

Protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism

Capacity building and awareness raising activities in Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Gambia and Dominican Republic



END CHILD PROSTITUTION
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY &
TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN
FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

A project funded by



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

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In the Netherlands Defence for Children and ECPAT are
one organization that promotes children's rights.

2013

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TABLE OF CONTENT

- 1. Introduction..... 7
- 2. Material and Methods..... 9
- 3. Best practices and challenges..... 10
- 4. Thailand 13
- 5. Cambodia 19
- 6. Philippines 26
- 7. Gambia 32
- 8. Dominican Republic..... 38
- 9. Overall Project Results and Conclusions 44
- 10. Literature list..... 47



INTRODUCTION

Sexual exploitation of children means the use of children for sexual gratification by adults for remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third party. Technology, urbanization, globalization and international trade and travel have greatly facilitated the sexual exploitation of children for commercial purposes. Anonymity, availability of children, and being away from the moral and social constraints that are present at home, can lead to abusive behaviour in another country. Most tourists do not intentionally travel for the sole purpose of seeking sex with children, but they take advantage of the availability of children and adolescents for sexual exploitation at a destination. Commercial sexual exploitation seriously compromises a child's right to enjoy their youth and their ability to lead a productive, rewarding and dignified life. It can result in serious, lifelong, even life-threatening consequences for the physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and social development and well-being of a child.



Tourism Child Protection Code

While tourism is not the cause of child sexual exploitation, child sex tourists make use of the facilities offered by tour companies, hotels, resorts, restaurants, airlines and other transportation companies. In order to prevent this, ECPAT (a global network dedicated to eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of

children) developed a code of conduct for the tourism industry. By implementing the six criteria of the Tourism Child Protection Code (Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism), tourism and travel enterprises implement child protection measures in their day-to-day business and utilize their wide network of international business partners and travellers. The aim of The Code is to create a tourism supply chain that adds to the protection of children by raising the awareness of travellers and travel professionals on child sex tourism and by engaging business partners in developing a policy on the protection of children including reporting child abuse cases.



Many suppliers of tourism services (tour operators, hotels, guest houses, airline companies, travel agents, bars, restaurants, et cetera) have recognised the key role they can play to protect children, and have adopted the Tourism Child Protection Code. Organizations that commit themselves to The Code implement the following six criteria:

1. To establish a policy and procedures against sexual exploitation of children.
2. To train employees in children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and how to report suspected cases.
3. To include a clause in contracts throughout the value chain stating a common repudiation and zero tolerance policy of sexual exploitation of children.
4. To provide information to travellers on children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and how to report suspected cases.
5. To support, collaborate and engage stakeholders in the prevention of sexual exploitation of children.
6. To report annually on their implementation of Code related activities.

The Tourism Child Protection Code was developed as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) instrument in 1998. In 2006 it was handed over to the industry and since then The Code is an industry-driven, multi-stakeholder initiative with the mission to provide awareness, tools and

support to the tourism industry in order to combat the sexual exploitation of children in contexts related to travel and tourism. For The Code to be successful as a CSR instrument, a number of conditions have to be created:

- Local governments and tourism boards support the protection of children in tourism.
- Relevant stakeholders are prepared to work together.
- There are local child rights experts to assist the tourism industry in implementing child protection measures.



Local Code Representatives

Part of The Code is a network of Local Code Representatives (LCR) to support Code members on national level with the implementation of the Code's criteria. In 74 countries there are ECPAT groups working to protect children against sexual exploitation. Many of those countries are tourism destinations where a problem with sexual exploitation in tourism exists. Therefore the child protection activities of the ECPAT partners in these destinations include the support of The Code as LCR.

Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Gambia and Dominican Republic have all been reported to be destinations for tourists who wish to have sex with children and young people. With many people living in poverty, children and their families are vulnerable to be lured by tourists for the purpose of sexual abuse or exploitation in exchange for money or gifts. There is the need for more involvement of local stakeholders, especially small and medium enterprises, but also local governmental tourism organizations, such as the local tourism board, the tourist police, the chamber of commerce and local government responsible for regulating the tourism development. Interventions focussed on awareness raising and capacity building of local LCR are highly necessary to improve the situation.

The awareness raising project

Since 2008 the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports ECPAT's work with the tourism industry to combat child sex tourism in the above mentioned destination countries. In 2010 the first project was finished. In September 2011 the Ministry financed a second similar project that finished in October 2013. With support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ECPAT Netherlands was able to strengthen Local Code Representatives in Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Gambia and Dominican Republic in their work with the tourism industry. Since 2011 the local ECPAT partners trained a total of 3,000 professionals and distributed almost 100,000 awareness raising materials on reporting child sex tourism. The awareness raising activities were targeted on the tourism industry (hotel managers, frontline personnel, incoming agents, tourism schools, tourism boards, branch organizations and tourists), communities in tourism areas, local governments, police, social welfare and NGOs. See page 44 for an overview of the activities and target groups.

This report is a result of two monitoring visits at each destination. Information was collected through unannounced visits to industry partners and interviews with management, front desk personnel and other stakeholders. During the monitoring visits the following questions were considered:

- What is the general picture of the protection of children against sexual exploitation?
- Which measures are visible to the accidental tourist and traveller when visiting the country?
- What has been achieved with the awareness raising activities within this project?
- What factors influence progress in a positive and negative way?
- What kind of recommendations do different stakeholders have on how to improve the protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

During two monitoring visits (in June-July 2012 and June-July 2013) different tourism facilities were visited, such as popular touristic attractions, hotels, tourist information offices, official tour guide offices, tourism security offices, nightclubs, restaurants and different means of public transportation. The hotels visited for monitoring were selected on the basis of their participation in the trainings, their relation to The Code, or their relation to one of The Code affiliated tour operators (TUI, Thomas Cook and KUONI). It was observed whether there was any information visible on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and, when possible, staff was interviewed. The local partners (see table 1) and some of the participants of the capacity building seminars were interviewed about the actions that were taken since the seminars. The monitoring visits were not only meant as an evaluation of the project, but also to assess opportunities and challenges. Therefore, meetings with many stakeholders took place to discuss how to improve the protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism.

Data for this report was obtained via a combination of methodologies, including:

- Literature research.
- Formal interview and informal communications with local project partners.
- Informal interviews with tourism staff and managers during site visits.
- Structured group discussions during evaluation meetings.
- Individual questionnaires completed by participants of the capacity building workshops.
- Observations during site visits to trainees' workplaces and other tourism facilities.

The following ECPAT partners participated in the project:

Country	Partner
Thailand	ECPAT International and The Code
Cambodia	ECPAT Cambodia
Philippines	ECPAT Philippines
Gambia	Child Protection Alliance, ECPAT affiliate
Dominican Republic	MAIS, ECPAT affiliate

Table 1: Local partners in the selected countries

The local partners concentrated their activities on different areas that are popular tourism destinations and where children are at risk to become exploited in the sex industry:

Country	Areas project
Thailand	Bangkok and Pattaya
Cambodia	Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk Province
Philippines	Boracay Island, Puerto Princesa, Panglao
Gambia	Senegambia, Bakau area, Banjul
Dominican Republic	Sosua, Cabarete, Boca Chica, Punta Cana

Table 2: Selected areas for the capacity building and awareness raising activities

Due to political unrest it was impossible to carry out the final monitoring visit in Cambodia. The report on Cambodia is based on the first monitoring and an update by ECPAT Cambodia.

BEST PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

Within this project several best practices can be identified on how to protect children against sexual exploitation in tourism in a multi-stakeholder setting in compliance with The Code. Also challenges have become apparent in the project that compromise active involvement of tourism and travel organizations in the protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism.

Best practices

Stakeholders as ambassadors

A successful strategy was followed in the Dominican Republic by building a strong case in one region and let the stakeholders be ambassadors in other regions. After MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic had invested a lot of time in building relations with the hotels and the associations in Puerto Plata, these business partners convinced their colleagues in Punta Cana and later in Santo Domingo to follow their example.

Development of training materials with different stakeholders

ACCOR Thailand Head Office worked with ECPAT International to create new e-learning training modules. A pilot session was conducted in June 2012 with several ACCOR hotels in Bangkok. In this way training materials were tested in practice. Involving industry partners in developing training modules creates involvement and commitment and makes the training modules more effective.

Youth participation

In the Dominican Republic MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic organized youth rallies in which youth talked to entrepreneurs and tourists about their peers who are less fortunate, and they helped distributing information materials. The participation of youth resulted in positive reactions and a high visibility of the awareness raising materials.

Local governments

In the Philippines cooperation with local governments led to much additional support. In Puerto Princesa the local government repeatedly invited ECPAT to participate in presentations and trainings and opened two hotlines to report sexual exploitation of children. The Bohol Provincial Tourism office included information of The Code and ECPAT in the provincial tourism brochure and asked ECPAT to be a partner in local policy advocacy. Especially involving tourism authorities bodies, such as the Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Boards and Associations are important to integrate child protection in licensing procedures.

Important government officials

In Cambodia the Undersecretary of State of the Ministry of Tourism gave an opening speech at every seminar and local Deputy Governors held speeches about the local situation. By involving important officials, the seminars are received as more important to the industry and a positive environment is created for tourism organizations to become active in the protection of children against sexual exploitation in tourism.

Law enforcement

The strong presence of law enforcement representatives in the trainings in Thailand, especially foreign police liaison officers, gave participants more confidence that there is willingness from authorities to tackle the problem and this motivated them to report cases in the future.

Involvement of Western tour operators

ECPAT Netherlands requested Dutch Code members to send a letter of recommendation to supplying hotels urging them to participate in the capacity building seminars organized by the local ECPAT partners. The commitment of large Western tour operators, like TUI, to child protection, motivated hotel managers in Cambodia to make time available for attending the seminars.

Stakeholders outside the tourism industry

Since children are often lured outside the tourism industry, CPA - ECPAT the Gambia invited many other sectors to the seminars in the Gambia. The trainings of fruit vendors, craft market workers and taxi drivers led to a high awareness amongst tourism entrepreneurs throughout the chain. Most of these small-scale entrepreneurs have direct contact with tourists and work at places where children are recruited for sex tourism.



Community involvement

In the Dominican Republic, the Gambia and the Philippines there was much attention for community involvement. This is important to break the silence around sexual exploitation of children and to inform children and parents about signals of traffickers, consequences of sexual exploitation, how to prevent and report it and where to find support. Community involvement is also important to create efficient pressure on local government and the tourism industry to take child protection measures.

Training of future managers

MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic started training tourism students in the Dominican Republic four years ago. These students are now entering management positions in the tourism industry and are already sensitized on the subject. Starting at schools is an effective way to change the attitude of the next generation of tourism professionals towards sexual exploitation of children in tourism.

Awareness raising materials

ECPAT Philippines produced a diversity of materials of high quality, like standees for in hotel rooms and a video that was used on a large commercial screen in the centre of Puerto Princesa town. ECPAT Cambodia communicated child protection messages on tourism maps, which were very popular among the hotel customers.

In order for the tourism industry to distribute information materials, messages should call on reporting suspicions of child sex tourism and be integrated in responsible travelling messages, to avoid offending of customers. It is advised to provide holders to store the information materials on the hotel reception counters and put contact information on the holder for ordering new materials when they are finished. Before producing materials it should be clear how these will be distributed. The distributing plan should contain ideas on how the materials reach their target groups and how practical matters like storage, ordering, transportation and re-printing are organized.

