production of a recommended model of care. Organizations with broader care provision such as foster care for boys or indeed for children in general will also be included in order to contextualize more specialized recommendations. Though organizations in Cambodia will be of primary focus, due to the seeming dearth of such initiatives in Cambodia, the research may have to extend the scope of its coverage area to include the neighbouring countries.

The research will be conducted (both surveys and interviews) in three sites (one rural, one urban and one ‘tourist’ site). The exact location of the research districts will be chosen during the early part of the research period.

This is a research project that will be undertaken with extreme care and the sensitivity of the research topic. The research methodology will be guided by internationally accepted and recommended ethical standards, in addition to being scrutinized by Hagar’s Child Protection Officer as part of Hagar’s Child Protection policy implementation to ensure the protection of the best interests of the participants and children already in Hagar’s care.

The Research Team

The research team will have responsibility for identifying the core issues for care for boys from SES. It will consist of:

- **Four Khmer researchers (male and female), preferably with background in social work.**
- **Translator.**
- **Administrative support worker.**
- **Team leader.**

The team leader should have expertise in qualitative, community-based research and experience of working with victims of SES and strong knowledge of program evaluation; developing and managing programs for the care and support of children in distress. A

psychotherapist with a clinical social work education and experience in mental health care for children with sexual trauma histories as well as experience training and supervising of clinical practitioners in rural and urban Cambodia will fulfil a specialist advisory role at key points of the research. The research should be assisted by a Khmer national translator with substantial experience of formal research and additionally be conversant in basic Vietnamese for community-based research within the ethnic Vietnamese community.

Knowledge of child development, psychological care, family dynamics, ethnicity, and alternative care models appropriate to Cambodia are intended to ground the model and to provide the framework upon which services and staffing can be constructed.

Information Gathering

The team will need to acquire and read documents related to sexual exploitation and child care; engage in an internet search of comparable programs and regional programs with care of boys; conduct all interviews and the survey. Further time will be needed to compile and analyse all data gathered and develop a model of care “in the best interests of a child” that can also accommodate the strengths and limitations of Hagar’s current model of residential care for children.

A specific timeframe will be agreed with the researcher before work commences.

Documents

Information gathering will involve reading and discussing a diverse range of documents to be collected from a variety of sources and authors, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSALVY), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, TearFund and the Coalition to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia (COSECAM). Topics will include assessments of residential alternative care, foster care, and reintegration efforts for children (particularly boys), surveys of sexual exploitation patterns and communities identified as target sites of exploitation, analysis of aspects of Khmer parenting, risk factors for vulnerable boys, boy’s perspectives on sexual violence, evaluations of the effects of trauma, regional news of sexual exploitation or child-related trafficking and local and international laws and conventions related to sexual exploitation of boys in Cambodia.

Surveys and Interviews

A preliminary survey in the designated research sites will provide data about the organisations operating in the areas, if any. This survey will be used to identify and choose respondents who are suitable for in-depth interviews.

The in-depth interviews will be enriched through drawing on the techniques of conversation analysis (a highly concentrated “listening” to what is said and not said, as well as how things are said), through which the investigators will aim to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and availability of care options currently available. In-depth interviews will be conducted with respondents of a range of ages—the exact number of interviews will depend on how many suitable interview respondents are located. Interviews will be conducted in the Khmer language and an experienced Khmer research assistant will assist in the translation and analysis of both linguistic and cultural data.

Due to the rapidly changing nature of sexual exploitation and trafficking as well as a lack of in-depth documentation on a number of topics, a great deal of emphasis will be placed

on the interview component of the research. An interview guide will be developed for the research and include questions raised by Hagar staff and individuals knowledgeable about sexual exploitation of minors and care, selected components of Hagar's previous interview guide which was utilised in the previous Aftercare research, as well as topics based on the knowledge and experience of the research team members.

The team will be able to triangulate areas for further inquiry by integrating three areas: Cambodian cultural and contextual considerations; core therapeutic and recovery issues focused on the mental health and healing process of young male trauma survivors; and best practice methodologies for qualitative research. A concerted effort will be made to create a questionnaire/interview guide appropriate to the key research issues.

Respondents

On some occasions, multiple interviews will be conducted with personnel from one organisation. Some interviews will be conducted with child recovery centres and trauma and foster care providers; with specialists from various government ministries. The team will also interview a limited number of respondents from organisations working with Vietnamese client populations in Phnom Penh in order to offer some guidance for cultural considerations of care provision and potentially guide future research.

