



RESULTS SUMMARY

Introduction

Since 2003, International Justice Mission (IJM) has worked alongside the Cambodian government to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). IJM has focused on the three geographic areas in Cambodia with the largest commercial sex markets for children—Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville. Estimates of CSEC prevalence in Cambodia around the year 2000 ranged from more than 15% according to the International Labour Organizationⁱ to as high as 30% in Phnom Penh according to estimates reported by the Cambodian government.ⁱⁱ In 2012, after a decade of targeted work to combat child sex trafficking, IJM conducted a study to determine the prevalence of CSEC in commercial sex establishments (CSEs) in IJM’s three target cities. IJM’s 2012 study found the prevalence of children in commercial sexual exploitation across the three cities was 8.16%, while the prevalence of minors identified as age 15 or younger was 0.75%. This study, conducted in March 2015, aimed to repeat the 2012 study using the same methodology to provide a second statistically significant measurement to assess prevalence in the same cities and show any changes in prevalence since 2012.

This document provides a summary of the study’s major results. A complete report will be released in August 2015, which will provide a detailed review of the methodology, full analysis of the data and all findings from the study.

Methodology

In replication of the 2012 prevalence study, IJM researchers used an establishment-based application of Time-Space Sampling (TSS), a methodology commonly used to reach hidden populations in research. The methodology involves the identification of a comprehensive list of areas (or locations) that members of the target population congregate, and that, conversely, are not commonly visited by the rest of the general population. One of the key benefits of TSS is that it approximates probability sampling by randomly selecting mapped locations as a proxy for randomly selecting members of the target population. As a true probability sample of hidden populations is typically impossible due to the absence of a complete list of population members, TSS allows inferences to be made regarding the population through the use of randomized sampling.

Before the study, IJM investigative staff conducted a 10-week systematic mapping exercise of all suspected commercial sex establishments in the three target cities. During the location mapping process, IJM staff divided each city into sectors and mapped the location and details of each suspected CSE by systematically covering all streets within each sector. In total, 834 suspected CSEs were mapped. Suspected CSEs were divided into the following categories: karaoke clubs (KTVs), beer gardens, hostess bars, massage parlors and brothels fronting as coffee shops. A statistically significant sample size for the three target cities, with a margin of error of 5%, required

surveying 255 CSEs. By the end of the study, data collectors surveyed 287 randomly selected commercial sex establishments.

Data collectors employed traditional undercover investigative techniques to determine the availability of minors for commercial sex in CSEs in the three cities. This approach allows IJM to gather accurate information regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of minors, and is an accepted strategy when attempting to quantify information on illegal practices and when collecting evidence against people leading or involved in criminal activity. Data collectors gathered both quantitative and qualitative information on the nature and prevalence of CSEC. Data collection techniques included direct observation and interaction with individuals in the establishments, including adult commercial sex workers, minors in commercial sexual exploitation, and establishment owners, managers and staff.¹ Data was reported back to the study team after each location had been visited. The data was audited in several stages to ensure accuracy. By the end of the study, data collectors identified a total of 2,104 individuals working in commercial sex establishments and available for sex in the target cities. Of these, 38 were identified as minors (age 17 or younger).

Results

The total prevalence of minors in commercial sexual exploitation across Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville was 2.22%. Compared to the findings of IJM’s prevalence study in 2012, the study results suggest that the prevalence of minors in commercial sex establishments in these cities has decreased substantially. From 2012 to 2015, *the overall prevalence of minors in commercial sexual exploitation in commercial sex establishments across the three cities declined by 73 percent* (from 8.16% to 2.22%).

Compared to 2012, the results of the 2015 study reveal the rarity of young minors (age 15 or younger) in exploitation in commercial sex establishments in the three cities, and indicate a substantial reduction of borderline minors (age 16 or 17) available for commercial sex. In 2015, the prevalence of young minors was 0.10% compared with 0.75% in 2012, while the prevalence of borderline minors was 2.12% compared with 7.41% in 2012.

Table 1 – Prevalence Results by City (2015)

City	Overall Prevalence	Young Minor Prevalence (age 15 or younger)	Borderline Prevalence (age 16-17)
Phnom Penh	2.86%	0.09%	2.76%
Siem Reap	0.75%	0.19%	0.56%
Sihanoukville	0.53%	0.00%	0.53%
Total	2.22%	0.10%	2.12%

¹ Identified minors were divided into four categories: suspected “young minors” age 15 or younger, confirmed young minors, suspected “borderline minors” age 16 or 17, and confirmed borderline minors. Minors were confirmed by specific evidence, such as a statement of age by the minor, manager, establishment owner or other individual, or by the minor stating a graduation year, a birth year in the Chinese zodiac calendar or other credible information that confirmed they were younger than 18. Data collectors possessed more than 60 years of undercover law enforcement experience or field data collection experience combined, participated in an age estimation exercise to validate the ability to report reliable data, and operated in teams to ensure accountability in age estimations. To ensure the accuracy of collected data, a systematic data audit process was followed throughout the study.

Table 2 – Prevalence Results by City (2012)

<u>City</u>	<u>Overall Prevalence</u>	<u>Young Minor Prevalence (age 15 or younger)</u>	<u>Borderline Prevalence (age 16-17)</u>
Phnom Penh	8.32%	0.66%	7.66%
Siem Reap	9.21%	1.18%	8.03%
Sihanoukville	3.72%	0.22%	3.49%
Total	8.16%	0.75%	7.41%

The prevalence of minors in exploitation was highest in the city of Phnom Penh (2.86%), compared to Siem Reap (0.75%) and Sihanoukville (0.53%). Overall, the reduction in the prevalence of minors in exploitation in all three target cities was substantial. Prevalence decreased in Phnom Penh by 66% from 2012 to 2015 (from 8.32% to 2.86%). Siem Reap saw a substantial reduction of 92% (from 9.21% to 0.75%), while Sihanoukville similarly saw a drop of 86% in the number of minors in exploitation (from 3.72% to 0.53%).

Qualitative information was also collected throughout data collection for the study to provide insight into changes in methods of operations in CSEs or potential causes for changes in the availability of minors. Statements collected from establishment owners or managers provided information on the effect of increased law enforcement on the prevalence of minors in commercial sexual exploitation. Several establishments indicated that minors were no longer available due to fear of arrest by the police for exploiting minors. One manager in a commercial sex establishment said that they “do not have minors because once a week the police come by to check” and that “they would get in trouble” if they had younger girls. Another manager of a commercial sex establishment supported this as well, stating that “before we had young girls but we do not now,” and went on to state that the police now intervene in those cases.

Overall, the results of the study show a large decrease in the number of children exploited in commercial sex establishments in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, Cambodia. The study measured a demonstrated decrease of 73% in the prevalence of minors in exploitation in a three year period. Based on the available historic data, the results of the study suggest a substantial decrease in the overall commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia, which was so evident in the early 2000s.

ⁱ U.S. Department of State. (2001, February 23). Cambodia. Retrieved June 5, 2013, from Country Report on Human Rights Practices (2000): <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eap/681.htm>

ⁱⁱ Ministry of Planning. (2000). *Cambodia Human Development Report 2000: Children and Employment*. Phnom Penh: Royal Government of Cambodia. Retrieved August 7, 2013, from <http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Cambodia/Cambodia%20HDR%202000.pdf>