

more permanent “end” or goal of starting up a business or purchasing a high-cost item such as a motorcycle. Often it appears that the ‘end’ is not the idea of the younger girls at least. Such findings are supported in other literature as well.

Other trends that were possible to clearly ascertain include the following:

Discernible TRENDS:

- Parents, mothers specified most often, make the decision to sell the girls.
- Age for sale of ‘*kieu*’ (virginity) is 13; few girls are reported as being sold before they reach this age.
- The price for *kieu* was consistently reported at \$300-\$500. There was some indication that the price paid for *kieu* is falling due to an increase in the supply of girls.
- More often than being self-propelled, girls are ‘forced’ by families/circumstances to enter prostitution.
- Kidnapping of children for the purpose of selling them into prostitution was cited as an occasional occurrence.
- Recruiters are intentional about targeting vulnerable families.
- It does not appear to be a result of ‘trickery’; more often ‘deception’/coercion is used to encourage families to sell their children for sex.
- Recruiters can be passive as well: often they are approached by a family wanting to sell a child.
- It is Vietnamese who buy the girls from the parents (specified as Vietnamese, Kampuchea Krom, or Chinese-Vietnamese). The ‘recruiters’ are [almost] always known in the community.
- Community members suggest that at their level, it is probably not a highly organised enterprise, but that it tends to be ‘opportunistic’.
- The majority of clients for the virginity are reported to be Asian expatriates: namely Japanese, Taiwanese, and Chinese. There is a belief that having sex with a virgin is good luck for new business ventures.
- Did not seem to be negative connotations associated with males visiting prostitutes or with the demand for under-age girls. Not one person interviewed talked about the need to address the ‘demand’ side of the equation: that is, the fact that men want to have sex for sale and thus there is a market for it.

4.7.5 Degree of organisation

This community perception that transactions are made through a dis- rather than highly organised network is corroborated in other research as well. An internal survey of one local human rights organisation about Vietnamese prostitution in Svay Pak (early 2003) concluded that:

“There might be many people involved at all levels of society throughout the country and over the Vietnamese border. Probably it is not a specific organised network but more the reflection of how things work in Cambodian society (that is: powerful people who control lucrative businesses, complete impunity, and lack of law enforcement).”

Writing specifically about movement of Cambodians from Prey Veng Province to Thailand, Preece (2005:44) describes the existence of an ‘...entrepreneurial network of traffickers: opportunistic individuals who seize the chance to deceive or coerce their victim into a situation of exploitation for profit.’ This seems to echo what Vietnamese respondents reported during this research.

It is possible, perhaps even likely, that a higher degree of organisation and control is present the further one advances ‘up the ladder’ because there is more money to be made: that is, the actual person selling a child may be a parent and the person buying to sell on to a ‘recognised broker’ may be just an opportunist as well. One shelter reported a recent case where a young girl running away from home entered a public bus and told the bus driver she wanted to go to Kampong Thom to find her relatives: the bus driver waived her fare (she had no money) and then sold her when they arrived in Kampong Thom.

4.7.6 Sale of boys

Sale of boys for sexual exploitation appears to be taking place, but not on nearly the same scale as sale of under-age girls nor in the same way. It was reported to be more of an occurrence in communities near the waterfront. Boys are not collected into a brothel arrangement. Rather, boys usually have another occupation, such as shoe-shining or book selling. They may then be approached directly by a foreigner to have sex, or by a ‘middleman’ such as a motorcycle taxi driver or a pimp on behalf of the client.

4.8 Perceptions of sex workers by community/public

In general, community respondents said they considered prostitution to be ‘not good work’ but that they were sympathetic to the women working as prostitutes, regarding them as having little choice for alternate employment: “at least they can earn some income.” It was also acknowledged that some women work as prostitutes in order to earn money to start a business – that they do not intend to stay in that occupation but are temporarily involved and this rationale seemed to be acknowledged as a reflection of ‘good character’ even though the work is regarded as ‘questionable’ or negative.

It seems that people make a distinction between prostitution as a job and ‘being a prostitute’ as a lifestyle, and this distinction works in favour of the women who involve themselves in selling sex. Further, many gave examples of women who formerly worked as prostitutes who had subsequently left the trade, married, and were apparently re-absorbed into community life.

- *“Apparently it is not difficult for the girl/s to fit back into the community; some of the families boast because their daughter was particularly beautiful and so commanded a higher price than other girls.” [ethnic Vietnamese physician commenting on the situation around her home area of Wat Phnom]*

The picture from girls in the after-care shelter (no longer working in prostitution), and from children participating in PLA, however, was more bleak and less hopeful.

- *The community teases girls who have been in prostitution.*
- *We are looked down on.*
- *In the view of the community, we loose value. We are not pure anymore; we are spoiled.*
- *Men do not respect or love us.*

In synch with the reflection from the girls, one woman who left prostitution (a condition imposed by her client for marrying her!) said:

- *I wish Vietnamese would wake up about prostitution [ie. stop it]. The job cannot help you for a long time.*

Churches and church leaders expressed a desire to reach out active CSW's of which they say there are many in their communities and living around their churches. However, they are afraid that the sex workers will corrupt the youth in the congregation and encourage them to enter prostitution. Teachers observed that girls who go away to do commercial sex work, sell their virginity, and return are 'different' not only in material ways such as owning different possessions, but in the way they look and carry themselves. They admit these girls back to class but admit to some reservations about doing so because they do not want the girls to 'be a bad influence'.

The general perception of commercial sex work as glamorous and lucrative is quickly dismissed in conversation with young girls who have been involved in selling sex. When asked to describe what impact the sex work has had on them, responses included:

- *I feel sorrowful inside, sorry about my own life.*
- *When you are healthy, you can make money; when you are sick it is all useless until you die. At the end is only death*
- *I am sorry about my life. But this was my fate, I was born in a bad year.*

In summary it seems the Vietnamese seem to take a rather pragmatic view toward trafficking / prostitution, but are not wholeheartedly positive about it; there was expressed some awareness by respondents of some of the potential dangers and negative effects (such as HIV/AIDS) although not much awareness expressed about emotional and psychological effects.

The sense of resignation that seems to pervade discussion about this social phenomenon may actually be a factor in families selling girl-children – in crass terms, an 'if you can't beat them, join them' sort of attitude.

4.9 Return to family/community

This research project did not obtain first-hand information from women/children who had actually returned to their communities after being involved in the commercial sex industry. However, as indicated earlier, there was a general perception from respondents that these women/children could return to their original communities and resume 'ordinary life'. Official marriage, or return to previous role/s their family of origin if they are very young, seemed to be one of the main factors legitimizing their status in the community. Having money was the other.

While 'return to family' and 'social reintegration' are ideal outcomes in the event that girls/women want to leave commercial sex work, this is not easy to achieve, not least because the original factor/s which sent the girls/women into prostitution have seldom been addressed or altered.

“At what price, honour?”

A qualitative study into domestic trafficking of Vietnamese (girl) children for sexual exploitation

Farrington outlines some of negative aspects of returning trafficked children (as perceived by the recipient families). These should certainly be seriously considered by any organisation seeking to promote return to the community/families of origin:

1. Family members may well have been involved in the original transaction, weakening bonds of trust and security.
2. Children may be considered unclean, diseased, sinful: might have community looking down on the family, shunning the family.
3. Negative outcome for the family who can no longer rely on the income.
4. Will increase family's financial burden as they have to feed/care for the child once more.
5. Factors which led to the trafficking in the first place have seldom been addressed!
6. Debts remain unpaid.



Chba Ampeu (Sugar Cane Market) area, Phnom Penh. Photo credit: Aaron Cash, 2005.

5.0 RISK /VULNERABILITY FACTORS

5.1 Overview⁴⁶

The concept of ‘poverty’ emerges quickly in any discussion about “why families would sell their children.” However it is acknowledged to be simply one variable, and not necessarily the primary consideration in this decision. The decision for sale of (girl)children into prostitution is clearly not the result of a single factor: it is always the result of a combination of factors. And this research did not identify one clear, single, overriding discernible ‘tipping’ factor⁴⁷.

And as one ethnic Vietnamese NGO worker noted:

- *“It is not [always done] maliciously: some parents really hope their daughter will marry a rich foreigner and then not only will the family be provided for but the girl will not have to live in the slum anymore.”*

Findings from this research corroborate previous research publications on risk/vulnerability factors that influence the sale of children into commercial sex⁴⁸. What is different in this research may be the weight of particular variables exacerbated by the fact of being Vietnamese in Cambodia, which is itself a vulnerability factor. For example, relational dysfunction [especially family] as an explicit factor in girls entering prostitution surfaces much more frequently in literature about Khmer girls than in reference to Vietnamese girls, an observation also borne out by this research.

5.2 Details of vulnerability factors

The major risk factors (named as such because they surfaced most frequently in conversation with respondents) among the Vietnamese communities surveyed in this research—the presence of which will make the sale of a child more likely—appear to be as follows: crisis/extra-ordinary expenses; debt; ‘normalisation’; materialism; family honour; cultural perceptions of the value/place of women.

5.2.1 Poverty as a contributing factor

All of the vulnerability factors identified through this research must be considered to occur within the context of general poverty and the psychological burden of uncertainty and insecurity accompanying it; as well as with recognition for the political uncertainty that characterises the lives of the Vietnamese minority in urban Cambodia.

The elements of poverty that surfaced most frequently in discussion included:

- Insecurity associated with inconsistent employment /income.
- Lack of ‘reserves’ or ‘assets’ that provide a ‘safety net’ for families in the event of a major crisis.
- Feeling hopeless about the future and possibility for change, improvement.

⁴⁶ For a list of the most frequent reasons for sale of children into prostitution, as stated by respondents, see Annex 6.