Respondents with specific areas of expertise are expected to be relatively easy to identify. However, identifying relevant programs may prove to be a challenge (as was experienced in Hagar's research conducted in preparation for the establishment of the Aftercare Program). Some organisations' program staff should be interviewed because they provide foster care, others because they work with young at-risk or abused boys and still others if they are found to provide long-term care. It is anticipated that very few organisations will be identified that provide long-term care for boys from SES within Hagar's chosen target age range (between 5 and 14 years).

A significant percentage of interviews will be undertaken with boys in child care and living in situations of high-risk of sexual exploitation. At all times the sensitivity of the research topic and the ages of the respondents will be kept in mind and if there is any indication that respondents are being stressed by the interview then that particular interview will be terminated. The cultural sensitivities of the Khmer research assistant and the long-term experience of the researcher will be drawn on to detect signs of stress in research respondents.

Data Analysis

All interviews will be transcribed and reviewed by the research team, who will read for similarities within specific areas such as foster or trauma care, best practices, and an understanding of the Cambodian context as it relates to boys from SES. The information will be analyzed and tested against the proposed model by means of data analysis charts and team discussion.

Internet Research

A concerted effort will be made to identify comparable programs working with boys from SES in other areas of the world and to solicit information from organisations recognized for the quality of their long-term foster care and aftercare programmes for boys with complicated trauma histories. Searches will be conducted by topics (e.g. sexual exploitation, rape, sex work, trafficking, trauma), geographically defined areas with high instances of paedophilia, international professional associations (e.g. social workers, child care workers), international advocacy organisations (e.g. ECPAT), and international non-

governmental organisations (e.g. World Vision, UNICEF, TearFund, World Health Organisation).

6. EXPECTED OUTPUT

A report of the research in English is to be provided in hard copy and soft copy in Microsoft Word format.

APPENDIX THREE: ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PROJECT

Ethical considerations are the guiding principles of our research; the well-being and safety of those children and other participants is the priority. The paramount ethical consideration is that researchers must do no harm.

If a situation occurs where a respondent becomes upset or emotional, we must stop asking questions and tend to their immediate needs; the interview must only continue when and if the child wishes to. We may ask the child if they wish to continue but must not persuade, encourage or bribe a child to continue if it is not in their best interests.

Where a child needs comforting or emotional support, the researcher will provide this in the first instance and discuss with the child any further needs they have. Referrals to other services or individuals may be made with the consent of the child.

Where interviewing children, gain the consent of both the child and an appropriate adult (where possible), using the consent form as a guide. We must have the active agreement of the child—a lack of disagreement is not sufficient to gain consent. The child must know that they can choose not to answer any question or questions and that they can end the interview at any time.

Interviewers must explain to the child that they can have time to discuss their involvement without any pressure; they can discuss their consent with a friend, and ask any questions about it.

Interviewers must genuinely listen to and respect the views of the children and adolescents with whom they talk. They must be sensitive to their reactions (e.g. feeling tearful) and not ignore their responses to ask more questions.

The advantages and disadvantages of information gathering techniques must be considered carefully when researching sensitive topics. Focus groups may provide an opportunity for children to offer each other support, but one to one interviews provide more confidentiality. If in doubt, consult with local staff and carers about the most appropriate course of action.

Avoid using labels, jargon and complicated words; use terms appropriate to the age, ability and understanding of the children or other participants. Use familiar language, the words they use.

Protect the identities of respondents at all costs and do not proceed if their safety and security cannot be guaranteed.

Anonymity—the identity of individuals is not collected and should not be able to be traced through the data. Procedures will be in place to ensure this and the researchers will be trained prior to the study commencing. Participants of Focus Group Discussions identities will not be recorded.

Confidentiality—explain what this means to all participants. Information collected in the study will be used but contributors remain anonymous. Information will not be written in such a way that their identity can be established.

Researchers will have experience of working with children and training to help them respond to children's needs. They will be provided with ongoing supervision and support throughout the duration of the study by the team leader.

Confidentiality must be kept at all costs; however, all participants must be made aware that if ongoing abuse is disclosed and the child needs immediate protection, the researcher is required to notify local service providers in order to protect the child. (Limited confidentiality).

Participants must not be unduly influenced by the use of incentives to take part in the study. If any incentives are used, they must be in line with local living standards.

Children's needs for support and protection, and their best interests, must be reflected in the interview procedures. Local staff and experts in working with children should be consulted in the process.

Following the publication of the research, plans must be made to give community members and partner organisations access to the results of the activity.