Capacity building seminars

The in house trainings of ECPAT Philippines and MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic of frontline staff were successful because they were small-scale and at the hotel premises, which provided a confident environment for effective discussion and practicing on how to react in suspicion of child sex tourism. Capacity building seminars are best attended when they are short and effective to fit into the tight schedules of the tourism industry and its personnel. Timing should also be adapted to the seasonality of tourism. When training employees, they should not be required to participate in seminars outside working hours and it should be considered that they take information materials into their communities. The training of frontline personnel should be done on a yearly basis, considering the rapid turnover of personnel. When developing e-learning modules for the tourism industry, keep in mind that although internet might be accessible in many Southern destinations, it often lacks the capacity, speed and stability to do e-learning courses without problems.

Challenges

Stimulation through the supply chain

The interest of the private sector to sign The Code, train frontline staff or visibly show information materials at the front desk is slowly increasing, but it needs much advocacy from ECPAT. If The Code

would work as intended, Code members would also do advocacy for The Code. Tour operators would ask their suppliers (hotels, local agents, travel agencies) to implement child protection measures and show interest in signing The Code. And these suppliers in their turn ask their suppliers (taxis or guides). In that way ECPAT or The Code don't need to approach the many tourism providers individually and can focus on creating a positive environment by involving local governments, tourism officials and communities, developing training and information materials and approach non-Code related hotels and other tourism industries to implement child protection measures.

At this time tourism enterprises are insufficiently stimulated to sign The Code through the supply chain. Hardly any of the hotels in this project were asked by the tour operating companies they supply, to adhere to or sign The Code. Nor did the hotels ask their suppliers for child protection measures. This only seemed to be the case in the chain of ownership that ACCOR and KUONI represents. The Code should make it a priority to convince the industry that the supply chain is at the heart of The Code, as an industry-driven CSR instrument.

One of the reasons that the supply chain is not effective could be the complexity of hotel ownership structures. It would be good if the industry would be more transparent on this. Another important issue in this respect is that supply chains should be approached more broadly. Not only hotels and tour operators should be considered, but also other industries like transport, guides, and other suppliers who cooperate in different industry associations. The industry should see The Code as an important and serious element of CSR and as part of the new drive for the implementation of respect for Human Rights in Business as laid down in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (informally known as the Ruggie Principles). The Code headquarters should define and distinguish the responsibilities of industry, LCR, ECPAT and themselves more clearly so the industry knows what is expected from them in advocacy of The Code.



Reporting, investigating and prosecuting

Reporting was promoted in the seminars and through leaflets and brochures. But some problems were apparent. In some cases there were a number of hotlines mentioned (from the local police, national police, the ministry of youth or health, et cetera), language problems (in the Dominican Republic the hotline was answered in Spanish), lack of personnel and issues of guaranteeing anonymity. Too often the people that report got frustrated since nothing was done with the report.

Very few cases of child sex tourism are reported because of social tolerance, neglect, fear, and lack of faith in the punitive system. Even fewer cases are thoroughly investigated in most child sex tourism destination countries because of inadequate legislation or weak law enforcement.

For The Code to be successful in combating child sex tourism through the tourism industry, legislation should be adequate, hotlines should work properly and capacity and skills of police officers need to be sufficient to follow up the reports that are brought in by the tourism industry. Therefore, police officers, public prosecutors and judges need to be trained on children rights and on handling child exploitation cases. Also child support systems need to be improved to make sure minor victims of exploitation receive the proper care.

THAILAND



Tourism

Tourism is a major source of income for Thailand and has been growing steadily over the past years (with a dip because of natural disaster and political unrest in 2009), accounting for 6-7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is the market value of all officially recognized final goods and services produced within a country¹. In the past three years the majority of tourists came from China, Malaysia, Russia, Korea and Japan. European tourists come from Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. Furthermore, there were around 144 million domestic travellers within Thailand in the recent years³.

Year	Number of tourists
2007	14,464,000
2008	14,584,000
2009	14,150,000
2010	15,936,000
2011	19,230,000
2012	22,303,000

Table 3: Number of tourists arriving per year^{1 + 2}

Sexual exploitation of children

In its Global Monitoring Report (2011)⁴ ECPAT International reports the following on sexual exploitation of children in Thailand and legislation and mechanisms to protect children:

Victims

Prostitution is technically illegal in Thailand, but sexual services are sold openly with an estimated 60,000 children under age eighteen involved in prostitution. Local officials with commercial interests in prostitution sometimes protect the practice. In addition entertainment venues are being used as a front for prostitution and sex trafficking, such as karaoke bars, massage parlours, 'curtain' hotels and even restaurants.

There is no accurate profile of children involved in prostitution in Thailand but the most common age range for children involved in commercial sexual exploitation tends to be those between the ages of twelve and sixteen. The majority of young Thai girls currently found in traditional prostitution (in bars, massage parlours, brothels et cetera) originate from Northern Thailand and are pushed to provide sex services by the need to help their family survive.

Causes

Even though Thailand enjoys relative prosperity and development compared to neighbouring countries, poverty and social inequality remain problematic, especially in rural areas in the Northeast and North regions. Many groups in Thailand have been left behind, particularly ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees and the very poor. For many children in Thailand, life has improved in the past decade, but children in disadvantaged communities have missed out on the benefits of the country's progress. Due to a lack in capacity of well-trained police officers, cases involving sexual exploitation are not given high priority.

Offenders

Research by Johns Hopkins University, published in 2007, found that the largest group of foreign sex tourists in Thailand may be opportunistic perpetrators or situational offenders, without a specific preference for children and without a prior plan to engage in sex with children. However, when presented with the opportunity, these men take advantage of vulnerable children. Conversely, preferential child sex tourists and paedophiles who in earlier years viewed Thailand as a safe haven for child sexual exploitation, may be less common than in the past. Alleged travelling child sex offenders arrested in 2007-2008 were mainly aged 50-59, while victims were mostly male children and youth aged between twelve and twenty years.

Trends

A number of changes in the characteristics of child sex tourism in Thailand have been noted in the last years. Organized crime appears to be less involved in the arrangement of child sex tourism, except in the case of very young children. However, the interface point for child sex tourism accordingly seems to be shifting to the streets rather than organized brothels. Children are also often delivered directly to provide sex services to an adult based on a pre-arrangement made between the adult and an intermediary controlling the child.

Whilst Thailand continues to be one of the main destination countries for travelling child sex offenders in the ASEAN region, reports suggest that crackdowns on child prostitution by Thai authorities in cooperation with Interpol and several foreign law enforcement agencies have induced offenders to move to neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and even Bangladesh to look for children.

Areas

With regard to locations and trends, there appears to be a decrease in child sex tourism in Bangkok while in Pattaya, Phuket, and Chiang Mai the problem is still prevalent.

General picture

Compared to previous visits in 2007 and 2010, Pattaya city has taken steps to give itself a makeover as a tourist destination in order to compete with other beach destinations within Thailand, such as Phuket, Samui, Hua Hin and Krabi. The tourism infrastructure has improved in terms of provision of a cleaner beach, more facilities and meter taxi as an example. More and more Russians (families, couples and single mothers) are taking the streets, and Indian, Malaysian, Chinese, Japanese and Arab couples, groups and families are becoming a familiar sight.



But still sex tourism is the core attraction of the tourism industry in Pattaya. In all areas of Pattaya (North, South and Centre) you will find open bars, offering girls and cheap beer. Every single man is contacted on passing these bars. The main areas within Pattaya that are identified to be high-risk areas are: Beach Road (main road along the beach), Sunee Plaza (area where all the boy bars and clubs are) and above all Walking Street. This is the main red light area, which has become a touristic attraction of itself. Russian families with children watch the women, lady boys, Russian stripteases and

the classic Ping-Pong shows, before taking a Big Mac in one of the two MacDonald's that guard both entrance and exit of this infamous street.

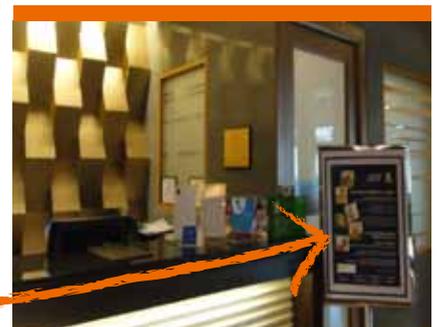
From the survey of Beach Road and Walking Street at around 5 pm, there are no at-risk children visible (street children or children in suspicious looking situations). However, at a second visit later on around 8:30 pm, several teenage girls came out of a sub-soi (secondary smaller street that

branch out from the main street) of Walking Street, where there were several guesthouses, service apartments and low-end hotels. A local taxi driver explained that children are still involved in prostitution and most come out after midnight. From the interviews it became clear that several hotels in Pattaya are willing to provide services to child sex tourists and there is room for vast improvement in implementing child protection measures.

Child protection in the tourism industry

Most hotels have accepted the fact that guests bring back prostitutes to the hotel and have clear regulations and policies regarding ‘joiners’. They require a joiner fee of around \$20 and will not admit children under age of eighteen without their parent or guardian. Despite having some policies in place, implementation remains questionable, especially when the industry seems to be catering to please sex tourists instead of enforcing the policy. For example there are condoms available in the mini-bar among the room amenities and one hotel had a card that explained the policy but it also stipulated: “guest can bring a child to the hotel with prior notification”.

In Pattaya no child protection measures are visible. During visits to 23 hotels in Pattaya only the three ACCOR hotels had information material visible at the front desk. Some hotels display information materials on their TV screens or at the hotel reception (see picture of ACCOR Hotel in Bangkok). ACCOR Hotels is an active Code signatory in Thailand. ACCOR Thailand Head Office worked with ECPAT International to create new training modules and a pilot session was conducted in June 2012 with several hotels in Bangkok.



ACCOR Thailand also suggested starting a pilot of a mini-movie covering the ECPAT partnership and Code’s implementation on its internal channel within the hotel. According to ACCOR Thailand there were no cases reported in their hotel. Probably this is because security stops minors before they get to the desk, and therefore these cases are not reported. It would be good to put procedures in place that guarantee that every incident gets reported.

Although there were repeated contacts with the tourism industry during this project, the number of new Code signatories was disappointing. The Ramada Encore joined in 2012 and Centara Hotels re-established contact. The national tourism associations in Thailand remain disengaged. The Code has tried to reach out to them via the Department of Tourism but they are not interested at this time.

Due to the lack of specific nationwide, coordinated efforts against child sex tourism, there is no ‘visual’ campaign against child sex tourism in other hotels than ACCOR or at any of the

public transport services. When entering Thailand the campaign against child sex tourism is not visible (in airport nor public transport e.g.). When leaving Thailand, on the way to immigration there is a poster for a hotline (1178) to report cases of human trafficking (not Code related).