⁴⁷ This observation is well summarized by Farrington speaking in reference to Cambodia: “the unravelling of the social fabric of Cambodian life combined with the impact of grinding poverty are noted...as the most potent factors in the trafficking equation” (2002).

⁴⁸ Major factors identified consistently in the literature include: family/relational dysfunction, deceit, previous exposure to prostitution, family and social pressure, weak social support, cultural pressure, debt.

- Desperation: need to borrow for immediate and basic needs such as food and rent.
- Afraid of money lenders, but need the capital quickly and see little alternative.

5.2.2 Crisis or extra-ordinary expense:

- *“Not all are so poor or completely destitute. Often it seems that they have a crisis in the family [in the case referred to by this respondent, a father was diagnosed with cancer] and then they take this drastic measure of selling a child for sex. They panic and it seems an easy way out.”*
[Vietnamese doctor working with NGO to provide free health care].

People who do not have consistent employment, or the guarantee of consistent employment; and who earn just an adequate income to meet what they consider the basic expenses (ie. shelter, water, food, clothing, and employment-related such as transport) are susceptible to the pressures of ‘extra-ordinary’ expenses in a unique way. They may be forced to choose between seemingly impossible options. Some of the specific things mentioned during the research as requiring a [relatively] large amount of capital, and often quickly, included:

- healthcare expenses (mentioned most frequently by far);
- new roof or other house repairs;
- money to get a brother out of prison;
- purchase of boat or motorcycle deemed necessary for employment;
- servicing a debt.

5.2.3 Debt⁴⁹:

- *“When you cannot repay your debts, you have to sell your daughter.”*
[Vietnamese teenage girl whose mother threatened to sell her six months ago but who went to an NGO for help and is now enrolled in their school and works as a cleaner in the NGO office]

Though ‘debt’ as a factor in the decision to sell a child was frequently mentioned, it was not always clear what the majority of cases of debt were incurred for: basic living expenses, business start-up⁵⁰, or other expenses⁵¹. Perhaps the most insidious aspect of debt incurred through borrowing from the ‘informal system’ is the way in which it becomes impossible to escape. The level of interest is so high that attempts to repay become a downward spiral toward even more desperate behaviour.

⁴⁹ Debt figures largely as a ‘push factor’ in studies about trafficking for sexual purposes. Seldom is there discussion about the reasons for debt, however.

⁵⁰ “The VN mothers in the group at Chbar Ampeou in Cambodia claimed that ‘many, many’ families in their community were selling their daughters. Chbar Ampeou is a poor riverside suburb of VN migrants. The first cause, they said, is grinding poverty that has led families to realise that daughters entering the sex trade attracted fast capital often with an initial advance of up to USD\$500. Local residents find it difficult to secure jobs. Without capital they have no way of establishing businesses of their own and they are wary of moneylenders.” (Beesey: 53)

⁵¹ Farrington indicates that most Vietnamese in Poipet stated that debt was incurred for basic living expenses (not defined or specified) and for capital to start-up a business.

Often there was mention of debt being a result of gambling: in Chba Ampeu, respondents indicated that they believe 40 percent of families with debt are indebted due to gambling.

Debt as a factor appears to have changed little in the past five years⁵²:

- *There are many cases where parents persuaded their daughters to work in prostitution. Just close to here, there are more than five families I know for sure that their daughters are working as prostitutes. At first their parents had a small shop in the market, then somehow they were in bad debt. So the parents asked their (female) children to sell their virginity (when they are just 14 or 15 years old) to pay part of their parents' debts.*

5.2.4 ‘Normalisation’:

- *“Living in the dark, you become like the dark. When dark is common, then all participate in it. When prostitution and sale of children is normal, then everyone does it.” [teacher FGD]*
- *“Prostitution has taken such root in the community as to be considered a ‘normal’ way of earning money. This is partly due to the fact that it is done so openly, and as a result people see prostitutes and pimps with nice clothes and jewellery, earning and spending money. Associating prostitution with wealth as the effect of ‘normalising’ the community’s attitude towards the sex industry.” [male FGD]*
- *“In Nham Keng and Km. 11 area people talk openly about buying/selling children as though they are talking about vegetables. They do this very openly.” [NGO teacher living in Svay Pak]*

Sale of children is reported to be a common occurrence in focus communities: nearly every person participating in the research has a story to tell about someone they know who was threatened with, or who was actually sold. While difficult to know precisely the extent to which it occurs, it is clearly not an unusual activity. Researchers have noted emergence of ‘sub-cultures’ where certain previously despised options are now seen as valid, even legitimate. Gradually people are socialised into the new way of thinking, new ways of seeing options. Speaking of the Vietnamese situation in Poipet, Farrington (2002) explains:

“This points to a level of acceptance within the community of going to Thailand in an attempt to improve an individual’s or a family’s standard of living. This acceptance may in some circumstances or subgroups of the population, extend to the acceptance of trafficking in children as a legitimate source of income for both parents and traffickers.”

⁵² “Trafficking of Vietnamese Women and Children to Cambodia Report.” Derks. 1998.

The erosion of self-worth through lived circumstances allows for negative ‘normalisation’ to occur, as articulated by one NGO worker:

- “...in my understanding it is that people don’t have sense of self worth, self value. When people then find themselves tangled in debt or without a job things go down. They can start gambling and consider that that is their occupation. Of course this involves other behaviour like drinking and so forth. Their lives become focussed on MONEY, not on other things like taking care of their families. They cannot get out of the spiral and [then] there is room for the thought on selling children.” [Ethnic Vietnamese NGO worker who herself is the survivor of a physically abusive family]

In an article “Vietnam’s Global Human Trafficking: An Epidemic” (2005), author Andrew Lam suggests three major reasons for the perpetuation of human trafficking of Vietnamese for sexual exploitation: “Third, and most important, Vietnamese people themselves have developed a *lackadaisical attitude* (italics mine) about the plight of trafficked women. After all, when approximately half a million prostitutes in Vietnam are trying to make ends meet, who cares if a few hundred thousand more are plying their trade abroad?”

5.2.5 Materialism:

- “We have heard of a child being sold for a television! It is not a survival issue.” [NGO staff]
- “People want to be as rich as their neighbours.” [girl whose mother threatened to sell her]

Clearly, the majority of respondents were not destitute: their livelihood situation is often precarious and uncertain but all have places to live and report adequate food security.

In the literature, this factor is described in different ways. For instance, Slocomb refers to ‘financial need’ vs. ‘financial ambition’⁵³. Preece (2005: 52) notes that daughters are sometimes pressured into “enhancing family economic status” – the families wanted jewellery, or to own a home.

Further, Slocomb suggests that this is a relatively recent phenomenon; it may be partially attributable to the fact that the population in question is in an urban environment⁵⁴ with constant exposure to extremes of wealth and poverty. “Many long-held cultural values of an egalitarian and Confucianist society have been eroded while the new ones such as money focus, consumerism, pragmatism...have been evolving.”⁵⁵ There remains an uneasy tension between old and new values and morals and norms.

Farrington (2002) too indicates that among Vietnamese living in Poipet, challenges to traditional culture from ‘globalisation’ and ‘modernity’ have resulted in materialism,

⁵³ “One study in Thailand found that in 60 percent of cases it was not extreme poverty that forced families to send daughters to brothels, but motivated by the desire to own consumer goods like tv and videos. There is competition among families to acquire such household items.” (Brown, 1999:55).

⁵⁴ One NGO noted that sale of children does not appear to occur from Vietnamese who live outside of Phnom Penh, in more rural areas: rather, it seems to be an urban phenomenon.

⁵⁵ Slocomb, unpublished research. 2001:17.

flagrant individualism, and economic security replacing ‘traditional values’ as the major organising framework for families and community. Beesy too posits the idea that the ‘moral economy’ (James Scott, 1984) where ‘haves’ look after ‘have-nots’ is slowly being eroded by the influences of the market economy (2003:53).

Perhaps one indicator of this is seasonal change in ‘volume’ of sales. During the research, respondents reported an increase in demand for young girls at around the time of the Lunar New Year (called *Tet* in Vietnamese). They suggested that this could be because using commercial sexual services is regarded by men as part of the holiday experience so in fact more girls are ‘needed’ for the brothels because there are more clients. They were apt to answer that it could be because many families return to Vietnam and either need extra money for travel/border fees (as well as to contribute to family festivities in Vietnam, not least because they want to demonstrate that they are successful in their location). And the most frequently reason stated was that families reportedly feel a need to ‘show off’ for neighbours with new clothes and expensive parties.

5.2.6 Family reputation/family honour:

- *“People around us looked down on us. We lost face when the person who we borrowed money from came and talked loudly so that all the neighbours could hear it and everybody looked down on us. This happens a lot.”* [Female minors in an after-care shelter]

This seems to have two facets. First, the reputation of a family is partially dependent on its perceived ‘success’ in terms of providing survival essentials for its members (food, shelter, etc.). Families who are barely able to ‘make ends meet’ may find it unbearable to be ‘despised’ by neighbours; they may feel that the only possible way to rectify this is to sell a daughter so that they can regain their honour by demonstrating that they have sufficient financial resources.

The second facet relates to the fact that there is a high value placed on obedience to parents; combined with strong pressure from families upon (girl)children to contribute to the family income, this can result in girls feeling powerless to resist whatever is asked of them ‘for the sake of the family’. It can also result in girls deciding to sell themselves ‘for the sake of the family’. In this research, girls who had formerly been involved in the sex trade spoke of needing to ‘sacrifice themselves’ for other siblings or the family.

This is clearly documented in a study about the trafficking of Vietnamese women and children to Cambodia for the commercial sex trade (Derks, 1998). Insofar as the Vietnamese cultural value of family and ‘honour’ (filial piety) are applicable to the Vietnamese in Cambodia these could then be assumed to apply in the Cambodian context.