APPENDIX FOUR: BOYS RESEARCH CONSENT GUIDELINES & FORM

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY:

Hello, my name is, I am here for a research study on behalf of SSC, we are talking to boys who have been hurt, abused or exploited in a sexual way.* We are talking to children and adults here to get information about their lives and experiences so that we can understand and get ideas to help boys, carers, parents and organisations offer support and help in the future.

INVOLVEMENT:

We have been talking to adults, staff and other children from this area and would like to know what you think too. We think it's really important to understand what children's opinions and ideas are when we are planning services and help.

PROCEDURES INVOLVED (How will we do it?):

I would like to spend some time with you talking and listening to your opinions. The meeting will take maybe one hour altogether, but we will take a break halfway through for a snack and drink. I have a few questions and you can answer by talking, writing and drawing or whatever way you think is best. I have a partner called, who will sit quietly in the corner making notes about the things we talk about.

You can meet us on your own, or if you want a friend, carer/parent or member of staff present, then we are happy with that—whatever you think is best?

RISKS:

Some of the things we may talk about are quite personal and might be hard to answer. If you don't want to answer any question or want to leave it to answer later on, that's fine too.

ABILITY TO SAY NO:

Remember, you do not have to talk about anything if you don't want to. However, I hope that you can help us by answering the questions and sharing your opinions so we can find out what you and other boys who live here think. **Hearing your voice and words is very important to us.** Do you have any questions about what I have just said?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION?

We will be listening to boys from different places in Cambodia; when we have finished meeting everyone, we will collect all the information from here (.....) and keep it safe. We will then add all the information together and write a report about what we have found and what boys say they need. We will then share that information with people in Cambodia and suggest ways that people can help boys.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

If you agree to take part in the interview, no one will know who told me those things. Your name will be kept private, so no one can tell who shared it. That will be kept confidential between you and me. We might use some of the things that you say in the report to help other people understand how boys feel and think about this subject and to help think of ways to help, but no one will know it is you.

So, I will not write down your name here but if you agree to take part and help us, you can make a mark or a cross here and someone can witness that you agree if you like, that could be your parent/carer or a member of staff.... you can choose.

UNDERSTANDING:

Do you have any questions about anything I have just said?

So, if you are willing to help—do you want someone to stay here with you while we are talking?

Youth / child agreement

Adult present? Who?

Witness

Researcher name

Date & time of meeting

Any other comments:

* Or whatever term the child uses.

APPENDIX FIVE: STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

The following is the original semi-structured interview guideline produced by the team following training related to sexual abuse and research. This was used when staff and adult participants were interviewed. The main questions are identified in bold and cues for probing are in roman. Throughout the course of the research the guidelines were used flexibly and amended according to the situation and specific roles of the staff in the boys' lives. In many respects it resembles a script, although it was not used restrictively, the importance of flexibility being emphasised in training and preparation.

Interview Schedule—Questions for staff (Main questions in bold type)	Tools used
<p>Thank the respondent for their time, introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the research in a relaxed manner.</p> <p>Explain issues related to confidentiality and privacy of data.</p> <p>Express how important their views are in this research process.</p> <p>Ask if they have any questions prior to starting.</p>	Field notes
<p>A: Tell me about yourself: (warm up question, to encourage people to relax and feel able to talk)</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>How long have you worked here? What is/are your role/duties? What are your likes and dislikes about the job?</p> <p>What services does the project offer—and to whom?</p>	
<p>B: This research is about the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys. What is your understanding of the terms “sexual exploitation” and “sexual abuse”? (i.e. what is your definition?)</p> <p>Share with the respondent the definitions being used in this research, so they are clear about what is being discussed.</p>	Printed sheet with definitions
<p>C: Tell me about your experience of working with boys who have been exploited or sexually abused. (use some of the suggestions below for probing, when necessary)</p> <p>How many boys have you worked with?</p> <p>Do you consider it to be a big/small problem?</p> <p>What are your reasons for saying that?</p> <p>What are your views on who the abusers are? (Strangers? Known? Foreigners? Cambodian? Men and women?)</p> <p>What kinds of boys are abused? (i.e. where do they come from, age ranges, backgrounds etc.)</p> <p>How do you find out about their abuse—from the boys? Others?</p>	