Legislation and mechanisms to protect children from sexual exploitation

The central legal framework prohibiting prostitution in Thailand is the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act (the ‘Prostitution Law’), which is active since 1996. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act was established in 2008. Thailand has several Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) on trafficking signed between Thai government agencies; MOUs signed among government agencies and NGOs, and MOUs among non-government agencies. Apart from that, there are several MOUs signed

bilaterally between Thailand and neighbouring countries, to improve collaboration on common problems regarding trafficking and child protection issues. Thailand has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT) for the practical work on criminal matters between countries. This includes the Extraterritorial law which can be used to prosecute offenders who manage to escape from the countries where they committed sex crime against children and return them to their own countries.



In Thailand there are several mechanisms dealing with the protection of children against sexual exploitation. For example, the National Committee on Trafficking (for the Anti-Human Trafficking Act), which consist of various government departments and ministries and NGOs at the national level. On operational level there is the Anti-Human Trafficking Division (AHTD) of the Royal Thai Police, the Centre Against Human Trafficking (CAHT) of the Office of the Attorney General and the Bureau to Prevent and Suppress Human Trafficking of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. In working on child protection issues, Thailand has been using a multi-disciplinary approach and a team of practitioners from several disciplines, including law enforcement, legal personnel, social workers and medical personnel for all over the country as it is stated in the procedural law.

While there are good laws and legal mechanism to safeguard children, Thailand's efforts to combat the sexual exploitation of children is gravely weakened due to lack of law enforcement, especially on cases relating to the prostitution of children, child sex tourism and child sex trafficking. Cases of child sexual exploitation are not prioritized and there remain pressing challenges in reporting possible cases to local authorities or the national hotline operated by the government, due to language gap, priority of other cases, corruption, et cetera While a National Plan of Action against child sex tourism was drafted in 2006, it still has not been finalized or brought into implementation.

Cases of child sexual exploitation

Thai Man arrested in South Pattaya for providing minors to foreigner (2013)

Officers from the Child and Women Protection Unit arrested a Thai man in South Pattaya Road. He offered children, mostly boys under the age of fifteen, to foreigners in bars in the Sunee Plaza area in South Pattaya. He was currently on bail for similar offences, but since he was still conducting the illegal activity he breached his bail conditions. ⁵

Mother arrested for selling fourteen year old daughter for sex (2013)

A Phuket female owner of a karaoke bar in Wichit area was arrested after she agreed a price of 35 euro with undercover police officers for sex with her fourteen year old daughter. The police officers went undercover following a tip off. The mother said she got her daughter to work as a prostitute in her karaoke bar because the owner owed rent on their house. The fourteen year old girl was brought to the Juvenile Observation and Protection House in Phuket Town. ⁶

Dutch citizen sentenced to 37 years in prison in Thailand (2009)

A 52-year-old Dutchman has been sentenced by a court in Bangkok to 37 years in prison for sexual abuse of a boy of twelve years old. A Thai court ruled that the Dutchman and a 35-year-old Thai man were guilty of taking a boy from his parents on several occasions between March and December 2007, with the intention of carrying out sexual abuse in the resort town of Hua Hin in Prachuap Khiri Khan. The Thai accomplice got 26 years in prison. ⁷

ECPAT Thailand

ECPAT International has its headquarters in Bangkok and it also acts as ECPAT Thailand. Since 1996 it has worked on commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sex tourism in Thailand by working directly with key stakeholders, including the tourism industry, government, law enforcement and other NGOs. Since a few years, the headquarters of the Tourism Child Protection Code is also based in the office building where ECPAT International is based.

Project activities



Capacity building seminars

ECPAT Thailand organized ten seminars and trained a total of 295 professionals on the protecting children against sexual exploitation in tourism. The participants consisted of tourism professionals (232), police officers (20) and employees of governmental agencies and NGOs (43). The objective of the training was to increase participant's ability to take action to protect children, especially in reporting cases.

An expert trainer of ECPAT International provided the participants with information on sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. The general manager of The Code explained how tourism companies protect children by implementing the six criteria of the Tourism Child Protection Code. A trainer from law enforcement gave extended information on the reporting of cases and what happens with the reports. The strong presence of law enforcement representatives, especially foreign police liaison officers, gave participants more confidence that there is willingness from authorities to tackle the problem and that motivated them to report cases in the future.

"I think I will be more confident to implement it to my hotel because there are many organizations that support us reporting." (participant seminar in Pattaya)

Prior to the seminars most of the tourism professionals were aware of the issue, but had little understanding of the issue as a violation of children's rights or had knowledge on how to report cases. After the seminars, the majority of participants showed that they had a good understanding of the issue and how to report cases. Several companies have asked ECPAT International to follow-up with additional support, specifically assist in setting up policy and procedures and training of staff. Some expressed interest to sign the Tourism Child Protection Code.



Awareness raising materials

Within the project a new e-learning tool for tourism professionals was translated in Thai. ACCOR Thailand agreed to roll this out to all their front-line staff, especially in between in-house trainings. New Code brochures (700) and child sex tourism leaflets (3,000) were produced in English and Thai as well as 75 mini-Code toolkits for new Code members that start with the implementation of The Code criteria. Care was taken to present the issue in a more positive tone, including links to responsible tourism.

Recommendations

1. There are several reasons why ECPAT International should pay special attention to Pattaya:
 - Pattaya is perhaps the most extreme case of a mix of prostitution and tourism.
 - Sexual exploitation is not only physical exploitation but also watching nudity. This complicates the problem in Pattaya since many tourists go to watch.
 - While in hotels in Pattaya tourists are being warned for drugs, there is hardly any warning for sexual exploitation of children. Although it is a much more serious problem in Pattaya, with probably a higher risk of getting confronted with it and higher penalties.
 - Since government is not acting, the responsibility should be picked up by industry.
2. New target groups are visiting Thailand and specifically Pattaya. Brochures for these tourists should be made in different languages, like Russian, Malaysian, Indian and Chinese.
3. Reporting possibilities to local authorities or the national hotlines need to be improved.
4. Tourism associations need to become engaged in child protection.
5. National Action Plans for the protection of children against sexual exploitation need to be updated and implemented.



CAMBODIA



Tourism

The number of tourists in Cambodia is steadily increasing every year. Most tourists arrive from within the region (Vietnam, South Korea, China, Japan). The United States and Russia are providers of tourists and from Europe most arrivals come from France, United Kingdom and Germany. In 2011 the number of arrivals from the Netherlands was 23,537.⁸ The year 2012 was a very good year for tourism in Cambodia with arrivals rising with almost 25% to 3,584,000. Tourism income grew with more than 40%.⁹

Year	Number of tourists
2007	2,015,128
2008	2,125,465
2009	2,161,577
2010	2,508,289
2011	2,881,862
2012	3,584,000

Table 4: Number of tourists arriving per year¹⁺⁹

Sexual exploitation of children

In its Global Monitoring Report (2011)¹⁰ ECPAT International reports the following on sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia and legislation and mechanisms to protect children:

Victims

In Cambodia an estimated 24,000 children live and/or work on the streets and are therefore vulnerable to various violations, including sexual exploitation. The number of individuals in prostitution in Cambodia ranges from 40,000 to 100,000 (30-35% of which UNICEF estimates are children). Child prostitution in Cambodia affects both boys and girls. According to a report, 80% of interviewed street children found to be involved in street-based exploitation were male. Many shared common backgrounds and experiences, such as stressors in the family environment, no education or low-level education among victims and parents, street-working or street-living lifestyle, death of one parent or divorce and large families with multiple siblings.

Causes

Child sexual exploitation in Cambodia is fostered by a number of underlying causes. Apart from fragile government institutions, widespread corruption, inadequate child protection mechanisms, and massive tourism development, cultural and sociological factors also play a role in contributing towards sexual exploitation of children. It has been observed that Cambodian children are indeed expected to abide by rules set forth by adults, and saying “no” to an adult is not easily tolerated. Combined with a historical legacy of foreign imperialism and the societal hierarchy, makes children particularly vulnerable to adult predators, especially those who are foreign.

Cambodia’s popularity as a sex tourism destination may be attributed to several factors including the low cost of travel to and within Cambodia and its perceived reputation as a developing country with weak law enforcement. In addition to that, the 2009 global economic crisis added to the existing elements of poverty locally, with numerous factories, especially within the garment sector, having to lay off their staff. Many families already on the brink of vulnerability may thus have been pushed

into outright indigence. Also as a result of this, a strong attraction for child sex tourists coming to Cambodia appears to be the availability and low cost of children for sex. There is reportedly often no need to groom children, as they are easily available in brothels or on the streets. This state of affairs seems to prevail, while prevention and reduction efforts taken in neighbouring Thailand, which had proved somewhat effective and which had driven child sex offenders to Cambodia, appears to be on the wane.



Offenders

Child sex tourists in Cambodia are said to include paedophiles, situational child sex offenders, long-term residents and virginity seekers. Although Western child sex offenders are the centre of media's attention, it has been noted that there are many more Asians who seek sex from minors, whether they be Cambodians, rich Chinese or South Korean nationals. Westerners are indeed more easily targeted because they are more visible than local clients, Chinese and Koreans. This factor appears to partially contribute to some degree of social tolerance in Cambodia.

Research published in 2007 confirmed that the recruitment methods used by travelling sex offenders vary according to their nationality. Whereas Chinese offenders often seek out virgins and do not approach children in public, arranging instead for a child to be brought to their hotel or residence by phone, Westerners are more likely to go out and make direct

contact with the children (some applying the 'grooming' technique for instance). Persons involved in street paedophilia are typically Western men who target underage boys, whereas Chinese and Japanese nationals rather tend to go to brothels where young girls are more predominantly found than on the streets.

Trends

Media reports indicate changes in the commercial sex sector. The multiple police crackdown operations carried out especially in Svay Pak (Phnom Penh) forced pimps to operate their activities underground in other areas/cities of the country. Youngsters have been moved to other parts of Phnom Penh or ended up in Siem Reap (home of the Angkor temples), where tourism has exploded, or at the seaside in Preah Sihanouk. A field study carried out in Siem Reap in 2009 by International Justice Mission showed that sixty out of eighty brothels inspected by the team offered prostituted children.

To a certain extent, child prostitution has become less visible than in the past, with children being confined into houses and delivered directly to the exploiter's hotel upon request. A diversification of locations where prostitution is practiced has also been noted. Although the street remains in many cases a location for recruiting and exploiting children, sex services are now provided in karaoke bars, massage parlours, nightclubs, and beer gardens.

Areas

Child sex tourism occurs in various Cambodian cities, such as the capital Phnom Penh, the tourist destinations Siem Reap and Preah Sihanouk, as well as in the border provinces of Battambang and Banteay Mancheay. According to the Ministry of Tourism, sex tourism also takes place in the eastern part of the country, which attracts eco-tourism.

General picture

Cambodia is a unique operating environment. Earlier in the decade, the disturbing evidence of foreign tourists with local children and the concerning frequency of arrests in the capital city forced the attention of international donors and resulted in a groundswell of preventative action across Phnom Penh. In 2004-2005, this well-intended but often uncoordinated assistance culminated

in a rush of billboards, street signs, airport videos, free motorbike helmets, leaflets, brochures, advertising in tourist booklets, free maps and a collection of hotline numbers, training workshops and conferences. Now the overwhelming attention has faded, but Phnom Penh still has a much higher visibility of child protection advertising than any other capital city in the South East Asian region. The most important NGOs working to combat child sex tourism in Cambodia are Friends International (promoting its Child Safe Organization Approach and a hotline), APLE (Action Pour Les Enfants investigates child sex tourism cases), World Vision (coordinating the Childhood project funded by AUSAID) and ECPAT Cambodia.