- “I must sacrifice my body for my family.” (15)
- “I didn’t want to do this work, but I needed to earn the money to buy medicine for my mother and to repay her debts. The creditor came very day to insult her., I couldn’t take it, so I had to do this work.” (27)
- “My mother told me to try to earn money, so that we did not need to be ashamed with our neighbours who had a lot of jewellery.” 31)

As Andrew Lam (2005) wryly notes: “In Vietnam, self-sacrifice is still perceived as the highest Confucian virtue, but it's seldom noted that consigning one's own offspring to a life of slavery is highly un-Confucian.”

5.2.7 Cultural perspectives of women:

- *“Part of the problem is cultural and social. There is not a very high regard for or respect of women in the culture. Since they are not valued, they can be used and sold.”* [NGO staff]
- *“Sometimes parents say “you are useless, why do you live here? Better for you to go work there [in prostitution] and make some money”* [girls in after-care shelter].

This factor is not often explicitly identified by victims or community members themselves; however it was frequently alluded to. As Preece convincingly argues in her gender analysis of employment-seeking migration from Prey Veng Province to Thailand, gender itself is a ‘risk variable’ rendering women generally more vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation than men.

5.3 Additional considerations

5.3.1 Cultural change:

This point is referred to in various places throughout this research report. The Vietnamese living in Cambodia are, by their own account, neither Cambodian nor “Vietnamese like people from Vietnam.” Respondents recognise that the Vietnamese in this country are, and are evolving, a unique culture (see section 5.2.4 above). For instance, the men’s FGD indicated that *“Vietnamese normally look down on the sex trade and do not consider it a normal, positive way to earn money.”* Most respondents said that while the sale of children might happen in Vietnam, it certainly does not happen to the extent that it does among Vietnamese in Cambodia.

- *“...the selling of daughters can be perceived, to some extent, as a symptom of the breakdown of societal norms, particularly if it is occurring among several families in a village or commune. Perhaps in the context of Vietnamese communities in Cambodia it points to the dislocation and lack of traditional values that have beset the community from the beginning of its development, rather than a disintegration which may be how it is best to describe communities in Vietnam. Such communities can be found in Thailand, Myanmar, and Cambodia as well as Vietnam and appear to be undergoing severe stresses and strains over time.”* (Beesey, 2003: 53)

5.3.2 The ‘Glam Factor’:

The idea that prostitution is lucrative surfaced frequently in conversation with adults and children both: girls/women who work in the trade, even for a short time, return to their community ‘looking different’. They are reported to now have telephones, jewellery, money, nice clothing, make-up, and to be ‘more beautiful than before’. This is admired

and envied by females in the community who are engaged in more routine and tedious work, much of which exacts a physical toll. So, even young girls may be drawn toward considering participation.

It is also regarded by young women as ‘glamorous’ (*‘the girls are clever and beautiful’*) and this may have the effect of rendering it desirable, and partly because it is possible/‘acceptable’ for them to engage in it. Furthermore, it is widely known that among clients, Vietnamese girls are considered to be prettier than the ‘dark-skinned Khmer’, to pay more attention to clients, be more experienced, be sexually adept, and so forth. This too may have a certain appeal to young girls and make them more inclined to volunteer, or acquiesce with parent’s wishes to sell their virginity and/or become involved in longer-term prostitution.

5.3.3 Pragmatism

The approach and view of the families and communities who participated as respondents in this research seemed most of all to be pragmatic: sale of a child for sex is not ideal, but as the opportunity exists many people will avail themselves of it. People did not talk about emotional or psychological damage that may be incurred by females, perhaps especially children, who are sexually exploited. See section 4.8 above.

5.4 “The Little Things”

Several observations by Malcom Gladwell in [The Tipping Point: How little things can make a big difference](#) seem cogent to the discussion of vulnerability factors amongst Vietnamese in poor communities in Phnom Penh.

Gladwell subscribes to an ‘epidemic theory of crime’. “Epidemics,” he writes, “are sensitive to the conditions and circumstances of the times and places in which they occur” (2000:139). Relating this to ‘crime’, he goes on to describe the ‘Broken Windows theory’ which argues that crime is, largely, the inevitable result of [social / socio-environmental / contextual] disorder.

“If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes.... The impetus to engage in a certain kind of behaviour [can be] from a feature of the environment.” (142).

“...the criminal...is someone acutely sensitive to his [sic] environment, who is alert to all kinds of cues, and who is prompted to commit crimes based on his perception of the world around him....The Power of Context is an environmental argument. It says that behaviour is a function of social context.” (150).

Putting this into the Cambodian context, then, it could be argued that perhaps the most critical point of intervention to reduce and eventually eradicate the deplorable crime of sale of (girl)children for sexual exploitation, is the social environment. That would require ‘getting tough on the crime’ as well as reducing the opportunity for sale of children.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS⁵⁶

6.1 Summary

Some of the recommendations included in this report are, obviously, not unique to the Vietnamese in Cambodia: all citizens and residents of this country would benefit from a stronger and more transparent judiciary, for instance. Furthermore, all recommendations must be regarded in light of the overall socio-political reality of Cambodia and within that, the tentative legal position Vietnamese hold⁵⁷.

Organisations are encouraged to think in terms of **prevention** when considering interventions for this area of child trafficking, as most of the small faith-based agencies are best suited for these types of activities. Prevention activities can often be implemented at minimal cost, although they tend to be labour intensive and require excellent community-organising and facilitation skills. In addition, agencies are also encouraged to consider efforts at protection and after-care. That is to say, a comprehensive approach to tackling this problem is advisable. Advocacy activities are best undertaken within the ‘protective framework’ of a larger agency, such as The Asia Foundation, that has extensive experience in this sensitive area.

The aim of intervention/s must be to reduce the ‘risk factors’ that seem to correlate with a family’s propensity for selling (girl)children. This is perhaps not so straight-forward as may first seem possible. The risk factors are quite inter-related and in many cases also appear to be related to ‘general quality of life’, a difficult change to realise for large number/s of people. In addition, the level of complicity by families makes it difficult to prevent the sale of children: for the most part, families appear to enter the sale arrangement thoughtfully and willingly.

In general, it is recommended that agencies desiring to participate in intervention against trafficking take a ‘rights-based approach’. Simply stated, a rights-based approach begins with the assumption that there is a minimum set of rights for every individual (the right for freedom from oppression, right to food, etc.). Many of these rights are well-articulated in various UN documents, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this approach, there are two basic actors: the so-called ‘duty bearers’ and the ‘rights holders’. Using these rights as a starting point then, people (‘rights holders’) can be encouraged to define for themselves peaceful means for (re)-gaining or asserting their rights (with ‘duty bearers’, or those whose responsibility is to ensure rights can be accessed) in way that respects the socio-political environment in which they live (in other words, the rights-based approach is not a call to violent action). There are at least three benefits for using the rights-based approach in addressing the issues articulated in this research report:

- It is currently a commonly-held and utilised NGO framework so it will be easily understandable in NGO and Government circles.
- It is not religiously specific, but acceptable across religious persuasions
- At the grassroots level, it gives a sense of external accountability: the idea that the world operates this way, and so should we!

⁵⁶ Farrington’s study on Vietnamese in Poipet contains numerous recommendations that could be considered by NGO’s working with Vietnamese in Phnom Penh. A summary of recommendations and rationale is included as Annex 7.

⁵⁷ That is, it should be assumed that the Vietnamese population’s ‘illegal migrant’ status will confound any intervention.

Furthermore, it is recommended that, where possible, ethnic Vietnamese staff are employed (ie. for providing services), rather than simply employing Vietnamese-speaking staff. Cultural affinity will enhance the ability to empathise and to understand the situation of those who are accessing the service/s. It will also increase the likelihood that Vietnamese in need will access particular services. The report recognises the improving access of Vietnamese to various services may not make a significant difference initially because those services are rudimentary or deficient even for the majority population. But it is an important part of the process of improving the overall situation for the Vietnamese.

6.2 General Intervention Framework⁵⁸

It is now clearly recognised that ‘trafficking’ is not a ‘steady state’ but that it is in fact a continuum with extreme forms of force/coercion at one end and voluntary entry for financial reasons at the opposite end (Preece: 45). Where one is located along this continuum determines what [types of] intervention is most appropriate.

The range of interventions can largely be divided into five categories: prevention, protection, victim support, reintegration, and advocacy. Possible sub-activities are outlined in general terms, in Annex 9. In some cases, a single intervention actually fits into different categories as it may achieve different outcomes.

Looking at it another way, one could begin with the risk factors particular to the Vietnamese in focus, and then consider how to address those specifically. One could envision the following:

RISK FACTOR	INTERVENTION/ MITIGATION	RATIONALE
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty reduction: employment generation, credit, etc. • Skills training; • Institute apprenticeship scheme. • Institute saving/s schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employment options. • Increase income opportunities.
Normalisation/ prevalence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accountability structures such as schools and child clubs. • Community meetings to discuss social situation and perceptions about it. • Institute neighbourhood watch system so people can alert one another to potential sale, ‘facilitators’. • Training on human rights (especially childrens’ and womens’ rights). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast doubt on the fact that the sale of a child is a ‘normal’ or ‘acceptable’ or ‘valid’ alternative for families to gain income. • Informing communities of national and international laws and conventions may act as a deterrent.
Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady employment & income. • Savings schemes. • Community support structures for encouragement and solidarity. • Health insurance schemes. • Improve healthcare; quality and accessibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Render individuals and families less vulnerable to shocks. • Provide means for accumulating additional assets that can be divested in emergency situation.

⁵⁸ For details, see Annex 9.