<p>In your experience what do you think are the causes of sexual exploitation and abuse?</p> <p>Some people think that touching a boy's genitals when they are very young children is harmless and others think that it can be a form of abuse. What is your view?</p> <p>What about older boys, when, for example a person might pull down their trousers and make fun of them or pull on their genitals? Is that abusive? What are your reasons for thinking that? What are the origins of this?</p>	
<p>D: In your experience, what kinds of problems do sexual exploitation and abuse cause for boys?</p> <p>Physical?</p> <p>Emotional? Do you have any examples?</p> <p>Thoughts & feelings?</p> <p>Behaviours?</p> <p>What do you notice from working with boys?</p> <p>What problems do boys tell you that they have?</p> <p>Are there any similarities or differences to girls?</p> <p>With girls, many people say that honour and loss of virginity is a major problem? Do you think that is a problem for boys? If so/not—why and how? (explore)</p> <p>Shame—is that an issue for boys? If so/not—what is the reason for that?</p> <p>Anything else you want to add?</p>	
<p>E: I would like now to focus on your work with boys, so could you tell me about some of your experiences?</p> <p>What about successes? Can you tell me about situations where things you have done have worked really well, or helped a boy or boys? What kinds of things help you as a carer/staff member in your work? Can you give examples?</p> <p>What do you find most difficult/confusing/hard in working with boys and young men? Can you give examples?</p>	
<p>F: What works and helps boys to recover or get better? (Explore what they may mean by recovery or getting better)</p> <p>What strategies?</p> <p>If you are a counsellor or social worker—what type of counselling works well? (please give examples) Explore.....</p> <p>What kind of things do you talk about? Who decides what to talk about?</p>	

<p>Do you have any examples of tools, methods, or interventions that work?</p> <p>Any resources or ways of working that you have found useful?</p> <p>An important part of this research is to find ways to help Cambodian boys recover and get better after being abused. So we are finding out what people think are good ideas for models of care.</p> <p>What do you think their main needs are? And how can they be met? What ideas do you have?</p> <p>(Residential care? Fostering? Outreach? Help lines? Staying with family? Family work?)</p> <p>What about traditional healing? Any useful methods you can think of?</p>	
<p>G: Another important part of this research is to look at developing support and training for staff and organisations working with boys:</p> <p>Could you tell me a little about the training you have had so far in your job, and how that equips you (or not) to work with boys?</p> <p>What about the support and supervision that you receive to help you in this work with boys? (How often? Does it help? How? Can you give me an example? Does your supervisor have knowledge about boys? Is your practice observed by your supervisor?)</p> <p>What training, support and supervision needs do you have to help you work better with boys?</p> <p>What things do you need to know more about?</p> <p>What questions do you have about working with boys/ victims of abuse?</p> <p>What do you need to know to help you feel more confident?</p>	
<p>H: Is there anything else you would like to say in relation to this subject?</p> <p>Any questions about the interview or the research project?</p> <p>Thank the participant for their time and contribution to this research.</p> <p>Remind the respondent about confidentiality and privacy.</p> <p>Hopefully the research will be published and launched by late 2007/early 2008.</p>	

APPENDIX SIX: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Similar to the semi-structured interview schedule used with staff, this was developed by the team after training and discussion of the ToR. It was designed to be used as a “script” to guide questions and themes and to be used in conjunction with the other tools. The main themes are identified by use of bold type and cues for probing in roman. Questions and words used were modified depending upon the age, ability and language skills of the participant. Some interviews took place over more than one meeting, others at a single event.

<p>Find a quiet place, where you will not be disturbed</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Explain the purpose of the research in a child friendly manner and explain how important it is that children have a voice, so that they and other children can be helped.</p> <p>Explain what confidentiality means and that the identity of all people helping the research will be kept private.</p> <p>Explain the meaning of consent and ask them, if they agree to sign the form and/or ask any adult present to do the same</p> <p>Explain the process (how it will be done and what methods we can use—talking, writing, drawing etc.) Explain that it will be done in two parts with a break in between.</p> <p>Remind them that if they don’t understand a question, they can ask... If they don’t want to answer a question, they don’t have to and if they want to stop the interview at any time, that is fine.</p>	<p>Tools</p> <p>Consent form</p>
<p>A: LIFE STORY:</p> <p>Show the child a completed life story picture and, using paper and pens, help them complete one for themselves, highlighting important events such as their birth, going to school, birth of siblings etc. (Become actively involved, sharing this activity in a relaxed manner.)</p> <p>Ask any additional questions to clarify anything you are not sure of, praise them on their ability and make it fun!</p> <p>After perhaps 30 or 40 minutes, take a break.</p>	<p>Paper, pens and other art materials</p>
<p>B: THE INTERVIEW:</p> <p>Reiterate that if they don’t want answer any question or if they want to take a break or stop the interview, that’s fine.</p>	<p>Have paper, pens and other materials ready</p>