At the tourist place along the river in Phnom Penh with many restaurants and bars there were vulnerable children such as beggars, shoe polishing boys and flower selling girls. Trained Tuk Tuk drivers and NGO investigators kept a regular eye on their activities and some of these children have also been trained on child protection and on how to report. In the popular Pub street in Siem Reap minors were not visible to the accidental tourist.

Last year Preah Sihanouk was certified as one of the top ten excellent beaches around the world and was named 'rising star in the southwest'. In the past years with the improved infrastructure, Preah Sihanouk attracted many tourists both local and international. According to APLE, governmental agencies, the tourism sector and NGOs have become more vigilant in protecting children in the tourism and beach area of Sihanoukville. At O'Chheuteal beach some begging children or souvenir selling children were seen during day time and late evening, but there were no children seen at night time.

Child protection in the tourism industry

At Phnom Penh airport there are no signs to address child sex tourism, but many Tuk Tuks display signs. On the road from Phnom Penh to Preah Sihanouk, a big billboard (produced within this project) is placed and highly visible to many travellers.



There is a problem with generating Code signatories in Cambodia. Like in other countries the ACCOR hotels, represented by Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeetra, comply with The Code. But there are no other Code members. Although three European tour operators with trips to Cambodia are Code members, they have not yet convinced any hotel to implement child protection measures.

From observations during the first monitoring visit, hotels that participated in the project displayed the information materials for travellers that they received during the trainings at the reception of the hotel. Also many Tuk Tuk drivers displayed stickers in their vehicle.

Legislation and mechanisms to protect children from sexual exploitation

In 2008 a specific law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Persons was implemented in Cambodia. In 2003 Cambodia signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Thailand to combat trafficking in women and children, a similar MOU was signed with Vietnam in 2005 and one is to be signed with Malaysia in the near future. A number of agreements, including extradition treaties, have been signed with China, Lao PDR, South Korea and Thailand. The Ministry of Tourism is working in close cooperation with countries such as Australia and Belgium on the extradition of child sex offenders.



Cambodia initiated strong laws to eliminate child sex tourism by having several provisions to criminalise foreign or national offenders of child sex tourism including extraterritorial legislation. The Cambodia Criminal Procedure Code (Art 566) allows Cambodian authorities to extradite offenders of such crimes to their original countries. The Department of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection under the Ministry of Interior has been active since 2002 to investigate cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia, including of children. The Ministry of Interior also operates specialized anti-trafficking divisions in all provinces and municipalities.



Cases of child sexual exploitation

Dutch man caught in the act in Cambodia (2013)

Thanks to firm indications from APLE in Cambodia, the 41-year-old Dutch man Mauritz D. was arrested by local police in Sihanoukville in January 2013 for the abuse of three children between twelve and fourteen years of age. D. came to the attention of APLE agents because he was spending time in places where street children gathered. He was caught in the act when he was just about to abuse a child at the beach in Sihanoukville. The case is currently being dealt with by the Cambodian police. It will take roughly six months before his case comes to trial. Until then, D. will probably remain in custody.¹¹

Smuggling child pornography from Cambodia to the Netherlands (2012)

In December 2012 Dutchman Stefan B. was sentenced by a Dutch court for smuggling child pornography into the country. In early 2012 B. was arrested at Schiphol Airport with thousands of child pornography photos and films in his suitcase. He was also suspected of abusing children because of a film that showed a man performing sexual acts with a boy, which was presumably B. because of a recognizable pair of green trousers. Because B. face was not filmed and the boy's identity and age were difficult to determine, it was hard to prove B.'s abuse in court in the Netherlands. B. was sentenced to twenty months imprisonment, of which eight months suspended, for the possession, importing and making of child pornography. He was also required to undergo treatment at a mental health care institution and have his computer regularly checked by social rehabilitation. B. had spent nine months in custody in the prison at Schiphol. The Public Prosecutor demanded two years in detention.¹¹

Supposing Dutch benefactor abuses underage boys (2011)

In February 2011 Cees C. was sentenced in Cambodia to eighteen months in prison for the abuse of two underage boys. He was released soon after the judgment since he had already served ten months in custody and the remaining eight months were commuted to a suspended sentence. In April 2010 the Dutchman was arrested in Sihanoukville after three boys filed a sexual abuse complaint against him. During the arrest, police found dozens of photos of naked children on his computer. In July 2011 the Cambodian authorities expelled C. from the country. Cambodia has placed him on its black list, which means that he can never enter the country again. Because C. served his sentence in Cambodia, there was no further prosecution in the Netherlands.

Cees C. ran a local NGO in Sihanoukville and offered schooling to children. He gained a lot of support in the community because he was seen as a benefactor. He also received money for his school from private individuals from the Netherlands. Soon after the case was reported in the media, the boys withdrew their statements. APLE, which played an important role in the investigation, believes bribery was involved.¹¹

Dutch man acquitted due to lack of evidence (2011)

In October 2011, the 38-year-old Dutchman Bas R. was arrested in the tourist spot Siem Reap, Cambodia. He was charged with the sexual abuse of five children between the ages of seven and thirteen. However, in December 2011 he was released on bail and was able to bribe four of the five victims and their families. As a result they withdrew their statements. When the case went to trial in August 2012 only one seven year old girl witnessed against R. The judge did not consider her statement to be credible because she changed her story several times. R. was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

Already in 2004 Bas R. had been convicted in the Netherlands and given a suspended prison sentence of one year (with a three year probation period) for the sexual abuse of an underage boy at the sailing school where he taught. The Netherlands can only provide this information when there is an official request from the Cambodian authorities, but for reasons that remain unclear, there was no formally contact with the Dutch embassy. APLE suspects that due to corruption in the Cambodian court and prosecutor office there was no request for R.'s previous conviction in the Netherlands as APLE had requested.¹¹

ECPAT Cambodia

Operating since 1995, ECPAT Cambodia has been instrumental in implementing child protection initiatives which mobilise action and collaboration amongst key stakeholders including government (specifically the Ministry of Tourism), the private sector (tourism industry operators), and other NGOs (especially amongst the 29 national and international member organizations who form the ECPAT network in Cambodia) to prevent child sex tourism.

Project activities

Capacity building seminars

A total of 493 tourism professionals participated in twenty capacity building seminars. The trainings were mainly aimed at hotel owners and hotel management, with 53 frontline staff trained. In addition twelve people from governmental agencies or NGOs were trained.



ECPAT Netherlands requested Dutch Code members to send a letter of recommendation to supplying hotels urging them to participate in the capacity building seminars. The commitment of large Western tour operators as TUI to child protection, motivated hotel managers to make time available for attending the seminars.

The capacity building seminars were organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and local Deputy Governors and focused on children's rights, sexual exploitation of children, child sex tourism, type of offenders, Tourism Child Protection Code and actions of the tourism sector to eliminate child sex tourism in Cambodia. The follow up meetings made clear that the majority of the participants had knowledge about the issue and was able to recognize risk situations and prevent child sexual exploitation related to their own companies or premises.

"This training is really useful for my company. Before I didn't know that our business may harm children. After this training, I know how to protect children." (participant seminar in Siem Reap)

Awareness raising materials

ECPAT Cambodia updated and produced 3,000 Code brochures for tourism companies and 36,000 leaflets for travellers. The Code brochure was produced in Khmer because this was a recommendation in the previous project that was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Another recommendation of the previous project was to make the information leaflet on something that is frequently used by tourists, such as a city map. Therefore, ECPAT Cambodia produced the leaflet on the backside of a map of Phnom Penh, Sihanouk and Siem Reap (with text in English). Also the local visitor guides of the three areas included advertisement on how to report child sex tourism.



ECPAT Cambodia produced a billboard of 8m x 4m in cooperation with Ministry of Tourism and the National Committee for the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Sexual exploitation, Labour Exploitation of Women and Children. The provincial local authority provided a location on the main route from Phnom Penh to Preah Sihanouk Ville where 90% of travellers travel through to get into town. ECPAT Cambodia only needed to support the set up costs. The billboard was set up in December 2011. Another billboard screen was placed in August 2012 on the main route to Siem Reap where many buses stop for a short break.

Recommendations

1. European tour operators and the ACCOR Hotel Chain members in Cambodia should use their influence to convince business partners to implement child protection measures and sign The Code.
2. Since there are many NGOs working in Cambodia that protect children against child sex tourism, there should be more structural cooperation and clear diversion of tasks to avoid competition and confusion among private sector organizations.
3. Battambang is reported to be a new popular tourist destination where child sex tourism seems to emerge. ECPAT Cambodia should consider expanding the awareness raising activities to that area.



PHILIPPINES



Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the Philippine economy. Arrivals have been growing steadily over the past years. According to the Philippines Department of Tourism more than four million foreign tourists visited Philippines’ white sandy beaches and exotic islands in 2012. Most of the foreign tourists arrive from South Korea followed by arrivals from United States, Japan, China, Taiwan and Australia. European tourists mainly come from the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia and the Netherlands.

Year	Number of tourists
2007	3,092,000
2008	3,139,000
2009	3,017,000
2010	3,520,000
2011	3,917,454
2012	4,272,811

Table 5: Number of tourists arriving per year^{1 + 12}

Sexual exploitation of children

In its Global Monitoring Report (2011)¹³ ECPAT International reports the following on sexual exploitation of children in the Philippines and legislation and mechanisms to protect children:

Victims

It has been estimated that in Manila alone there are 1.5 million street children. Life on the streets increases the vulnerability of children to all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children, in particular, child prostitution, pornography and trafficking for sexual purposes. In 2007, it was estimated by PREDA Foundation, an NGO that assists victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children, that there are more than 60,000 girls exploited through prostitution nationwide. A study published by the John Hopkins University the same year estimates the number of minors exploited in the commercial sex industry in the Philippines between 60,000 and 75,000.

Causes

While the Philippines’ economy is now making progress, almost a quarter of the population still lives below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 per day. Poverty within families is one of the factors contributing to vulnerabilities of children to commercial sexual exploitation. Media reports indicate several instances of parents or guardians who sell sexual services of their own children in return for money. Furthermore, family breakdown also results in children living on the streets. Conflict between MILF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) left between 128,000 and 160,000 vulnerable individuals displaced in 2010. An estimated 900,000 undocumented Filipinos, mostly based in Mindanao, whose lack of official documentation contributes to the population’s vulnerability to trafficking. Also persistent law enforcement officials’ complicity in human trafficking and corruption at all levels of government enables traffickers to prosper and exploit children in the sex industry.¹⁴

Offenders

It is very difficult to profile foreign visitors who have sex with minors and to identify the relative percentages of various nationalities. It is presumed that typically child sex tourists are males who come from all income brackets, and in the case of the Philippines mostly hailing from Western Europe, Australia, the United States, as well as the wider region of Asia. Asian businessmen from Japan, China, Taiwan, and increasingly South Korea, comprise the most sexual exploiters who are seeking virgins – a demand highly prevalent in the Philippines. Nevertheless, according to the John Hopkins University study, in the period of 2004-2006, it was the US citizens who constituted around 29 per cent of offenders and alleged offenders of child sex tourism. This may be explained by the fact that Asian men use more discrete means to seek their child victims and thus remain undetected. Female tourists, although in significantly lower numbers, are also known to purchase sexual services from children in the Philippines.