RISK FACTOR	INTERVENTION/ MITIGATION	RATIONALE
Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit available on reasonable terms. • Steady employment. • Alternative entertainment activities. 	For people living at the subsistence level in an urban context, it is probably not likely that debt can be totally eradicated. Therefore, it is important to construct systems and opportunities that are favourable for those who need to utilise those systems.
Materialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cultural/traditional stories and ideas to promote value of children. • Promotion of values and morals in school. • Promotion of values and morals through greater interaction with parents of children in school. 	People should be enabled to make positive choices, meaningful choices, with a range of information. Behaviour change should occur within this context of focused reflection and information.
Lack of social / support structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based research. • Community organising • Parent-teacher meetings. • Increase access to services in general. 	Creative ways of bringing people together to work on common activities promotes a sense of solidarity and community ownership/pride.
Cultural perspectives on ‘family honour’, gender, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct gender analysis with community members. • Find culture ‘touch points’ that celebrate women. • Focus on promoting girls education – increases their value in the sight of the community, gives them a greater sense of confidence and self-worth. 	Improve male and female perceptions of the value and contribution of women.

6.3 Community level intervention⁵⁹

6.3.1 Sensitization/Awareness Raising

- Translate and produce CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) as posters or pamphlets – increase awareness that selling children is against international and domestic law/s as well as not in the best interest of children. Can follow up with sensitization workshop/s.
- Translation of relevant legal documents in Vietnamese language; then circulation of documents and education/awareness raising about the [related] legal context in Cambodia. This may serve as a deterrent.
- Establish some sort of hot-line so that people in trouble can phone for help. Need to make very clear what procedures/steps are for reporting threat of sale or actual sale, or rescue.
- Could have NGO’s with VN speaking staff make presentations to churches and/or parents of students regarding their services and contacts.

⁵⁹ In developing these recommendations, the author intentionally did not incorporate suggestions from Farrington (Annex 7) – it is advisable that NGOs carefully review both sets of possible interventions in the process of determining what may work in their given community.

- Set up a ‘neighbourhood watch’ system with clear information about who to contact in the event of particular observation/s or situation/s.

6.3.2 Community building/development

- Develop social cohesion and a sense of community in these slum areas – not one based on ethnicity, however, but on more positive aspects like working together as neighbours to resolve common problems in the location where we live.
- Bring people together to analyse their lives and situation and discuss changes they might want to make.
- Initiate community-based action-oriented research. This would give time for building relationships and for increasing peoples self-awareness.
- Stimulate sense of community and communal pride through common activities like ‘clean up day’.
- Provide recreational opportunities such as soccer that can bring people together for something other than work.

6.3.3 Thinking about the future

- Address feelings of ‘hopelessness’ – discussions, create more support mechanisms such as mother’s groups or play groups.
- Continue to implement education programmes for children – this gives a sense of hope and future.
- Could do more with children in school to help them envision occupations and livelihoods, and ways/means/requirements for achieving those dreams. Helping children and their parents to think about the future may go a long way in reducing social ills: encourage them to identify and name the various components that are necessary for certain occupations. This may prove to be a motivator for people, and give them practical and manageable achievements that they can work toward (ie. literacy, development of particular language skills, and so forth)? It may also do much to inspire hope. Of course, facilitation skills of the person leading these kinds of processes are vital to ensure that positive outcomes of such discussions.

6.3.4 Establish Local ‘accountability mechanisms’ or structures

- Establishing various ‘accountability mechanisms’ such as school, seems to be a positive activity that NGO’s can do. Parents seemed to be very conscientious about reporting to teachers that they wanted to withdraw their child from school; in reality they do not have to do this as they are completely free agents. But they have a sense of obligation: could capitalise on this. Establish more schools, small credit groups, sports teams, etc.

6.3.5 Poverty reduction

- Clearly, poverty is an important part of the equation. Therefore, greater attention to this issue would ostensibly pay significant dividends—through establishment of simple savings groups, provision of small-scale credit, education in business management and accounting, vocational skills training, and so forth.
- Think in terms not only of ‘income generation’ but in terms of ‘meaningful work’.

6.3.6 Credit/Vocational skills training

- Pilot a credit scheme. Focus strongly on the solidarity aspect of groups.
- For vocational skills, would be ideal to first liaise with existing skills training initiative (such as Don Bosco, Bright Arrows, WEC) to determine whether or not it is viable to place Vietnamese young people in these existing schemes.
- Explore the ‘traditional’ Vietnamese system of apprenticeship. It is reportedly common for parents to pay a sum of money to an established business (such as mechanic shop, hair dressing salon) to have their child trained in that skill at that location. Sometimes the apprentice eventually gains a job at the shop where she/he was trained; other times they complete their training and start up their own business or go to work in another shop. NGO’s can capitalise on the existence of this strategy by finding ways to support children/families who may want to participate but who may not have the capital to do so.

6.3.7 Education for children

- Providing educational opportunities has practical benefits, ie. passing on skills such as literacy, but also has a ‘deterrent property’ in that it provides an external structure that parent/s or families must negotiate if/when they are considering sale of a child in school.
- Agencies who are currently engaged in offering ‘formal’ education to Vietnamese children could consider incorporating a ‘lifeskills’ approach to education and especially for the older children. The OPTIONS Project of The Asia Foundation could provide a model in this regard. Specifically, “lifeskills” include such things as critical thinking, data collection, problem solving, analysis, communication, and decision-making (as well as practical information about topics like personal hygiene and safety, family relations, social skills, HIV/AIDS). Teaching lifeskills as been demonstrated to boost the confidence of participants and help them negotiate more favourable relationships which will in turn, contribute to reducing their vulnerability to exploitation.
- Curriculum could also be expanded to include HIV/AIDS education, and trafficking and sexual exploitation can be discussed quite easily in that context. Also, children can be encouraged to share this information with their parents. Materials in English and Khmer already exist – see, for instance, the Tearfund HIV/AIDS and Safe Children karaoke materials for children and youth. These could be translated into Vietnamese; or the Khmer

version utilised as part of the curriculum for older children who already speak/read/write Khmer.

- Curriculum could also be expanded to include gender awareness as well as conflict resolution. Even at a very simple level this could be enormously useful in the situation where families appear to have largely abrogated their responsibility for the moral instruction of children.
- Increase interaction of NGO with parents – so far, little is being done by any NGO to involve parents in the education of their children. The parents represent a natural affinity group, and this could be positively exploited as a starting point for enhancing community solidarity or doing community-based action research.

6.3.8 Education for adults

- It is suggested that more emphasis is placed on adult literacy and oral Khmer classes - both to learn the language as well as to bring adults together for solidarity and community sense.
- Can use lifeskills⁶⁰ approach for adult education as well; include relevant issues such as domestic violence, HIV/AIDs, etc.

6.3.9 Addressing cultural values

- Find positive cultural ‘touch points’ where people can be challenged by traditional stories, cultural myths, and values that they themselves ascribe to – for example, relating to the value of children or the how critical women are to the well-being of a family. The Vietnamese love stories: traditionally, they are often taught values this way. Relevant stories can be sought from older people, literature, proverbs, and incorporated into teaching, sermons, and so forth.
- The sale of children appears to be less common for church-goers. This could be because it contravenes Christian principles; it could also be that the Church acts as an ‘accountability mechanism’ like the schools do. It would be useful for Christian agencies could prepare materials about morality and values and use in church/Sunday school. Any means for positive affirmation of the dignity of human beings should be encouraged.
- It must be recognised that the Vietnamese in Cambodia have a unique ‘third-culture’: they are somewhere between Vietnamese from Vietnam, and Khmer, neither one nor the other.

6.3.10 Gender issues

- Conducting a gender analysis in Vietnamese communities would help to define what the predominant cultural values are. Essentially, a gender analysis describes the roles and positions and value of women and men in the context of how they relate to one another within a particular culture. For example, to be a ‘woman’ within the Vietnamese context is very different than what it is to be a ‘woman’ within the Khmer context –

⁶⁰ See Annex 11 for details on ‘lifeskills’.

there are different expectations, roles, responsibilities, etc. placed on ‘women’ and on ‘men’ in different cultures. It will be important to engage the focus people themselves in asking questions such as: ‘what do men in our community do’ and ‘what to women do’ and ‘why is this the case’ and ‘do we think it should continue to be like this’. They may decide they want to construct an alternate reality; they should be the architects of that new way of relating to one another.

- Address the demand side of the equation. Both women and men should be challenged to question whether or not harmful cultural stereotypes (ie. men have inexhaustible libido and must be able to access sex whenever they want to) and myths (if a man has sex with a virgin, it brings good luck) are true.
- It will be important to teach young boys to respect and more highly value women and girls, so that as they grow up they may be less likely to use CSW’s.

6.4 Organisational-level Considerations

6.4.1 Philosophical approach:

- It is clear that child trafficking cannot only be regarded as a result of poverty; therefore, poverty alleviation strategies are necessary, but are not sufficient for addressing this.
- It is important that organisations recognise the need to address issues of social and community development, design creative ways to foster hope, and as address issues of culture and values.
- The process by which organisations approach this issue/social problem is as critical as the types of intervention. It is vital to ensure that community members are involved at every step: from needs assessment and analysis to determining interventions, to implementation, and review. As there are likely very few areas of their life where they would be engaged in these sorts of activities and analysis, it will take patience and training/education in order to equip people to fully participate.

6.4.2 Application of PRA tools

- Organisations who are working in areas where this phenomenon is present could consider gathering relevant information in a participatory way such as done in this research. In this way, agencies can begin tracking the extent and some dynamics of the trade: in the event of their future involvement and also to assist other organisations who are focusing their efforts on trafficking and commercial sex sector.
- Specifically, Venn Diagramming was noted as a potentially very useful counselling tool – if done individually. It gives a schemata of who is important to the person being counselled, and facilitates discussion about why and why not.
- Various tools can be used on on-going basis with children as a way of encouraging their analysis of their lives, encouraging visioning, and dealing with difficult issues such as those discussed during this research. Especially drawing and then analysis of pictures has proven useful with children.