<p>C: PROBLEM-FREE TALK:</p> <p>Choose something from the life story or things they like about living in this place/favourite food etc.</p> <p>Make small talk to help the child/young person used to talking about something easy.</p> <p>Remember, it's a conversation, so be natural and relaxed too.</p> <p>Show your interest with verbal and non-verbal language</p> <p>D: BOYS—when people do things they don't like and hurt them:</p> <p>This research is about understanding boys who have had problems after being hurt by adults or other children.</p> <p>Can you tell me the ways that you know about adults or other children hurt boys? (e.g.—at school, home, being bullied, called names etc). We can list them down/draw them if you like—what would you prefer to do?</p> <p>(Be encouraging but not pushy—rather lead them gently through the conversation, step by step).</p> <p>If they don't mention sexual abuse that's okay.</p> <p>E: BOYS—SEXUAL ABUSE & EXPLOITATION:</p> <p>We are finding out through reading and talking to people that children and young people, girls and boys, all over the world and in Cambodia are sometimes used and hurt by people in a sexual way:</p> <p>Adults or staff might call that sexual abuse or exploitation. What do you understand by that/or do have words that you use to describe that?</p> <p>What are they? (Maybe write the words down on a sheet of paper or better still, if the child is willing and able, ask them to do it.)</p> <p>What kinds of things do you know about that some adults or children do to boys to hurt them in that way? (can be self or other person)</p> <p>Probe gently ...</p> <p>Listen and show you are listening carefully ...</p> <p>Ask follow-up questions related to what they share</p> <p>Allow the participant to answer the question in the first or third person</p> <p>Some people think its okay for Cambodians to touch a baby boy's genitals when they are very young to show affection or to calm them down when they are crying. Other boys say that it happens later in life too—maybe when they are seven, eight, nine or ten years old.</p> <p>Have you heard about that kind of thing happening?</p> <p>What do you think about that? What are your views?</p> <p>Is it okay/not okay?</p>	<p>Paper, pens, and other art materials</p>
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<p>F: IMPACTS AND EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE:</p> <p>Some people say that sexual abuse/(whatever word(s) the boy uses) can have a big impact on a person...</p> <p>What do you know about either from your experiences or those of other people? (explain that they can talk, write or draw using the body map/Mandala picture/other art materials)</p> <p>Thoughts? (What does that make people think?)</p> <p>Feelings? (What does it make people feel?)</p> <p>Behavior? How do people change after abuse? what might they do differently?</p> <p>Seek to clarify if you are not sure...</p> <p>How does it affect family? Relationships?</p> <p>What other things do you know about?</p> <p>When girls or women are abused people often talk about them losing honour because they lose virginity. Is it different/the same for boys? How?</p> <p>Is there anything else you want to say?</p> <p>G: GETTING HELP</p> <p>Another really important part of our research is to know how to help and support boys, look after and care for boys who have experienced such things and to know what boys need and want from services.</p> <p>We think that the people who will know more about this are boys themselves.</p> <p>So firstly, I would like to know, when you first told someone what had happened – what did they say – how were you treated? (Explore)</p> <p>Can you tell me if you have had any kind of help so far? Who it was from (Parents, carers, NGO? Talking/listening? Medical help? Listening? Law? Health related?)</p> <p>Can you tell me about things that were helpful, good or useful?</p> <p>(That might be a person, a place, an organisation or it might be something else.)</p> <p>Can you tell me about things that weren't good, helpful or useful?</p> <p>WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO YOU THINK THAT BOYS NEED TO HELP THEM FEEL BETTER ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?</p> <p>Probe gently—physical things?</p> <p>Personal qualities from helpers (e.g. What skills or attributes?)</p>	<p>Utilise Mandala drawings, body maps and other materials</p>
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<p>Practical support (e.g. food, clothes, medical attention?)</p> <p>Emotional support?</p> <p>(Talking? Having someone to listen maybe?)</p> <p>Remember to probe gently, seek the meaning of what they say and “look beyond” their answers for the meaning.</p> <p>Link their ideas to the list of impacts and effects and things they have already shared</p> <p>If you had the choice of staying somewhere that would be safe for you and other boys, what would be your first choice? (e.g. your family? Someone else’s family? Somewhere else?)</p> <p>SO, IF YOU WERE ABLE TO DESIGN OR CREATE NEW SERVICES FOR BOYS...</p> <p>What would they be like?</p> <p>Maybe draw a picture?</p> <p>Would it be somewhere people could go anytime of day or night? (“drop in”)</p> <p>If it was a place...</p> <p>What kind of things would it have?</p> <p>If the child struggles, maybe probe by asking some of the following ... get them to draw it, if it helps...</p> <p>Would it have rooms for sleeping?</p> <p>What else would it have?</p> <p>What would it be like?</p> <p>Would it be somewhere to live and how many boys would live there?</p> <p>Staff? (Male and female?) What would they be like? (personal qualities)</p> <p>What kind of things would they do for you?</p> <p>What kind of things or problems would they help you solve?</p> <p>How would or could they do that?</p> <p>Do families of boys need help too? What do they need?</p> <p>GIVING YOU A VOICE!</p> <p>It’s really important for us in this research to give you a voice, so that other children but also adults—staff, helpers supporters, carers and parents can hear what you have to say, so....</p> <p>If you could say anything to Cambodian people or the world about the abuse and exploitation of boys – what would you say?</p> <p>(e.g. people who might not believe it happens or others who want to help?)</p> <p>What would you say to other boys, who may have been hurt or abused by others?</p>	<p>Mandala picture, paper, pens and other art materials</p>
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<p>What would you say to people or adults who hurt people in a sexual way?</p> <p>ENDINGS:</p> <p>Thank you so much for helping with this research is there anything else you would like to say or ask?</p> <p>Reminder of confidentiality, safety etc.</p> <p>Problem free talk for a few minutes before ending the meeting.</p>	
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APPENDIX SEVEN: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS—A TEAM APPROACH