Foreign nationals also manage bars and clubs that cater to foreign demand for prostitution. For example, in Puerto Galera, an infamous location for child sex tourism, most of the local bars are owned by Europeans, while South Korean nationals are reported to be increasingly obtaining property in Boracay.

Trends

In recent years, a new form of online child sexual exploitation has emerged and spread with great speed and devastating effects in the Philippines—adults who offer payment or other rewards to view and direct live streaming video footage of children in another country performing sexual acts. Since there is no direct sexual contact, often parents see it not as a problem. But as in other forms of sexual exploitation of children webcam sex is very damaging for children.¹⁵

Areas

The major locations for child sex tourism in the Philippines are Sabang and Puerto Galera in Mindoro, Cebu City in the Visayas, Angeles City, Pasay City in Luzon, and Boracay. Boracay Island is a popular island in the middle of The Philippines and had almost 780,000 visitors in 2010. There have been several child sex tourism cases in Boracay Island. The Puerto Princesa Underground River was officially chosen as one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature in January 2012, which will dramatically increase the number of tourists coming to Puerto Princesa. Therefore, this island needs to be organized to protect children against sex tourism and was therefore included in the project. Panglao, part of Bohol Province, is a popular tourist destination known for its diving locations and tourist resorts. In 2011, an estimated half a million tourists visited the province of Bohol.

General picture

The immigration form that needs to be filled in by everyone entering the country, contains a text about human trafficking being prohibited in The Philippines. At the airport of Manila there are no billboards with messages of child sex tourism and how to report suspicious behaviour. Around hotels at the city centre of Manila there are many begging children.



At the Airport of Puerto Princesa, there are no signs or other awareness raising materials about reporting child sex tourism. The main groups of tourists visiting Puerto Princesa come from Korea, the US, Malaysia, India, Singapore and Australia. Europe is seen as a potential market but until now there are not many Europeans going there, especially since there are no large tour operators offering organized holidays to Puerto Princesa.

Puerto Princesa has a main street going from the airport to the centre with restaurants, bars and disco's. During the low season, there was no real overt prostitution, but two cases were observed of western men with very young girls. Some bars and restaurants will allow girls to enter to solicit for men, but many, mainly catering for western tourists, will not. Three bars are so-called class A bars, meaning they have airco, but also meaning that the bar fee to pick up a girl from a bar is higher, around 3,500 pesos. In these bars supposedly there are no minor girls. There are also class B bars and there the fee is only 2,000 pesos. In these bars more is possible and taxi drivers suggest that minor girls are available upon request.

Child protection in the tourism sector

Hotels will charge a joiner fee of around 800 pesos and check IDs. But this does not automatically mean that guests are not allowed to bring minor joiners. When a front desk office employee in Puerto Princesa was asked about the minimum age of the joiner, she responded that it is the same price for everybody, also children. When she understood why these questions were asked to her, she explained that the joiners need to be at least eighteen years old. Nevertheless, a middle aged white male entered the hotel with a local teenager at his side.

In the Philippines there are no Code members registered. One of the hotels visited during the monitoring visit belongs to the Wyndham chain, which is member, but at the hotel nobody was aware of that.



Interesting was that the Legend Hotel in Puerto Princesa, although no Code member, obliged taxi drivers working for them to use ECPAT stickers, which complies with elements of The Code. Taxi drivers showed a high degree of awareness of the issue. Of the ten taxi drivers interviewed seven were aware of The Code and five had received training. Nevertheless one of the taxi drivers gave advise on where to go for special demands concerning prostitution. Of the 3,000 stickers distributed to taxi drivers, many were actually displayed in the tricycles. Of the nine tricycles used, seven displayed the sticker (probably there is a bias because the majority worked around the Legend hotel).

Hotels that participated in the training showed during the first monitoring visit in 2012 information materials on the front desk. But at the second visit in 2013, materials were only visible in one of the ten hotels visited. The hotels explained that the materials were displayed and taken by guests. Unfortunately, they did not order additional copies.

Legislation and mechanisms to protect children from sexual exploitation

In 2004, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking in Persons (IACAT), in collaboration with other government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders, created a six year (2004-2010) Strategic National Plan of Action against Trafficking. The plan is divided into three major components; (a) prevention; (b) protection, including law enforcement and prosecution; and (c) repatriation, recovery and reintegration. In relation to the prevention of trafficking, relevant objectives of the plan include: 1) increasing public awareness of trafficking; 2) undertaking research on the root causes of trafficking in women and children; and 3) instituting programs at the local level to prevent women and children from being procured by traffickers.

The Philippines has made significant efforts to ratify international and regional instruments. In addition to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Trafficking Protocol, the Philippines has also ratified the ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children 2004. The 2003 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (the '2003 Act') defines trafficking as acts of recruitment, harbouring, transporting, transferring or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation. Where the victim is a child (a person under eighteen) there is no need for means of force or deceit to be used by offenders for the offence to be considered as trafficking and the consent

of the child is irrelevant to criminal liability. The 2003 Act also targets those who buy or engage the services of a trafficked person for prostitution. While it is clear that the Philippines has in place strong anti-trafficking legislation, the enforcement of the legislation remains problematic. The government has convicted only 108 individuals for sex trafficking offences since the passage of the 2003 Act.

Child Wise Tourism (CWT) is a responsible tourism program of the Philippine Department of Tourism to protect children against commercial sexual exploitation in tourism destinations. CWT embarks on human resource development for tourism service providers to upgrade their knowledge and skills to be at par with international standards. CWT also advocates education campaigns through various multimedia means in congruent to the promotion of the culture of tourism to all tourism stakeholders.

Cases of child sexual exploitation

IACAT scored 108th conviction against human traffickers (2013)

In June 2013 the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) has scored anew in its campaign against human traffickers with the conviction of local club manager C. to life imprisonment and a fine of five million Pesos. C. was arrested by IACAT agents during a raid in 2006 where four victims, including two minors, were rescued from what authorities described as an “untouchable strip club.” This case is the 108th conviction instigated by IACAT since it was created in 2005.¹⁶

Escaped Dutch paedophile abused underage boy in The Philippines (2012)

In August 2012, a boy of seventeen year old filed a complaint of sexual abuse against the Dutch national Richard B. In 2008 Richard B. was sentenced to a two years detention in the Netherlands, of which one year suspended, for sexual offences with a niece and two nephews. He was also required to undergo therapy because there was a good chance of a repeat offence. Richard B. appealed and was allowed to await the outcome in freedom. His victims warned the authorities that B. intended to flee to the Philippines in order to marry there and set up a business. The judiciary said that nothing could be done about B.’s threats for departure because the appeal still had to take place.

In December 2008, B. withdrew the appeal. The public prosecutor decided to impose a self-reporting procedure on him because there were too few concrete indications that there was a danger of him escaping. In February 2009 B. obtained a new passport without difficulty from the local authority civil affairs counter and travelled to the Philippines where he started working for a Dutch organization on the island of Cebu where he had a lot of involvement with children. The boy who accused R. of sexual abuse knew him through this organization. The police put R. on a telex and the Dutch television station RTL caused great commotion about the case in the media, but until October 2013 he was not arrested.¹¹

ECPAT Netherlands won civil trial for compensation of the sexual abuse of a Philippine girl (2004)

In September 2004, after the end of a civil law trial initiated by Defence for Children-ECPAT the Netherlands, Jan van S. was convicted in court in the Netherlands to pay a little more than 3,000 euro to one of the victims. In October 1996, a Dutch penal Court had sentenced Jan van S. (then 43) to five years’ imprisonment for, among other things, rape and other forms of sexual abuse in the Philippines with a girl under sixteen (she was then 12 years old).

Van S. arranged for under-age girls to come to his hotel room. He recorded his activities in pornographic pictures and videos, which he took back to the Netherlands. The pictures were discovered and Van S. was arrested. He was the first person who was convicted under the extraterritorial legislation in the Netherlands, which makes it possible to convict nationals for criminal offences abroad.¹⁷

ECPAT Philippines

ECPAT Philippines has been the sole non-government organisation (NGO) leading activities on Boracay Island to protect children from sexual exploitation in tourism. But also in other areas ECPAT Philippines has implemented projects aimed at providing a protective environment for children through education and advocacy in collaboration with key stakeholders, including the government and the private sector. ECPAT Philippines also provides support to child victims of sexual exploitation and offers them shelter, psychological support, education and legal support.

Project activities

Capacity building seminars

ECPAT Philippines organized 27 capacity building seminars in the three selected areas in cooperation with local the Departments of Tourism who provided lists of tourism and travel associations and tourism establishments. This cooperation led to much additional support from local governments. In Puerto Princesa the local government repeatedly invited ECPAT to participate in presentations and trainings and opened two hotlines to report sexual exploitation of children. The Bohol Provincial Tourism office included information of The Code and ECPAT in the provincial tourism brochure and asked ECPAT to be a partner in local policy advocacy. Local tourism authority in Boracay included an article about child safety and the work of ECPAT in a popular tourism magazine.



The trainings are subdivided in seminars to convince management and in house trainings. Some 570 tourism representatives were trained on the protection of children within their work, of which 189 were frontline staff. The vast majority rated the seminar as very useful to their work. Also fifty police officers and 33 other stakeholders were trained. The hotel management and taxi drivers interviewed spoke with much respect of the attempts of ECPAT and The Code. Unfortunately, this has not yet resulted in Code signatories.

“This seminar has opened my eyes. I didn’t think much when I saw a tourist with a minor girl. Now I know that this might be child sex tourism and I should not allow that at my premises.”
(participant at seminar in Puerto Princesa)



Community awareness activities were conducted in three barangays (villages) surrounding Puerto Princesa, where a total 118 community members attended and which led to several cases reported. In Boracay Island a school education session organized by ECPAT was attended by sixty students. In Panglao the community sessions were conducted in three barangays where a total of 94 community members were informed about sexual exploitation of children, signals of traffickers, consequences of sexual exploitation and where to report offenders or seek help.

Awareness raising materials

ECPAT Philippines produced a wide variety of materials, including 20,000 Code brochures, 60,000 leaflets for travellers, 29,000 stickers, which were handed out to tricycle drivers and multicabs and 20,000 standees, which can be put on the reception desk or in the hotel rooms. Also mugs (300), eco bags (1,000) and t-shirts (50) were produced within this project. Above all a video was produced which was presented on a big screen with commercials in the centre of Puerto Princesa. The materials produced were of high quality and all serve a purpose. The sticker was widely accepted by stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. Create holders for hotels to keep the information materials on their counter and put contact information on it with the message to order new materials when they are finished.
2. There are not many chains of hotels in the Philippines. Hotel owners are crucial in new approaches. Unfortunately owners are hardly ever available and managers cannot decide. This should not lead to delays in implementation.
3. Not only does frontline personnel change often but also managers change often, therefore regular trainings are necessary.
4. Use languages of high numbers of tourists, such as Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Malaysian and Indian.
5. Popularize the educational and information materials by using local language and massive distribution at airports, including all transport groups - land based and sea based.
6. Provide for an opportunity to conduct awareness and education sessions in schools and communities, especially for parents and children in the local villages.
7. Provide for a training of trainers towards the city's tourism office who do regular training activities with current and new tourism professionals in the hotels.
8. Work together with the religious sector in the conduct of awareness raising and education and information activities at community level.