6.4.3 Information-sharing & collaboration

- Few of the faith-based organisations contacted during the course of this research knew much, if anything, about the work of the others. The advantages of increased communication and information-sharing amongst agencies working with Vietnamese are numerous, particularly if their activities are similar as is the case. One benefit would be that lessons learned from a particular approach can be passed along, so mistakes don't need to be repeated. Sharing of resources such as trainers and training materials is another possible benefit.
- Agencies tend to work in different geographic locations, so another benefit of regular information sharing would be development over time, of a more comprehensive, composite picture of this marginalised population.
- For after-care and crisis shelters, and legal organisations, it would be useful to coordinate monitoring, data collection, and the sharing of basic information about Vietnamese sex workers such as: community of origin, age, location of work (brothels and/or kieu), ethnicity of clients. This would help to establish knowledge about patterns of sale and movement, trends in volume of trade. It is recognised that this may be difficult because it is not always possible to distinguish the ethnicity of sex workers: some Vietnamese women want to hid that identity and if they can speak Khmer well this may not be hard to do.
- Shelters should have basic information too that is gathered consistently and completely, relating to communities or origin, age, etc. that would enable development of a clear profile of the girls and circumstances surrounding their involvement. That on-going data collection and analysis of trends would be useful in designing intervention/s.

6.4.4 Improved access to services

- Consider ways to enhance access to relevant services, for Vietnamese. This can be done by paying attention to language issues (print-based media will be effective in Vietnamese because of the high literacy rate); hiring ethnic Vietnamese as staff; etc.
- The urban Vietnamese population is underserved in terms of basic amenities and development programmes: NGO's should consider starting (or expanding on existing ones) community development initiatives targeting Vietnamese only, in Vietnamese communities.
- Consider ways to advocate for the minority Vietnamese population in Cambodia; especially regarding legal status. This has implications for the Vietnamese to be able to access more easily, such Government services as do exist (specifically: healthcare, education).

6.5 **Legal Education and Protection**⁶¹

- Ensure dissemination of relevant laws to local authorities, councils, village chiefs, and communities. It is important to ensure that such documents are made available in Khmer and in Vietnamese.
- Vietnamese require knowledge and understanding of how to use legal instruments to seek redress and legal rights in Cambodian and international law. This can be accomplished through sensitization and training sessions.
- Given the historic animosity between the people groups, anti-trafficking police would require sensitization/special instructions about Vietnamese they may be working with.
- Ensure that there is access to free legal services, assistance, and representation for Vietnamese. Language and culture issues are paramount in this regard: having Vietnamese speakers is necessary, but having ethnic Vietnamese who understand not only the language but also cultural nuances is ideal.
- It would be useful to ensure that there are female lawyers and counsellors who can assist female victims.
- Criminalise traffickers, de-criminalise victims; prevent the practice of viewing victims primarily as illegal migrants and deporting them.

6.6 **Policy level considerations**

Legalising the presence of the Vietnamese in Cambodia would give them access to basic public services such as education. The degree of security that such a shift in policy would bring may have very positive implications for community-building within predominantly Vietnamese locations, thus reducing social problems.

One expatriate advisor of a local NGO engaged in human rights work suggested that it may be easier for the Cambodian government to consider the issue of trafficking among/of Vietnamese women and children if it is presented in the context of larger issues of migration. This shift of emphasis from ‘trafficking’ per se to ‘migration’ currently characterises this sector in Cambodia and may be more palatable to local authorities as they are struggling with labour migration of Khmer to Thailand and the precarious situation that non-Thai speaking Khmer experience.

In addition, an internal report document of a local human rights agency gives several other suggestions for ways to work toward improvement of the policy and legislative environment vis-à-vis reducing trafficking and sexual exploitation, especially of children.

1. Deal with corruption at all levels of society.
2. Make and communicate clear laws.
3. Improve law enforcement. Real perpetrators usually not prosecuted.
4. Improve independence of judiciary.
5. Expand legal aid institutions
6. Cooperate with VN on trafficking, cross-border issues, migration.
7. Hold parents responsible for the sale of their children – not just pimps, etc.
8. Reduce particular discrimination against VN sex workers – such as putting rescued sex workers in jail for illegal immigration!

⁶¹ Many of the ideas in this section have their origin in the LSCW report on migrant labour from Cambodia to Thailand.

6.7 Further research suggested

This research identified several topics that would be very useful to explore further in the future.

1. Indebtedness

- a. Debt: local formal and informal credit options, when does it happen, who goes into debt, for what do people go into debt, how is it regarded if people default, etc.

2. Family status/situation:

- a. Family situation: the literature suggests that family dysfunction is a major factor for girls entering prostitution. It is often stated, especially by Khmer but also by Vietnamese, as a reason that they became prostitutes or ran away from home and were thus rendered more vulnerable and eventually ended up working in prostitution. The ‘family factor’ was also highlighted as a ‘major cause’ by several Vietnamese staff working for the faith-based NGO’s who observe that families are often in crisis and violence is a regular occurrence among the poor and very poor Vietnamese families among whom they work.

This current piece of research did not go into detail about the quality or nature of inter- and intra-familial relationships – it would be worthwhile to do more focused research on this and the [possible] correlation with entry into prostitution.

3. Concepts of family:

- a. Perception of ‘family’: what does it mean to be a family for a Vietnamese person living in an urban slum in Phnom Penh?
- b. Perceptions of children: how are they regarded by the Vietnamese in Cambodia? What is their role, the value that families place on children?

4. Education initiatives

- a. Actual results of the education initiatives – is the aim of ‘mainstreaming’ in fact being achieved? Are the assumptions undergirding those programmes holding true?
- b. If not, perhaps more effort should be channelled into the provision of practical non-formal education (literacy and numeracy and lifeskills) rather than into formal curriculum? Or at least provide it as an alternative.

5. Cultural issues

- a. Perceptions of sex in the Cambodian-Vietnamese culture: what do people think they are selling? What do people think they are buying?
- b. Perceptions of money and wealth: what is important to people? House, motorcycle, keeping a family intact, having steady employment? Would include issues of ‘having enough’ and tolerable margins of risk/error.
- c. Understanding ‘shame’ in relation with economic gain as opposed to the nature of the work.
- d. Determinants of male behaviour (Note: a sample FGD discussion outline is included in Annex 14. This could readily be employed by any interested NGO as a starting point in addressing this often-overlooked and seldom addressed issue.)

6. Reintegration

- a. Conduct research into the outcome of attempts by NGO’s / shelters to re-integrate Vietnamese children back into local communities. This may reveal important information about community perceptions of family as well as of prostitution.

7.0 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This research marks a significant step in understanding the unique situation of the Vietnamese in Cambodia, in particular relation to their vulnerability to human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.

Clearly, there are viable interventions possible at a number of different levels, ranging from the national policy and practice level down to the grassroots level of working in communities for prevention of trafficking as well as with victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

There are also significant barriers to working with Vietnamese *per se* in Cambodia, not the least of which is an intentionally vague national policy on citizenship and legal status for immigrants. Furthermore, the historical animosity between Cambodians and Vietnamese should not be minimized in the process of considering possible interventions. It must also be noted that the overall situation for women and children in Cambodia for human trafficking and sexual exploitation is dire: the situation is not unique to Vietnamese. Even for the Khmer majority population there are many ‘push factors’ including:

- widespread poverty,
- high unemployment,
- low levels of literacy, and
- few income earning opportunities for women)

that conspire to make sale of children for labour and prostitution serious considerations for many families. Furthermore, relatively few resources are available for victim support, there is a weak and not well understood or enforced legal framework for prosecution of perpetrators, and many

cultural traits (generally a low regard for women) collude to sanction trafficking and commercial sex.

The major risk factors among the Vietnamese communities surveyed in this research—the presence of which will make the sale of a child more likely—are: crisis/extra-ordinary expenses; debt; ‘normalisation’ of the phenomenon of commercial sex and sale of children; materialism; family honour; and cultural perceptions of the value/place of women.

The aim of intervention/s, then, must be to reduce the ‘risk factors’ that correlate with a family’s propensity for selling (girl)children. This is perhaps not so straight-forward as it may first seem. The risk factors are quite inter-related and in many cases also appear to be related to ‘general quality of life’, a difficult change to realise for large number/s of impoverished and politically marginalised people. In addition, it must be recognised that the level of complicity by families will make it difficult to prevent the sale of children. For the most part, families (read: head of household, major decision-makers) appear to enter the sale arrangement thoughtfully and willingly. Obviously, then, attention must also be given to issues of personal and communal values that influence the way males and females are regarded in Vietnamese-Cambodian society.

The barriers to effective intervention are significant, but not insurmountable: difficulties must not stand in the way of concerted efforts to protect vulnerable Vietnamese women and children from trafficking and sexual exploitation. The very lives and well-being of thousands rest on the response to issues highlighted in this report.

“At what price, honour?”

A qualitative study into domestic trafficking of Vietnamese (girl) children for sexual exploitation

ANNEX SECTION

Annex 1: Stakeholder analysis

For the actual question frameworks devised for each stakeholder group, see Annex 13.

Stakeholder	Methodology
Primary NGO	Semi-structured interviews; training of their staff; observation of activities.
NGO's - direct work among Vietnamese (faith-based NGO's)	PRA activities; Focus Group discussions.
NGO's - community development projects that reach Vietnamese	Semi-structured interviews with staff.
NGO's involved in legal aspects of trafficking, victim services, etc.	Semi-structured interviews.
Children - in NGO schools	PRA activities.
Teachers - of NGO's running schools	PRA activities; Focus Group discussions.
Church leaders	Focus Group discussions.
Community leaders - Hoi Viet Kieu	Semi-structured interview.
Community members	Walk-about, informal discussion, in-depth interviews, observation, PRA activities, focus group discussions.
Shelter/s - staff and residents	Semi-structured interviews with staff; PRA with residents.