In keeping with the team capacity-building approach developed throughout the study, all members took part in a team analysis of data for a period of three weeks at the end of the field research. However, analysis was not restricted to that instance at the end of the data gathering process but was essentially a process that took place in the field throughout the study, utilising a range of methodologies that enabled the researchers to respond to changing themes and events, developing their awareness, skills and intuition.

The previously mentioned reflective journals provided an additional and rich source of material; the team was encouraged to discuss and share thoughts and ideas relating to what they were discovering with each other, at individual and team meetings throughout the study and at the end of each day in the field. Notes were taken at those meetings which informed and laid foundations for a more formal analysis process later. In addition, each set of field notes and other forms of data was translated, checked, discussed with the author, clarified and amended where necessary, prior to analysis. The training had also prepared the team for looking beneath the surface and encouraged the development of critical thinking.

The study generated significant amounts of data based on key informant meetings, focus groups, observations, meetings and individual interviews. The data from all three sites and that of boys and adults was also kept apart to enable triangulation and later comparison. Initially the data for boys and young men was analysed from each geographical site, and a similar process was followed for data relating to staff, adults and carers. Where multiple interviews were carried out within the same NGO, they were analysed together, enabling the team to identify consistencies, differences and emerging themes.

Team analysis was a time-consuming and exhausting process conducted in two languages. While it was structured, it also allowed for flexibility. Each set of notes was discussed in order for every response to questions to be explored. A system of “open coding” was used to record ideas, similarities, differences and points of tension emerging from the data and the material was then broken down, compared and discussed further. Notes were taken throughout, summarising findings until a list of key themes emerged, using exact quotations from participants to support our ideas and tell the story. Analytical strategies included comparisons of themes emerging across and within groups of participants and across and within groups of questions. Due to the immense amount of data and limited time available, some field notes (including many of the interviews carried out by the team leader) were analysed separately by him, and a summary of findings was presented to the team for discussion.

Time was taken to discuss what the findings meant to the team, considering differences and similarities in opinions, and those ideas were subsequently noted, which helped construct meanings, informing the writing of the report. Other material, including media reports and NGO documents, also informed our analysis. Following the end of the process, team members were provided with opportunities to discuss the findings individually and write a personal reflective summary for inclusion in the report.

APPENDIX 8: SUMMARY OF DATA FROM FOCUS GROUPS IN PHNOM PENH

Five focus groups and group meetings were held in Phnom Penh at various stages of the research. They included groups of staff from NGOs working with sexually abused and exploited children, street living and working children, totalling more than 50 people. Participants included carers, social workers, project coordinators and managers. Open questions were asked, exploring themes of awareness and experiences of working with boys and sexual abuse. These groups helped develop an understanding of organisational cultures and attitudes, enabling the team to identify individuals with specific experience for one-to-one interviews at a later date. The main themes to emerge were as follows:

Most participants thought that boys were abused by foreigners or gay men.