GAMBIA

Tourism

Gambia's tourism industry has been going through a rough time. Tourism is the second highest earner of foreign revenue but in 2010 and 2011 numbers dropped dramatically. This is a problem for Gambia since tourism is important for the nation economy. In 2012 arrivals were up to 104,000 arrivals, but this is still only two thirds of top year 2008. Tourists mainly arrive from Europe, with package tour operators from United Kingdom making up over 50% of the visitors. After the British, Dutch tourists come second with 12,906 Dutch visitors in 2011.



Year	Number of tourists
2007	143,000
2008	147,000
2009	142,000
2010	91,000
2011	88,000
2012	104,000

Table 6: Number of tourists per year^{1 + 18}

Sexual exploitation of children

From the Global Monitoring Report Gambia (2006)¹⁹ and a country assessment within the project 'Don't look away' (2013)²⁰ there is the following information on sexual exploitation of children in the Gambia and legislation and mechanisms to protect children:

Victims

Most of the children engaged in commercial sex in the Gambia are aged between fourteen to seventeen years and are mainly girls. However, it was also discovered that the number of young boys engaged in commercial sex is on the rise as there is an increasing number of male tourist seeking young boys. There is nearly universal agreement among varied experts that children engaged in commercial sex are predominantly poor. Having parents or caregivers who are ill or dying from HIV/Aids, lacking a home and/or family, living in an unhealthy, unsupportive environment, being isolated, exploited or discriminated against, make children vulnerable for sexual exploitation. Gender may also contribute to vulnerability.

Traditional practices such as early marriage, child domestic labour and children engaged in petty selling and street begging are also contributing factors to situations in which children are vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual exploitation. A factor that may keep children in prostitution is the ease of 'hiding' their sources of income and nature of activities. Often, parents are only too eager to receive supplementary income and do not probe their children for explanations.

Causes

Almost 50% (48.4% in 2010) of the Gambian population lives under the poverty line. This makes the Gambia vulnerable for sexual exploitation of children in tourism. In the Gambia there is a false 'glamorization' of prostitution, particularly in sex tourism. For many young prostitutes being a sex worker means having access to a lot of cash to buy jeans, shoes, to go to beauty salons for hair and nail care to show off at beach parties and nightclubs. The Gambia is a small country (less than two million people) and this means that in some way people know each other, are related to each other,

or belong to the same tribe. To speak about sexual abuse or exploitation would bring harm or shame to the family. This culture of silence prevents children from reporting cases of sexual abuse and exploitation to their parents or guardians. Together with inadequate or weak law enforcement, weak child protection systems and non-implementation of child protection policies, children are poorly protected against sexual exploitation.

Offenders

Not only foreigners exploit children sexually. Also adult Gambian men, so called 'sugar daddies', sexually abuse and exploit young girls in exchange for money and gifts. Although the Gambia is known to attract single European women who come on holiday looking for sex with Gambian men, no cases have been reported involving women with under aged boys. Tourists interested in sex with minors are mainly tourists from Europe, China and India.



Some travelling sex offenders gain access to children and develop relationships with them through charitable organizations. This is usually achieved by the offender working for the organization or by providing sponsorship and support for the children. Another method used by travelling sex offenders involves ingratiating themselves with the child's family and/or the community. Such grooming-based tactics within the family may include building a house or repairing an existing home for the child's family, or providing financial

support. Grooming-based tactics in the broader community may include house building, providing clean water, monetary donations and construction of nursery schools for communities. This practice provides children, families and communities with confidence in the offender and reduces the possibility of complaint against a person who is seemingly so decent and helpful.

Trends

Trends can be identified in the way in which travelling sex offenders target vulnerable children. The field within which sex offenders act is increasing focussed on communities closed to the main tourism area. Private houses are more often used as a place for child sexual exploitation than tourist accommodations such as hotels and resorts. A reason for an increased use of private houses by child sex tourists is that they are easily accessible because they are offered for rent on many Gambia tourism related websites. Furthermore, the hotel industry has become more aware through awareness raising activities and is rejecting child sex tourists more often. Due to a security checkpoint at the entrance of the Senegambia strip to deter children under the age of eighteen years from entering the area, children are offered in private houses through a network of pimps and contacts.

Internet is becoming an important tool and media for building such relationships. Thousands of profiles are created by Gambian women on several dating-sites. There is no data on internet facilitated commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Gambia, but observations in internet cafes, especially those in the urban areas, showed that they are becoming an avenue for people involved in commercial sex.

Areas

Senegambia is a well-known area for prostitution. With hotels imposing stricter controls on visitors, a lot of the tourists seeking sex prefer buying or renting a holiday home in Kololi, Kotu, Bijilo and Kerr Sering.

General picture

Most tourist accommodations are situated within the Tourism Development Area in the Greater Banjul Area, with almost 90% of all tourist accommodations (35 hotels with 31,164 rooms). The remainder is spread across a wide range of small guesthouses, camps, lodges and apartments much of which is outside of the Tourism Development Area. What is typical for the Gambia is the fact that it belongs to a number of countries (along with countries like Kenya and Jamaica) that

is attractive to both male and female sex tourists. Bumsters in the Gambia are often referred to as 'professional friends' who may offer sex as part of the tourist experience or even receive financial rewards for their services. Bumsters are usually out for the 'jackpot' of being 'lucky' to be in a friendship that may eventually lead to being sponsored. However, what makes them annoying to some tourists is the fact that they are persistent and do not take "no" for an answer.

The most popular touristic area is the Senegambia Tourism Development Area, which consists of a strip of bars, restaurants and disco's that runs from the main road to the sea and is protected by a Tourism Security Unit Post at the entrance. No unattended children are allowed in. Prostitutes and bumsters are. In restaurants and bars these bumsters and prostitutes approach male and female tourists. In discos there is an abundance of women waiting for the western tourist.

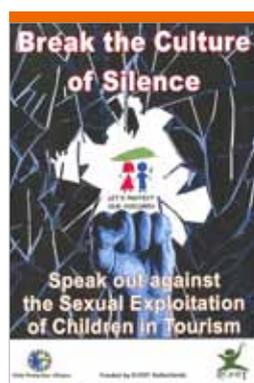


In Banjul quite a number of children can be seen in the streets soliciting to provide services or asking for money. Since it is prohibited for children to beg, police takes children to social welfare when they see them begging.

Child protection in the tourism industry

Bars, restaurants and nightclubs in the Gambia also play a part in facilitating child sex tourism. There are bars, restaurants and nightclubs in the Tourism Deployment Area that are mainly frequented by sex workers. Hotels will charge a joiner fee up to \$50 and keep ID cards at the desk, a bar fee to take a girl from the bar is not common. Security checks the joiners before entering the hotels. From interviews with taxi drivers and hotel employees, there is a high awareness of the problem and of measures in place to fight it. The Radio programme of Gambia Tourism Board pays attention to the issue quite often.

The situation relating to The Code in the Gambia is a bit different from other countries, because there has been a functional Code of Conduct to protect Children from sexual abuse in tourism and travel for ten years. This Code is unique because it is related to the Tourism Child Protection Code, but instead of being industry driven, it is a government driven Code. This obligatory character changes the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and as a result the industry waits for the government to act. Tourism Authority and Associations are actively involved in awareness raising on The Code.



Since it is mandatory to put up a poster explaining the Gambian Code, this can be found everywhere. Unfortunately the poster is not targeted at tourists and in some cases is displayed in a somewhat hidden place.

The 'Break the Culture of Silence' poster that CPA - ECPAT the Gambia developed was popular and displayed at hotels, tourism information offices, offices of tourism guides and secondary schools.

None of the visited hotels stated explicitly in booklets with hotel regulations and services that it is not allowed to bring minors into the hotel rooms, even though most hotels had extended information, for instance on feeding animals. None of the hotels had clauses in their contracts because the general feeling is that the contractors are local and usually do not work with written contracts.



Legislation and mechanisms to protect children from sexual exploitation

A number of European sex tourists who sexually abused girls and boys have been brought before the courts in the Gambia and in Europe. This attracted much attention from the local press and resulted in recognition of the existence of child sex tourism by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture as well as by Gambian Tourism Board. As a consequence, they have taken measures to protect children in tourism. In December 2009 the government installed a Task Force Combating Trafficking in Persons. In 2004 Gambian Tourism Board introduced a Code of Conduct to prevent sexual exploitation of children in tourism (on the basis of the international Tourism Child Protection Code). The Ministry of Justice, Department of Social Welfare, Police, Gambian Tourism Board, Gambia Hotel Association, ASSET (Association for Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism) and the Child Protection Alliance - ECPAT Gambia collaborate within the Child Sex Tourism Taskforce. The purpose of the Taskforce is to gather and share information in order to improve the combat against child sex tourism.

There are many laws in the Gambia that protect a child, defined as any person under the age of eighteen years, from sexual abuse and exploitation. The Gambia's Tourism Offences Act 2003 states that sexual abuse of a child by a tourist is punishable with fourteen years imprisonment. The Children's Act 2005 states that purchasing sex with children in the Gambia is punishable with ten years imprisonment. Production of pornography involving children is punishable with fourteen years imprisonment without the option of a fine. In the Criminal Code of The Gambia, rape is punishable with life imprisonment. The Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 prohibits the trafficking of children for whatever purpose and punishes perpetrators with maximum term of life imprisonment in addition to a fine.

Cases of child sexual exploitation

There has only been one conviction in the Gambia for sexual exploitation and abuse of children by foreigners.

Dutch man paid fine for suspicion of rape of underage girls (2011)

In February 2011 the 63-year-old Andreas van R. was arrested in the Gambia on suspicion of the rape of two underage girls in 2010 and 2011. In November 2011 the court in the Gambia sentenced him to pay a fine of 2,600 euro (100,000 Gambian Dalasi) and was ordered to pay compensation to the victims. The court took into account in the formation of the penalty R.'s medical problems and the fact that it was the first time that he had been suspected of child sexual offences.¹¹

Gambian and Norwegian authorities work successfully together (2007)

In 2003 a Norwegian man of 58 years old was reported to the Norwegian authorities by another Norwegian tourist who observed him with a young boy in a hotel in the Gambia. The boy turned out to be twelve years old. The Gambian and Norwegian authorities worked closely together and in May 2007 the man was sentenced to 2.5 years of imprisonment in front of a Norwegian court. As far as the Gambian Tourism Authority knows, the owner of the hotel did not receive any form of punishment for facilitating the sexual abuse of a child.¹⁷

Convicted in the Netherlands for sexual abuse in the Gambia (2004)

In October 2002 the 64-year-old Dutch Wim de W. was arrested in the Netherlands for the rape of several women in the Gambia. One of them was underage. De W. was the owner of a hotel in Banjul, which was also known as 'Holland House'. Due to his arrest Terre des Hommes started an investigation and discovered involvement of Dutch nationals in child abuse. Research revealed mainly male tourists over the age of 45 would travel to the Gambia to abuse young boys and girls. The age of the victims ranged from nine to sixteen years old. An investigation commission of Dutch police officers travelled to the Gambia where they were able to obtain sufficient incriminating material to arrest the suspect. De W. was sentenced at the end of 2004 by a Dutch court to thirty months in prison. This sentence was passed under the pre-2002 legislation because the abuse took place between 1995 and 1997. The police investigation had been ongoing for a very long time because the Dutch police received no help from their Gambian colleagues.¹¹

ECPAT Gambia

Child Protection Alliance (CPA) is the ECPAT affiliate in the Gambia. CPA was formed in 2001 and was the first inter-agency collaborative institution on child protection in the Gambia. It currently has 36 member organizations, including NGOs, civil society organizations and youth organizations. Its objectives include: awareness raising on child abuse and exploitation in order to break the culture of silence surrounding it, building national and institutional capacity to prevent child abuse and exploitation and protect victims, promote networking and alliance building among agencies involved in child protection and empower children with skills and knowledge and encourage their participation in decision making. CPA - ECPAT Gambia works closely together with the Gambian Tourism Board in activities concerning the Gambian Code of Conduct.