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Annex 3: Details on respondents/interviews

STAKEHOLDER	DETAILS	NUMBER contacted
NGO's and Staff		
Christian NGO's that have projects working exclusively with VN.	Names omitted at request of NGO's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 agencies ▪ 2 VN staff ▪ 8 Expat staff
Christian NGO's that have community-based projects reaching both Vietnamese (degree of intentionality) and Khmer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. World Relief (CREDIT for loans; HOPE – kids clubs) 2. TASK (TLC, etc.) 3. Maryknoll (education) 4. Omitted on request of agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 agencies ▪ 2 Khmer staff ▪ 5 expat staff
Secular NGO's with community-based projects reaching both Vietnamese (degree of intentionality) and Khmer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSF 2. AFESIP 3. [RHAC] 4. [MSF Belgium] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 agency ▪ 3 expat staff
Agencies working in trafficking prevention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNIAP 2. TaF – OPTIONS 3. IOM 4. [ILO] 5. [CHO] 6. [HCC] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 (only IOM & UNIAP face-to-face, others by email)
Agencies engaged in 'legal aspects' of trafficking prevention.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IJM, 2. IOM, 3. Licadho, 4. LSCW, 5. CDP, 6. [OCHR,] 7. [MOWA] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5
After-care shelters, care & vocational skills training	Names omitted at request of NGO's.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5
Hoi Viet Kieu	Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1
Children – FGD		
Child-FGD: Girls in a shelter		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 shelter ▪ 5 participants ▪ 1 counsellor
Child-FGD: Children in community	Boys: 15 – Mekong (age 9-12) 15 – K11 (age 10-14) 8 – Chba Ampeu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 FGD in total ▪ 76 children (38 boys & 38 girls).
	Girls: 15 – Mekong (age 9-12) 15 - K11 8 - Chba Ampeu	

STAKEHOLDER	DETAILS	NUMBER contacted
Adult – FGD		
Adult-FGD: Pastors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 FGD ▪ 3 male participants 	
Adult-FGD: Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 FGD ▪ 10 women, 2 men participating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- 1 with 4 women teachers. -- 1 with 1 male, 3 female teachers -- 1 with 1 male and 3 female teachers. 	
Adult- FGD: Community	Chek engry Leu (5 were former prostitutes, 1 a mother of one of the former CSW's).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 FGD ▪ 6 women
Adult-FGD: Community	Chba Ampeu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRA & mapping Mekong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRA & Mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 FGD (2 women, 2 men) ▪ 13 people total (7 women, 6 men)
In-depth Interviews		
In-depth Interviews: Community people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 hairdresser ▪ 1 girl whose mother threatened to sell her. ▪ 2 sisters who run a hair salon. ▪ 1 Khmer woman working as prostitute (TASK clinic) ▪ VN woman whose mother goes to Church; 3 kids. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 interviews ▪ 6 people (women)

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Annex 4: Legal Framework - Overview

Annex 5: Legal Services and Support

1.0 LEGAL SUPPORT OPTIONS

In discussion of legal support options, it is important to clarify the issue of “jurisdiction”. Basically, it is globally accepted that does not matter what nationality commits a crime and/or is victimized, it is the responsibility of the police/authorities of the nation in which the crime occurs to investigate and bring charges if possible. In practice, however, this happens inconsistently especially in countries with weak judicial systems (like Cambodia); and particularly for marginalised minority group/s (like the Vietnamese in the case of Cambodia).

Discussion about ‘legal support’ must also necessarily include attention to both conviction of perpetrators⁶², as well as the care and security of the victim. Ideally, it should also include attention to prevention of trafficking (such as assistance in the event that someone who is afraid for their own safety or the safety of someone else) as well as to conditions for victims in the post-trafficking phase.

In theory, it is possible for Vietnamese victims of trafficking and or physical/sexual abuse to access legal support on a gratuitous basis through local organisations that offer it. These include PJJ (Project for Juvenile Justice), LAC (Legal Aid Cambodia), CDP (Cambodia Defenders Project), APLE (Action Pour Les Enfants), Adhoc, and LSCW (Legal Support for Children and Women). Likewise, assistance is [theoretically] available from more social-service oriented agencies such as Licadho and Mith Samlanh who work in conjunction with local Police, Ministry of Interior, and sometimes the Anti-Human trafficking Department to investigate cases brought to their attention. All agencies indicated that they would serve Vietnamese like they serve Khmer, and without discrimination⁶³.

However, it seems unlikely that Vietnamese victims would actively pursue legal recourse for several reasons. Perhaps the foremost reason is the fact that most Vietnamese, and certainly the majority if not all Vietnamese who would be trafficked, do not have legal status here in Cambodia; they are considered ‘illegal immigrants’⁶⁴. Experience suggests that both victims and perpetrators are more likely to be tried for illegal migration (a criminal charge with penalty of 3-6 months imprisonment then deportation) than for the trafficking-related charges⁶⁵.

In addition, Vietnamese victims:

- may not be aware of the presence of such services as they are ‘advertised’ in Khmer and likely not in predominantly Vietnamese communities;

⁶² At least one international organisation indicated that it has been quite successful in securing the conviction of perpetrators of trafficking and sexual exploitation; 18/48 convictions during its time of operation to date were reported to be of Vietnamese.

⁶³ Author’s note: While there is not necessarily active discrimination against Vietnamese, failure of organisations to be equipped with, as a minimum, Vietnamese-speaking staff constitutes a certain degree of negligence that amounts to discrimination. This is especially so, given the preponderance of Vietnamese within the population of sex workers and potential trafficking victims.

⁶⁴ Respondents, speaking of their experience as a minority in Cambodia, indicated that generally they try to ‘stay quiet’ and ‘go unnoticed’, not drawing any attention to themselves in case they should be expelled or otherwise harassed.

⁶⁵ Both Licadho and AFESIP indicated that there seems to be a decrease in these cases, as authorities are trained and international standards and requirements tighten up.

- may not have adequate Khmer language to access such services;
- may not have confidence to approach services even if they are aware of them because of personal experience with discrimination that is common to Vietnamese in Cambodia.
- An issue for any woman accessing the legal system is that the majority of staff employed by these organisations are male; this may further disempower a Vietnamese woman.

Furthermore, because of the politically sensitive nature of ‘the VN question’ it is difficult for local agencies to respond well. Their own staff may feel at risk of harm if they pursue a case for Vietnamese clients. And they may be discouraged by the precedent set through former attempts. So even if there is organisational policy against discrimination it may unwittingly occur.

2.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK REGARDING TRAFFICKING

The legal framework in Cambodia relating to trafficking and exploitation of children is a thick morass of global, international, regional, and national statements, protocol, agreements, MoU, laws, codes, draft laws, and purely descriptive documents⁶⁶. And theory differs significantly from practice, both for Khmer as well as for Vietnamese.

According to Farrington, the unfortunate convergence of political factors (complicity of politicians, police, military, legal system, etc.) in this country “...means that the Cambodian population remains [largely] unprotected for the threat of exploitation.” This is even more the case for the Vietnamese, given the historical animosity between the two nations and their current precarious legal status.

Conviction of perpetrators: Basically, there are legal grounds on which to convict perpetrators (often using articles of the Criminal Code such as ‘infringement of minors’, ‘indecent assault’, ‘rape of a minor’, ‘illegal confinement’, etc.) regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. The question is more of a practical nature: whether sufficient evidence about Vietnamese involved as perpetrators can be gathered by largely Khmer-speaking authorities and legal experts. And whether or not the perpetrators will actually be tried for the crimes against children; historically, they are more readily tried for being ‘illegal migrants’, jailed for a short time, and then deported (or simply released back into Cambodia).

Prevention of trafficking: According to a staff member of the IOM, prevention of trafficking is nearly impossible from a legal perspective, even for Khmer. Even if there is a suspected plan for trafficking a child, you cannot intervene legally despite strong evidence! This is because there is no comprehensive child protection law in Cambodia; and the Vietnamese families are certainly not physically neglecting their children who will be sold (about the only clause allowing for removal of a child). The Family & Marriage Law is the only mechanism available for removing children from their families and still this practice is virtually unheard of.

And, it is the Provincial level of the Ministry of Social Affairs that holds responsibility to act on what laws are available – there is no historical precedence to suggest that the MoSAVY will take interest in cases involving Vietnamese.

⁶⁶ See Annex 4 for an overview of the specific components of the legal framework.

Under the current legislative framework, the level of complicity by immediate guardians of the children, their birth-parents, makes it virtually impossible to prevent the sale of the girls. Action can only be taken after the fact of sale.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that any intervention will require financial resources. And that language will be a barrier to communication as few Khmer speak Vietnamese and it is not common for Government services to have Vietnamese-speakers available. A lawyer with Cambodian Defenders Project assigned to the Trafficking department indicated that there are three forms of recourse in the event of a suspected plan for, or actual sale of, a child:

1. An NGO can take the girl into a shelter because she is at high-risk.
2. Police can come to research and investigate and charge the family. However, this requires purchase of fuel for the motorcycle, lunch, phone card, etc. to cover police expenses as they do not have enough money to cover these for themselves.
3. Can go to anti-trafficking police unit. CDP advised that this is a better option than the regular police because their sole mandate is to address and reduce trafficking. However, there is only one such office in Phnom Penh so they may be more difficult to access than local police unit. And, like the regular police, the anti-trafficking police must also have their expenses paid before they will agree to conduct an investigation.

The law as deterrent: It was difficult to obtain information from anyone within the focus communities who had actually attempted to access or employ ‘the law’ to any aspect of the threat/sale/trafficking of Vietnamese (girl)children.