In one organisation working with street children, the staff stated that they were not working with and had not met any boys who were sexually abused.

Where Khmers were identified as abusers, this was often seen as a response to western culture, including pornographic films and/or involving high-ranking people. Some viewed pornography as a significant problem, which led to children abusing other children, as they wanted to try what they had seen.

A lack of belief that boys can be abused was present in one team, underlined by thoughts that boys are exaggerating when they talk about it.

Some teams do not think that working with sexually abused boys is their job or goal, and so they pay little attention to it.

Some participants in one organisation believed that ejaculation is necessary for an act to be defined as abuse; others believe that force is required.

In terms of harm, a range of problems was identified by some, but most believed that abuse of girls was more serious; boys can “forget” the events more quickly because they don’t suffer from loss of honour.

Other impacts noted were boys becoming pale, anal injuries, suicidal thoughts, using drugs to cope, finding it hard to study and wanting to have sex. Some believe that abuse makes victims gay.

Most participants found boys difficult to work with because they don’t listen to advice or don’t want to speak.

No staff have received specific training or supervision in relation to this issue.

Difficulties working with boys included lack of training, little help from authorities and problems getting parents to cooperate, because they prefer their children to work and earn money.

Potential solutions were considered as educating boys to stop them wanting to have sex, helping them to express their feelings or sending them to see a psychiatrist.

One group of carers were clearly very cautious talking about the issue, as they perceived that they were not supposed to know about things like that and hadn’t been given

specific permission to talk by management. They described their situation as being like “frogs in a well”.²³⁵

Several females identified feeling anxious and/or scared of working with boys, especially when they are aggressive.

It was clear that despite being the adults who spend most time with the boys, the carers were given insufficient information to help them provide support.

235 Throughout the research, we became familiar with this term, often used to explain situations where staff have little knowledge in relation to a subject and often related to a sense of powerlessness. So like frogs in a well, they feel that they are kept in the dark, having little opportunity to escape their predicament or understand issues in the wider context.

APPENDIX NINE: A PLAN FOR FLEXIBLE THERAPEUTIC WORK

This is just one example of a plan developed by Andrew Durham and borrowed from his excellent *Young Men Surviving Child Sexual Abuse* (2003). This is not exhaustive and should not be considered as exclusive of other aspects of support not included in the plan. It is used primarily to illustrate the types of issues included but does not include reference to the methods and tools used. There is no “one size fits all” path or A, B, C to recovery, and it is crucial to recognise that each survivor will have his own unique story, difficulties, strengths, coping skills and needs. This or any other plan for that matter should not be imposed as a blueprint for recovery at the expense of the needs of the individual concerned and should be used flexibly. Good practice involves a truly empowering person- or client-centred approach, enabling children to have control over the process.

Other key issues identified are the need for genuine flexibility and transparency (openness and honesty). The order in which the work will be undertaken varies depending on the individual circumstances of the child or young person, as will the time scale. Where possible, children should be offered a choice about the gender of the counsellor or supporter. It remains to be seen how ideas like these may be incorporated within Cambodia, but it is interesting to observe that many of these issues reflect expressed problems or needs of boys in our study. It is hoped that in years to come ideas like this and others can be used, evaluated, modified and shared, blending Cambodian perspectives and approaches with the best that is available elsewhere.

- **Being safe—feeling safe—keeping safe**
- **Telling the story, being heard, being listened to and believed.**
- **Placing responsibility with the abuser**
- **Telling family**
- **Help with the legal process—police—court—compensation**
- **How it happened**
- **Why it happened**
- **Understanding gender myths and oppression**
- **Memories, flashbacks and fears**
- **Anger and feelings**
- **Sex and sexuality knowledge and education**
- **Physical pleasure**
- **Fear of abusing others**
- **Friendships and peer relations**
- **General support**

APPENDIX TEN: RELEVANT ARTICLES OF THE U.N. CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Article 19 of the CRC states that state parties shall take all appropriate measures to protect the child from sexual abuse.

Article 34 and the Optional Protocol to the CRC commit state parties to make and implement national laws against the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Article 35 obligates states to take all appropriate measures to prevent the abduction, sale and trafficking of children

Article 39 commits states to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social integration of children who have been victims of any form of neglect, violence, exploitation, torture or other degrading treatment or punishment.