Project activities



Capacity building seminars

A total of 330 participants were trained in ten training seminars on preventing child sex tourism, of which 192 frontline personnel, 56 police officers, 24 members from the community, such as neighbourhood watch group leaders (they keep an eye on private houses that are built by foreigners within the communities) and other stakeholders, such as social welfare and NGOs (58). Three quarter of the participants rated the training seminar as excellent.

Since children are often exploited outside the tourism industry, many other sectors were invited at the seminars. Amongst others the fruit seller association, taxi driver association, hairdressers association and craft market association participated in the seminars. The trainings of fruit vendors, craft market workers and taxi drivers led to a high awareness amongst tourism entrepreneurs throughout the chain. Most of these small scale entrepreneurs have direct contact with tourists and see a lot of what happens on the street.

The Gambian Tourism Board, which is owner of the Gambian Code and also responsible for the licences of tourism entrepreneurs, the Gambian Hotel Association and ASSET (Association for Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism) supported CPA by providing lists of associations and tourism establishments. The Minister of Tourism and Culture opened the seminar in Banjul.

During the training in Senegambia, a tourism guide explained a case about a girl of thirteen years old who was selling nuts at the beach. A tourist approached her, bought all her packages of nuts and gave her a little note. The tourist guide went to the girl and asked for the note. The note said: "Come to room X at Hotel Y, I will pay you good money". The tourist guide threw the paper away and ordered the girl not to go. It was discussed that it would have been better to break the silence and report offenders to the police to prevent them of making more victims.

"I am very happy to be part of this workshop. I have learned a lot and I promise that I will do my best to spread the message about child sex tourism." (participant at seminar in Banjul)



Awareness raising materials

CPA - ECPAT Gambia and the Gambian Tourism Board are developing a billboard at the airport of Banjul. It was not finished before the end of the project, since they need to work on installing proper reporting mechanisms before communicating hotlines. CPA produced 4,400 Code brochures, 1,300 Factsheets, 800 brochures on the Tourism Offences Act, 5,000 leaflets for travellers, 1,000 'Break the

Silence' posters, and 1,300 stickers. The awareness raising materials were distributed during the seminars and CPA visited different stakeholders to personally hand over the materials. Not on every awareness raising material mentioned the reporting hotline due to capacity problems at the hotline.

Recommendations

1. The electric sign board at the airport of Banjul carrying messages against child sex tourism should be followed up.
2. The reporting possibilities should be improved.
3. There is a need for regular trainings on child sex tourism with different stakeholders to refresh knowledge, exchange experiences and to invest in networking.
4. The Taskforce Child Sex Tourism is an important collaboration and should continue meeting.
5. The Gambian Tourism Board and CPA - ECPAT Gambia should negotiate with The Code for recognition so that the supply chain can work better.
6. Use the radio shows of the Gambian Tourism Board to discuss case scenarios and reporting measures.
7. Provide structural lectures at the Hotel School on how to protect children against sex tourism.
8. Train police on the Tourism Offences Act and other child-related legal instruments.
9. Interventions need to be developed to protect children from grooming and webcam child sex tourism.
10. Organize trainings for journalists on how to report about child exploitation (privacy issues).



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Tourism

The Dominican Republic has long been viewed primarily as an exporter of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, but in recent years the service sector has overtaken agriculture, due to growth in tourism free trade zones and telecommunications. Since the nineties the Dominican Republic has become a popular tourist destination in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic is especially popular among tourists from the US, Italy, the UK, Russia and some other northern European countries. In 2012 there was a continuous growth of tourism to a total number of 4,652,000 arrivals ²¹.

Year	Number of tourists
2007	3,980,000
2008	3,980,000
2009	3,992,000
2010	4,125,000
2011	4,306,000
2012	4,652,000

Table 7: Number of tourists per year ^{1 + 21}

Sexual exploitation of children

From the ECPAT Global Monitoring Report (2006) ²², a research done by Save the Children Sweden (2011) ²³ and a situational analyses done by International Labour Organization (2003) ²⁴, there is the following information on sexual exploitation of children in the Dominican Republic and legislation and mechanisms to protect children:

Although prostitution is prohibited in the Dominican Republic, it has a thriving sex industry that serves mainly the local demand, but the demand of tourists is growing. There exists a formal sex industry where the work of prostitutes is led by third parties (bar owners, brothel keepers, et cetera). On the other hand, there is an informal sector where women, men and minors prostitute themselves or are being forced by family, pimps or 'friends'.

Victims

Child sex tourism is a visible phenomenon in the Dominican Republic. Figures on the number of minors in prostitution range from 25,000 to 35,000, of which around 60% are girls. Prostitution is often seen as lucrative and as a last resort. Many children at risk are Haitian orphans, refugees and children from refugees.

Boys that are exploited in the sex industry tend to escape from violent family context, ending in beach or street life. Girls that are exploited in the sex industry often try to escape, looking for a boyfriend outside. It can happen to the girl that, after an engagement or a cohabitation time, the boyfriend starts to act as a pimp and pushes her into prostitution, playing on the feeling of love and dependency inducted in her.

Causes

The country suffers from marked income inequality; the poorest half of the population receives less than one-fifth of GDP, while the richest 10% enjoys nearly 40% of GDP. High unemployment and underemployment remains an important long-term challenge. The poorest areas of the country can be found both in Santo Domingo and in remote rural areas. Poverty is also more visible in the Southern and Eastern regions around the Bateyes (sugarcane-producing communities) where illegal Haitian immigrants work for \$2.50-\$3.00 per day²⁵.

While free primary school education is available, many children fail to complete their early education, often because they are required as workers to supplement family income. HIV and AIDS is a growing concern for the Dominican Republic. More than 52,000 Dominicans live with this virus - more than 5,000 of these are children under the age of five. However, as well as the consequences of the infection itself, children whose fathers and/or mothers live with the HIV virus suffer the effects of their families being stigmatised and discriminated against, as well as the effects of economic deterioration. And even worse, they suffer the effects of the death of their parents, which makes them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation²⁶.



Offenders

The child sex tourists are mainly men of all ages and from different social groups. They have the common characteristic of being irresponsible persons that commit sexual crimes against children and adolescents, excusing themselves with many different arguments. They often argue that they provide them with economic earnings. It is the payment that makes the exploiter feel free of all responsibility about the damage that they are causing, and they feel that whatever act they commit against the child or the adolescent is legitimate, even if that includes forced pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, or physical and sexual violence. Offenders use various methods to contact children and adolescents to involve them in sexual activities. They meet them directly on the streets or in bars, use intermediates, or contact is made through internet and social media.

Trends

In Boca Chica, many tourist facilities on the beach, discos and restaurants are being owned by foreign residents in the country, each one attracting tourists of their same nationality. This kind of tourism is not organized by tour operators, but it is rather a self-organizing tourism that is based on informal services at low cost, friend suggestions and on a network of connections mediated by the locals. This leads to an underground tourism, away from tourism authorities and where illegal offers, like sex with children and adolescents, is more likely to occur. An example of this is the phenomenon of Russian run villas, where not only foods and drinks are included, but also sexual services of Eastern European and Dominican women/girls. Tourists can book the villas and choose girls on the internet.

Areas

The Dominican Republic has gained a reputation of being a major destination for international sex tourism. Children are trafficked to work in tourism regions around Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata. Sex tourism is common in Las Terrenas, Cabarete, Sosua, and Boca Chica. The strategic location of Boca Chica (nearby the capital Santo Domingo and the international airport of Las Americas) attracts a great number of people: not only tourist arriving for holidays (predominantly Americans), but also business travellers and tourists in transit to other destinations.



General picture

In the Puerto Plata region, especially in the streets and discos of Sosua and Cabarete, prostitution dominates nightlife. Girls as young as thirteen years old can be spotted, although they will avoid the main street and crowded places because police can intervene. Local studies indicate that sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is also taking place in open places like: streets, parks and beaches.

Sosua is the bigger town with a strip of open bars and known for its nightlife. During the day there are hardly signs of prostitution, but at night it becomes visible. All the bars are filled with women and girls who approach tourists very actively and create a very explicit atmosphere. Cabarete is smaller than Sosua and the atmosphere is less explicit. Prostitution, also of minors, can be seen in the bars, discos and restaurants at the beach boulevard.

Punta Cana is dominated by large scale fenced resorts with very strict security. It is virtually impossible to bring local children into these resorts. However, in the bars, discotheques and restaurants surrounding the resorts it is common to see under aged girls exploited in the sex industry.

In the Dominican Republic there is scarce sensibility towards the protection of children, there is even a certain tolerance, especially towards teenagers since they can represent a form of income or an image that attracts tourists who bring money.

Child protection in the tourism industry

Entering the country through Puerto Plata Airport there are no signs of the campaign against child prostitution. In a non-participating hotel where several people were interviewed (owner, waiters, desk employee, surf teacher) the knowledge on the issue was notably less than in the hotel that did participate in the capacity building seminar, even though the hotels were just 500 meters apart. Not much is visible for tourists about the protection of children against sexual exploitation, nor at popular touristic attractions, or in hotels. Some MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic stickers were seen in a few bars, but not very visible.



In many hotels prostitutes are allowed. A joiner fee of up to \$100 is charged, bar fees to take a girl from the bar are uncommon. Normally it is impossible to get under aged girls into a hotel, because IDs are checked. But in a hotel in Juan Dolio (near Boca Chica) a shocking number of young girls was around. When asking hotel personnel about this, there was a hostile response. In bars that are frequently visited by prostitutes, some minor girls were seen. The customers of these bars seemed to be Dominicans (personnel of the surrounding hotels), foreigners who live in the area and tourists from hotels in the neighbourhood. Some hotels organize excursions to the casino in Sosua, where there is (under aged) prostitution.

As a result of the project two tourism associations (Ashonorte and Ashoresoca) and one hotel complex (Palladium) have signed The Code. Furthermore, at least five hotels and chains have entered the procedure to sign.

Legislation and mechanisms to protect children from sexual exploitation

In 1991, the Dominican Congress ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in 2006 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. Since 2004 there is a new law for child rights protection. It includes ten General Principles and 487 Articles, expressing the right of children to health, education, and protection from work (also exploitation in child labour).