Respondents reported that there have been cases where NGO staff have intervened on behalf of children who were afraid they would be sold into prostitution. The presence of external interested parties seemed to be sufficient deterrent; in most cases the child was not sold. In at least one case it was clear that the family thought it would be deported to Vietnam if they sold their child; although there are no legal grounds for this the apparent threat proved useful!

Annex 6: Frequently cited reasons for sale of children

REASON	DETAILS (ALL QUOTES)
Financial	
	“They want money.”
	“Money is important to them – more important than their children.”
	<i>Prostitution is definitely</i> regarded as lucrative; women who have or who are working as prostitutes [or sold their virginity] return to the community well-dressed and this makes other girls want the same money
Extra-ordinary expenses	“Sometimes a family member goes to prison and the girl becomes a sex worker to earn enough money to get the brother out of prison.”
	Reason: life is too difficult; people in debt; special situation like creditors coming to take away all possessions or someone gets sick.
	Poverty, illness from siblings, illness from mother
	Health reasons (parents were sick and needed money for medicine or doctor visits).
	Family needed money for a new roof for their house.
	Family needed money for her mother’s health problems.
	Family member gets sick, father leaves the family, mum needs the \$
	There is a myth about getting rich if you go into prostitution; finding a foreign husband.
Family honour / reputation / competition with neighbours	
	People around us look down on us. We lost face as the person who we loaned money from came and talked so that all the neighbours hear it and everybody looks down on us. This happens a lot.
	“Don’t have nice clothes – they compare themselves to neighbours and people around and find that others are better off so they want to get money to improve.”
	Families ‘sweet talk’ the girls into saying they will become a prostitute or sell their virginity – this is seen as a ‘choice’ by the girls. (talk of clothing; talk of good money; talk of responsibility they have to the family).
	The ‘pagoda theory’ says that you need to honour and respect your parents because they gave you birth and they raised you.
Poverty	
<i>Mentioned by nearly every respondent, but only as one factor not the main cause...!</i>	‘Family is very poor.’
	Because of poverty; the families were working in the fields and did not have enough money coming in.
	Not all is done maliciously: some parents really hope their daughter will marry a rich foreigner and then not only will the family be provided for but the girl will not have to live in the slum anymore.
	Not sure: not all are so poor or completely destitute. Often, it seems that they have a crisis in the family and then they take this drastic measure of selling a child for sex. For example, the family from Bodeng whose father got cancer. They were not so poor, but still they panicked and sold their daughter.
	One other reason might be the crowded homes -- in which in the very poor homes, everyone sleeps in one very small room -- there is no privacy -- and by going to a brothel - there is some kind of privacy and "more freedom."
Persuasion or trickery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ However they placed a bigger blame on skilled recruiters/traffickers who specifically target poor families with pretty girls to either persuade or trick them into entering the sex trade. ▪ Persuasion generally involves getting to know the family informally by chatting, asking about their circumstances, learning about their problems, etc. At the same time, they show off their wealth and offer to “help” them if needed. At this point they make a direct offer for the girl; if they are refused, they simply wait and often over time the family will need money for an emergency

REASON	DETAILS (ALL QUOTES)
	or need, and they will agree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trickery can involve loaning the family money and getting them into debt, then asking for the girl to pay off the debt. The recruiters/ traffickers are almost always women of VN, Kampuchea Krom or VN-Chinese descent. They are said to change their mobile phone numbers often to avoid tracking by the police.
Deceit (all are examples from girls originating in VN)	They were told that it was easy to get money in Cambodia.
	Some were tricked through someone reading their palms and predicting a future for them in Cambodia. (girls from VN)
	Other girls were girlfriends of gang members. The boyfriend would trick her and take her to the shop to sell her.
Debt	
	Debt to moneylenders.
	Debt is a big reason: families need to get out of debt. They cannot get credit or money in any other way. Maybe they are in debt because their business failed. They don't know how to run a business very well.
	Family's business was in debt
	Debt – family cannot pay back
	<i>“When you cannot repay your debts, you have to sell your daughters.”</i>
	Big debts from gambling.
	People in debt and they cannot pay back (first and strongest answer from HAGAR shelter girls).
Materialism	
	Want to be as rich as their neighbour.
	To buy extra things (ie. sale increased around Tet time; people buy new motorcycles, telephones, etc.)
	<i>“We have heard of a child being sold for a television! It is not a survival issue.”</i>
Employment	
	Unstable employment seems to be a compounding factor as well – lots of mobility, not sure when they will have income, etc.
	The parents don't have work, but they have children to feed and they need to pay the rent.
Family problems – dysfunction, poor relations, violence, etc.	
	<i>“They become prostitutes because they are poor, number one. Also because there are problems in the family.”</i>
	One day the girl was angry at her father; so she ran off. A lady took her home and gave her food and drink for two days. Then took her to a brothel to work as a CSW.
	Sometimes parents say “you are useless, why do you live here? Better for you to go work there and make some money”.
	I went into it by herself after being raped by her father and beaten by her mother. She went with a pimp that was in the community collecting women.
Spiritual/moral	
	People do not know God.
	People don't have good morals.
	People in this area (Chba Ampeu) are happy when they have a girl; they think, a girl is more valuable than a boy because she can be sold.
Cultural	
	<i>“It is their culture.”</i>
	<i>“They think that virginity is not so important.”</i>
	Don't care about tomorrow – living for today only.
	People living only for themselves, and without regard for the future of their children.
	Violence in the culture: no role models.
	No respect for women.

REASON	DETAILS (ALL QUOTES)
<i>Response from girls in shelter.</i>	Sometimes parents say “you are useless, why do you live here? Better for you to go work there and make some money”. The girl who answered this initially said that many hear it, maybe 40-50 %.
	One girl sold herself to help her family. She told her mother she would go to sell soup in a shop.
	“I had to sacrifice myself for my brother.” [brother is doing very well in school now, because he has sufficient clothes and food]
	Part of the problem is cultural and social: there is not very high regard for or respect for women in the culture. Since they are not valued, they can be used and sold.
	The sense of needing to honour parents is very strong [so girls feel they must do this because their parents say they should]: sad because it is a positive trait but it is exploited by people in a bad way.
	Girls force themselves to help their family.
	Girls feel and say that they have to ‘sacrifice’ (<i>hy sinh</i>) themselves for the good of the family. This means to ‘forget about yourself’, ‘for the sake of’. It is the same word used for soldiers who go into battle and know that they will die.
	Do not want to dishonour the family – have to contribute to family income; have to do what parents request; don’t want family to be looked down upon.
	Generally speaking, the informants believed that younger children do not want to enter the sex trade and must be forced or strongly persuaded, usually by the mother who will use guilt to get her daughter to agree to help her parents and family. Older children and young women are believed to more readily agree, particularly if they have been aware of the sex industry and see that it is lucrative. [Summary by technical advisor on male FGD]
The ‘glam factor’	
	Girls see that other girls in prostitution become glamorous and they want the same thing.
	...they see their friends who are prostitutes wearing make-up and pretty clothes and want that for themselves.
Lack of Law enforcement	
	The government needs to change – needs to have laws and enforce those laws.
Corruption	
	Too much corruption in the system – too many powerful people are making money!
Awareness (low level)	
	Parents are deceived by middlemen who say, you should at least get something for your daughter’s virginity before she loses it for nothing to her boyfriend! After you get the money, then you will also have your daughter and she can have her boyfriend!
	Low understanding and knowledge on the part of parents. Don’t really know what they are getting in to – don’t know that it will be hard for the daughter, can only see the good things like money.
	Lack of education – people come persuade the poor people to sell their children and the people do not know how to argue.
	Many people are ignorant, they do not understand about HIV/AIDS.
Ease, accessibility, ‘normalisation’	
	It is easy to sell! The opportunity is there so people do it.
	Seems to be a correlation between proximity to PNP and sale: ie. if you live in the city you are more likely to be sold.
	Said that it seems people in outlying village areas (‘rural’) are not selling their girls: it is restricted to the slum areas within PNP. “They are protected from the influence of the middle man saying your daughter is growing up, she will be playing around with boys anyway very soon so why not just sell her?”
	People imitate their neighbours: my neighbour sold a girl, I can too.
	Speaking specifically about K.11, the male FGD indicated: prostitution has taken such root in the community as to be considered a “normal” way of earning money. This is

REASON	DETAILS (ALL QUOTES)
	partly due to the fact that it is done so openly, and as a result people see prostitutes and pimps with nice clothes & jewellery, earning and spending money, etc. Associating prostitution with wealth has the effect of ‘normalising’ the community’s attitude towards the sex industry. Vietnamese normally look down on the sex trade and do not consider it a normal, positive way to earn money.
	“When you pour water on a seed, it grows! Maybe people have some small bad thing in their heart and then they see it around them so they agree to sell their own child.”
	“Living in the dark, you become like the dark. When dark is common, then all participate in it. When prostitution and sale of children is normal, then everyone does it.”
Results From Child FGD [Mekong girls, ages 13-17]	
	Reason is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ because of poverty; ▪ debt; ▪ some volunteer to do it b/c of poverty, to help parents; ▪ some intend just to sell virginity, but after a month or so they “go to far” and just continue; ▪ others have been cheated.