Freedom of expression in Article 13 and the right to be heard in Article 12 are of specific importance when a child or children want to speak out about sexual abuse and exploitation. Children who report sexual abuse and exploitation have the right to be taken seriously, to be met with respect and to receive assistance. Good channels for reporting and effective disclosure procedures are essential measures for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Sexual abuse and exploitation are detrimental and violate the child's basic right to life and development as stated in Article 6 and the best interest of the child, set out in Article 3. It must be addressed through a non-discriminatory and inclusive approach, and therefore Article 2 on non-discrimination is also relevant.

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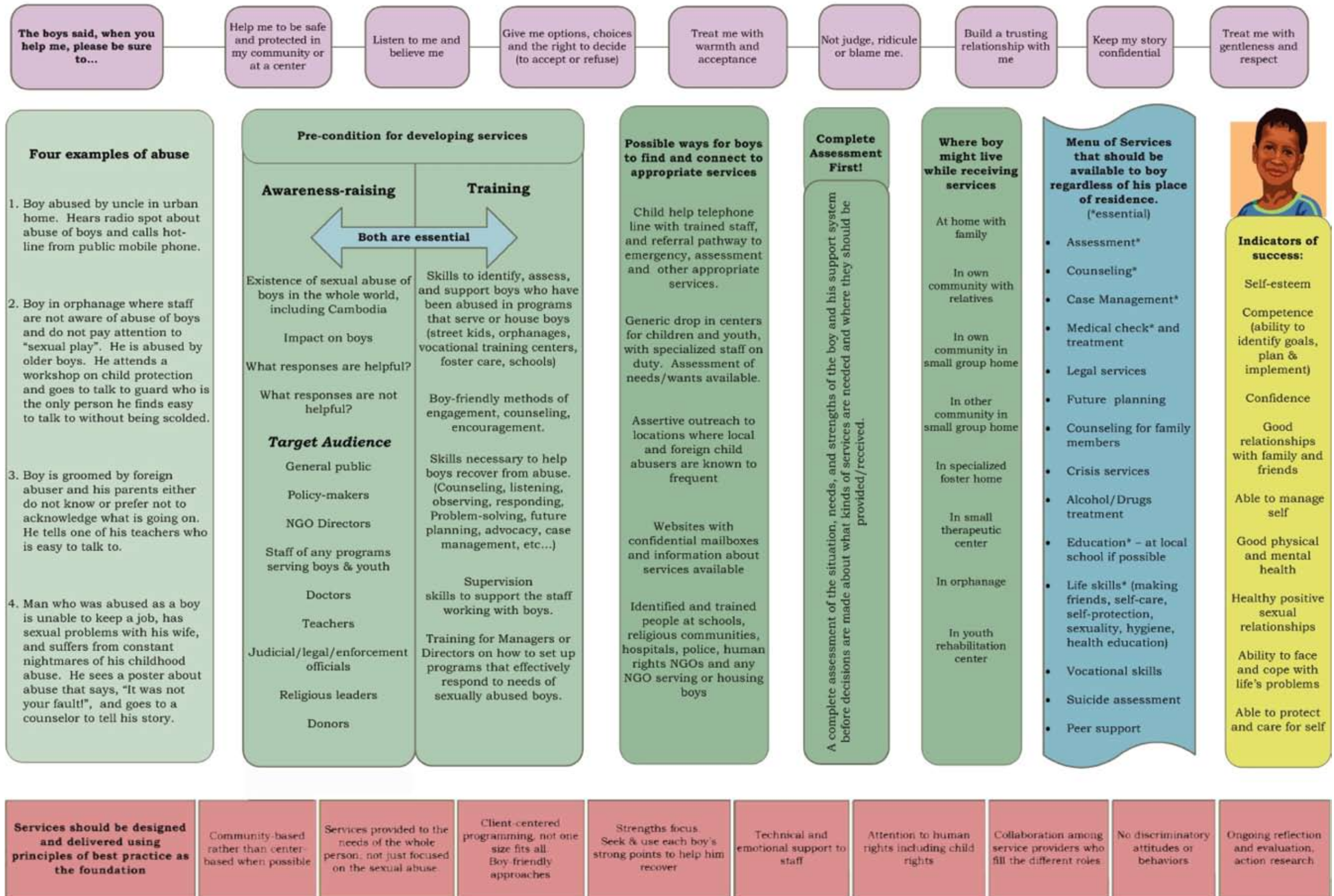
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Developing Services that Respond to the Expressed Needs of Boys Who Have Been Sexually Abused



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