In the Dominican Republic there are various entities that have the authority to intervene and punish exploiters. There is the Public Ministry, Public Prosecutors and Children's Defence Office, the Department of the Family and Children and adolescents of the Attorney General of the Republic in Santo Domingo, as well as the Department of Sexual Abuse. However, these last bodies function in theory, only in the legal boundaries of Santo Domingo (the capital), which sometimes causes confusion about its competence.

In relation to sexual tourism, Dominican Republic has legislation to prevent hotels from becoming accomplices and beneficiaries of the exploitation. Establishments that provide lodging to a minor without parental accompaniment or written authorization from them are punished by being fined or by the closing of the establishment in the event that it happens again.

Cases of child sexual exploitation

Very few cases are reported and even fewer are thoroughly investigated. There is an erroneous perception that the victims of commercial sexual exploitation, particularly adolescents, are not really victims, and they tend to be blamed and made responsible for their own exploitation. In some cases, reports are not made because of neglect, fear, and lack of faith in the punitive system. In this sense, there is impunity for the exploiters, and only a few pimps have been punished, while the client-exploiters, and other intermediaries and accomplices have practically not been punished. In 2011 there was the first conviction of child trafficking (which did not involve sexual exploitation).

First conviction ever in the Dominican Republic for child trafficking (2011)

With two child traffickers convicted in June 2011 to fifteen years of imprisonment the Dominican Republic celebrated its first conviction of human trafficking ever. They were sentenced for the smuggling, trafficking and labour exploitation of Haitian children in Santo Domingo. The traffickers were arrested in a raid by the Dominican authorities in the Los Alcarrizos neighbourhood of Santo Domingo in February 2011, during which 44 children were discovered and rescued. Of them 22 were identified as victims of human trafficking and taken into Dominican custody. They had been trafficked to the Dominican Republic to beg on the streets of Santo Domingo or to carry out menial labour. Their traffickers had taken all money they earned.²⁷

Americans arrested in other countries also visited the Dominican Republic

Marvin H., an American convicted for child sex tourism in Honduras, may also have engaged in relations with two minor boys in the Dominican Republic in the mid-1980s, according to evidence revealed during his trial. The American Daniel R. was convicted for child sex offenses in Honduras, but in his extensive records of his travels to various countries where he abused children, the Dominican Republic was also mentioned. Likewise, Steven I., arrested in Mexico, had insinuated that he had also travelled to the Dominican Republic to sexually abuse children. From these cases, it may be suggested that the presence of U.S. child sex tourists in the Dominican Republic is likely to be significant due to its geographic proximity to the United States.¹⁷

ECPAT Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic several institutions are working towards the eradication of commercial sexual exploitation of children. MAIS (translated into English as International Solidarity Self-Development Movement) has been active in the fight against child sex tourism as ECPAT affiliate. Within this project MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic made a notorious progress. In 2009 it was struggling with The Code, but in 2012-2013 they have managed to create a momentum and have succeeded establishing a strong organization and bargaining power towards the tourism industry and government. MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic also offers support and social services to at-risk and exploited youth.

Project activities



Capacity building seminars

After the first year of training and focussing on one region, the trained stakeholders started to contact their business and government partners in other regions. The campaign gained a momentum, which led to support of UNICEF in the form of three young ambassadors/trainers with knowledge of the tourism industry. The increased capacity created room for more trainings and it seems that this process had a dynamic

of its own, in which there was full support for signing of The Code, training of personnel and distribution of awareness raising materials in all three regions.

Because of the increased capacity to support the tourism industry, MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic was able to organize 131 training meetings and reached almost 1,000 individuals. It developed two types of trainings. One training for high and middle management that focussed on the importance of implementing child protection measures through the Tourism Child Protection Code and one training for lower staff (front office, security and cleaning) aimed at practical actions at the job. This resulted in tailored trainings for 118 tourism entrepreneurs and hotel managers and 435 frontline staff. Beach vendors were invited to the trainings, since sexual exploitation also happens on the beach. MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic also developed activities for local governments (129) and for tourism students, communities and youth groups (233).

“We have to participate in the course in our own free time, but it is worth it, and I have shared the information with my community. We are vigilant now.” (participant at seminar in Sosua)



Awareness raising materials

MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic distributed 2,640 Code brochures through Code promotion activities. Most of the 13,332 leaflets reached the target groups of frontline personnel through trainings, and part also went to members of the communities. The attendees of the trainings also received posters (2,520 produced), small posters (6,810) and stickers (6,500), which they took back to their communities.



The Code brochure offered much information for the tourism industry on how to protect children against sexual exploitation in tourism. In the brochure the local hotlines were mentioned. But since the question remains whether the local hotlines are also available for tourists who can't speak Spanish, the hotline was not mentioned in all materials, especially for tourists. The participants of the trainings were enthusiastic about the information materials. During the first monitoring visit only three hotels displayed the poster that was produced by MAIS. But with the second monitoring this number had grown, because of the rapidly increasing number of trained tourism workers. In Puerto Plata, trained beach vendors carried stickers on their sales suitcases.



MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic and 64 youngsters visited communities around Sosua to mobilize community members and raise awareness on sexual exploitation of children. With thirty youngsters they visited Cabarete beach to speak to beach visitors about the problem and distribute information materials. The information materials, especially the stickers, were very popular and there was an increased visibility after the youth rallies.

MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic reached an agreement with UNICEF that for 2013-2016 actions in the framework of The Code will be supported. The information materials produced in the present project will be used as a basis for this campaign.

Besides tourism professionals, target groups will be young people working and studying near tourism areas, parents and community members.

Recommendations

1. MAIS - ECPAT Dominican Republic is based in Puerto Plata and should strive for a more national coverage.
2. Make an inventory of all hotels that have signed The Code and make it visible to the public.
3. Develop an inventory of all stakeholders involved in the fight against child sex tourism.
4. Motivate (local) government to integrate the protection of children in tourism in licensing policies.
5. Create standard plans on how the tourism industry can involve communities.
6. Train police officers, border officials, labour inspectors on child protection in tourism.
7. Create strategic alliances and trainings of key sectors with great influence in the creation of public opinion, such as the communication media or community and religious leaders.



OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The project was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project started in July 2011 and ended in September 2013. The general objective was to reach a total of 1,200 attendees in sixty training sessions, and to distribute a total of 55,000 awareness raising materials, posters and billboards. The quantitative objectives of this project have definitely been met. Qualitative achievements of the project can be measured by the impacts on institutional strengthening, on tourism industry engagement and other general impacts. Overall, the seminars and information materials of all ECPAT partners were received very positively in all countries, contributing to the professional image of their organizations. The impact on industry differed from country to country, but in general the reception of the message has become much more positive. General impacts were visible in the growing support of national and local governments and the good reception by communities and youth groups. This has led to several Code signatories.

The target groups of these awareness raising activities can be distinguished in:

- Tourism business (managers, entrepreneurs). They have to take the decision to sign The Code and make sure it is implemented.
- Frontline personnel. These are the workers in tourism who actually have contact with tourists and are in a position to observe and report child sex tourism.
- The Community. Without the support of the community in which the sexual abuse and exploitation takes place, The Code will not contribute to its goal: eliminating child prostitution. In the framework of The Code responsibility should be taken to inform the community.
- The police: All actions in the framework of The Code should be supported by the Police. At one point in the process of denouncing the perpetrators, they will have to be involved so there should be coordination with them.
- Then there are the other stakeholders that have to be involved to create a stronger environment for action, amongst them governments and NGOs.

To reach these target groups, it became apparent during the project that three types of activities were necessary:

- Convincing Government and Corporate Management to engage in The Code.
- Training Higher and middle management how to introduce The Code in their Business.
- Training Frontline staff (desk, cleaning, bar, security) in how to act.

Trainings and seminars

The overall target of reaching 1,200 people in three regions per country with four meetings per region, has been exceeded with a total of 3,000 trainees. Every country reached its goal of a minimum of 240 trainees. The overall target of sixty seminars has been exceeded also, with a total of 198 meetings. Especially the Dominican Republic organized many training seminars in cooperation with UNICEF. The Gambia and Thailand did not reach the goal of organizing twelve meetings. Both the Gambia and Thailand organized ten seminars, but trained more than the minimum number of people.

Table: Number of attendees

Country:	Tourism business/ Tourism entrepreneurs	(Of which Frontline/ direct contact with tourist)	Community/ Students/ Youth	Police	Government/ NGOs/ others	Total
Thailand	232			20	43	293
Philippines	570	(189)	302	50	33	955
Cambodia	493	(53)			12	505
Gambia	192	(192)	24	56	58	330
Dom. Rep.	553+	(435)	233+		129+	915+
Total	2040+	(869)	559+	126	275+	3000+

Table: Number of trainings

Country	Industry				Other	Total
	Promotion	Train High	Train Low	Mix		
Thailand				5	5	10
Philippines	3	8	3	4	9	27
Cambodia		7	13			20
Gambia			7	1	2	10
Dom. Rep.	7	3	63	4	54	131
Total	10	18	86	14	70	198

Awareness raising materials

An important goal of the project was to adapt the internationally produced information materials for The Code to local needs and culture. Each country was asked to produce a minimum of three types of materials, but left with the liberty to add others. The minimal requirements were to translate and reprint The Code brochure (target group professionals), produce and-or update a child sex tourism leaflets (target group tourists, local community and others) and to produce posters and/or a billboard.

The goal of 5,000 copies reprinted of The Code brochure has been largely exceeded with a total of 30,740 copies (indifferent versions depending on the country). Each country also managed its individual goal of a thousand copies. Not only did they produce them, but they were also distributed. For posters and billboards, the Philippine and Cambodia choose to focus on a billboard and a video on a big commercial screen in the town centre. The Gambia is in the process of putting up a billboard at Banjul Airport. The local partners have produced numerous other information materials, according to the needs of the country, like mugs, t-shirts, stickers et cetera totalling to almost 50,000 items.

Table: Awareness raising materials

	Thailand		Philippines		Cambodia		Gambia		Dom. Rep.		Total	
	Prod.	Distr.	Prod.	Distr.	Prod.	Distr.	Prod.	Distr.	Prod.	Distr.	Prod.	Distr.
The Code brochure 5000	700	250	20000	5000	3000	2620	4400	4400	2640	2640	30740	14910
CST leaflet 50000	3000	500+	60000	30000	36000	30500	5090	5090	13332	12764	117422	78854
Posters 1500							1050	1050	2520	2175	3570	3225
Billboard			1	1	2	2					3	3
Total	3700	750	80001	35001	39002	33122	10540	10540	18492	17579	151735	96992

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The children in the photographs in this brochure are no victims of sexual exploitation.

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In the Netherlands Defence for Children and ECPAT are one organization that promotes children's rights.

While tourism is not the cause of child sexual exploitation, child sex tourists make use of the facilities offered by tour companies, hotels, resorts, restaurants, airlines and other transportation companies. In order to prevent this, ECPAT (a global network dedicated to eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children) developed a code of conduct for the tourism industry. By implementing the six criteria of the Tourism Child Protection Code (Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism), tourism and travel enterprises implement child protection measures in their day-to-day business and utilize their wide network of international business partners and travellers. The aim of The Code is to create a child safe tourism chain by raising awareness towards travellers and travel professionals on reporting child sex tourism and by working with business partners that have a policy on the protection of children.