Annex 7: Summary of recommendations from Farrington

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
Child care (play group, daycare, nursery, childcare cooperative, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficult for both parent/s to go out and work if there are young children at home. ▪ Older kids prevented from going to school b/c they have to care for younger siblings. ▪ Young kids not getting adequate nutrition, stimulation, etc. ▪ Relieve parents of the burden of worry about the health and care of small children.
Low-interest Loans – way to deal with the debt problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Debt seems to be universal problem. ▪ Moneylenders charge exorbitant interest rates.
Support group for women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many women hold families together without men around: creating opportunities for them to share experiences may improve their self-confidence and help them see they are not alone. ▪ Might contribute to sense of hope and community.
Support & nurture for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cycle of poverty is likely to be continued in future generation/s without intervention for the children. ▪ Providing opportunities for: play, recreation, creative expression, development of self-care skills, self-esteem, social skills will assist overall development.
Education/school for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education no guarantee of decent employment: but without it, certainly little change of decent employment! ▪ Education is a basic right. ▪ Can create sense of hope and stimulate creativity.
Formation of children’s clubs or play groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alleviate some worry from parents. ▪ Help break the cycle of poverty. ▪ Address basic rights of children. ▪ Give something constructive to do so that they do not get into trouble (ie. drugs, crime, etc.).
Skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People lack skills to do other than manual labour. Giving new skills would increase opportunities for different kinds of employment. ▪ Would require wage replacement too, b/c families too poor to take time out for skills training.
Job creation / placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving skills is just a first step; helping people to either find jobs or to create the work for them may be necessary next step.
Reduce expenses (ie. communal garden so they can grow their own food)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People barely able to make ends meet: anything that can be done to reduce their need for money would help them improve quality of life. ▪ Rent is a huge portion of income drain as well – how to address that? Land ownership? Cooperative housing??
Improving services (ie. available from NGO’s...): get VN speaking workers, have separate programs for VN, work on NGO staff attitudes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are NGO projects that address most of the needs VN have – but not reaching VN because of prejudice from Khmer staff, lack of awareness about needs in VN community, lack of VN speaking staff, fear by NGO’s of working with VN who are mostly illegal immigrants (might jeopardise the NGO).
<p>PROCESSES: “It is important to develop any such plans in consultation with the community itself and it is also essential to understand the nature of Poipet in considering such plans.”</p>	

Annex 8: Comments from literature review

1.0 OVERVIEW

The literature provides some illumination on the general phenomenon of ‘commercial sex’ and in so doing provides an important context to the specific sub-issue of domestic trafficking of Vietnamese minors. To a lesser extent, there is some information available about ‘the Vietnamese reality’ in Cambodia that is also informative.

2.0 SEX SLAVES

A seminal piece of research is Louis Brown’s Sex Slaves: the trafficking of women in Asia (2000). Three major concepts that Brown clearly ‘exposed’ were the gender dimensions of the sex trade which necessarily incorporates issues of power wealth, cultural dimensions (the fact that the vast majority of customers in Asia are Asian men and not foreigners as previously assumed in international media, and how this can be so), and the fallacy of ‘free choice’.

Gender dimensions:

- “Laws prohibit slavery and in many countries in Asia they also outlaw human trafficking. The sexual exploitation of women in prostitution continues, however, because it is acceptable in cultural codes that are constructed upon two fundamental premises: the first is that females can be bought and sold and the second is that men have the right to buy sex. These are the laws that matter. Terrible poverty and acute disparities in wealth encourage these laws to be implemented with savagery.” (p. 209)

Power dimensions:

- “The people who endure the grossest forms of commercial sexual abuse throughout the world are those who are at the bottom of lots of different, and very complicated, hierarchies. They are female, they are from poor families in poor communities, and they belong to despised racial and ethnic minorities. They are abused...precisely, and simply, because they can be: they are society’s most vulnerable people.” (p. 3)

Cultural dimensions:

- In an Asian setting, family values mean stability of the family unit (p. 6). “In Asian societies, sex and the family are two almost wholly separate facets of a man’s life. Marriage, reproduction, and the family are economic and social contracts. Sex is a recreation [for men].”
- “Asia’s sexual codes are built upon the subjugation of women and the exploitation of the vulnerable. In this sense, Asia is just like anywhere else. But in Asia the level of hypocrisy is greater. More accurately, it is staggering.” (p. 253)
- “In Cambodia male sexual desire is considered insatiable. Prostitutes are needed as a sort of safety valve allowing men burdened by awesome libidos to have a sexual outlet - this will protect innocent women from being raped. In this context, prostitution changes from a social vice into a worthy social service.” (p. 131-132)

The notion of ‘choice’:

- “The further you descend in the prostitution hierarchy the less real and the less meaningful the element of choice actually becomes.” (p. 17)

- Women forced by extreme poverty
 - Prostitution is all about survival – get food to eat, etc. (p. 25)
 - Poor self-esteem
 - Enormously restricted life chances
- “Women are reared in poverty, socialised amidst discrimination, and conditioned to accept narrow choices.” (p. 29)

3.0 THE CONCEPT OF ‘CHOICE’

It is true that many women involved in selling commercial sex would indicate that they have ‘chosen’ this as a profession, career, income-generating activity and that no one ‘forced’ them to do this. But, factors influencing the ‘choice’ are often so strong as to at least cast doubt on the notion of ‘free choice’:

- Low skills, including literacy skills.
- Lack of formal education
- Lack of options for work for women.
- Family pressure to provide money.
- Personal sense of obligation to help family, inculcated since birth.
- Poverty and desperation.
- Poor modeling.
- Poor, very basic living conditions.

In this context, can a meaningful choice really be made?

- “The term voluntary is not meant to suggest that the women and girls are completely free to make choices. It is worth bearing in mind that family difficulties lack of opportunities, and other factors may force women and girls into migrating.” (Beesey, 2005:65)
 - “Although the term voluntary entry into prostitution suggest free will, it does not always mean a free choice among the economic alternatives for those women who decide themselves to enter prostitution. Most often these women entered because of the dire economic need within a specific social context.” (Derks: 1997:8)
 - “Common to all the country reports is an emphasis on recognizing the agency of women, their families and communities in making decisions to improve their lives, seek means of livelihood and find ways to escape poverty. [They can be motivated by] financial ambition, desire to get out of poverty, longing to escape family problems.”
- “...people make their own decisions, even if it is a combination of being ‘forced,’ ‘pushed by circumstances’, and ‘relatively free’. (Action Aid, 2005:28)

Annex 9: Intervention Framework

GENERAL INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

Prevention

- Outreach/awareness-raising (see list of topics in box below).
- Crisis intervention – NGO staff can intervene on case-by-case basis with individuals within their realm of influence (such as children in schools, as they have done)
- ‘Neighbourhood watch system’ / safe spaces.
- Telephone ‘hot-line’ services.
- Child care & early childhood development.
- Social /community development.
- Social services (health, education).
- Temporary shelter.
- Mediation services; counselling.

Protection

- Temporary shelter.
- Rescue.
- Health services (education, treatment).
- Legal services.

Victim support/services

- Shelter and accommodation.
- Counselling and recovery assistance.
- Health care and disease prevention.
- NFE/lifeskills/literacy.
- Vocational skills training.

Reintegration

- Income generation assistance (loans).
- Teaching about lifeskills, business management, other practical skills.
- Counselling & mediation for families.
- Sensitization of community about related issues.

Advocacy

- Enforcement of existing laws and regional agreements.
- Sensitization and training for those involved in law enforcement, about working with minorities.
- Passage of new trafficking law.

Topics for awareness raising & outreach:

- Basic human rights.
- Children’s rights.
- Women’s rights.
- International Protocol and Cambodian laws.
- Promoting positive attitudes toward girls and women.
- Domestic violence.
- Dependable information about sex work and implications.
- HIV/AIDS and STI information.

Annex 10: Defining a ‘Human Rights Framework’

The following explanation is excerpted from a document prepared by DanChurch Aid⁶⁷

Human rights are legitimate claims that all human beings have for living a life in dignity and in conditions of social justice. The persistent and systemic denial of basic freedoms and needs as experienced by the poor and the oppressed in many countries of the world are and should be recognised as significant human rights deficits. Poor people are poor because they have been denied or have been unable to access their rights and freedoms. Those marginalised in society or living in abject poverty rarely have either the social or political power to articulate their claims and entitlements. Through the language of human rights legitimate political claims can be articulated with a moral and normative authority which other approaches lack. It is a language, which has the potential to empower the poor and the marginalised through the recognition that they are entitled to the right to food, the right to health care or any other right.

The human rights legal framework of responsibility and accountability at national, regional and international levels is also a transformative factor in peoples’ struggles for increased access to resources and rights, as it can partially counter-balance political powerlessness and marginalisation by providing a set of international legal norms to which they can appeal, when national systems fail to respond.

Working in a rights framework reinforces the notion that development is not about providing welfare to passive recipients or beneficiaries but is about facilitating the securing of basic claims and entitlements of rights-holders. The focus must therefore be on supporting the poor, where necessary, in their processes of self-identification as rights-holders and in strengthening their active and meaningful participation in decisions that affect their lives.

⁶⁷ DanChurchAid’s Rights in Action paper, 2 June 2004.

Annex 11: Explanation of Lifeskills

The following explanation is excerpted from a UNICEF website⁶⁸:

There is no definitive list of life skills. The list below includes the psychosocial and interpersonal skills generally considered important. The choice of, and emphasis on, different skills will vary according to the topic and local conditions (e.g., decision-making may feature strongly in HIV/AIDS prevention whereas conflict management may be more prominent in a peace education program).

Though the list suggests these categories are distinct from each other, many skills are used simultaneously in practice. For example, decision-making often involves critical thinking (“what are my options?”) and values clarification (“what is important to me?”).

Ultimately, the interplay between the skills is what produces powerful behavioural outcomes, especially where this approach is supported by other strategies such as media, policies and health services.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal communication skills

- Verbal/Nonverbal communication
- Active listening
- Expressing feelings; giving feedback (without blaming) and receiving feedback

Negotiation/refusal skills

- Negotiation and conflict management
- Assertiveness skills
- Refusal skills

Empathy

- Ability to listen and understand another's needs and circumstances and express that understanding

Cooperation and Teamwork

- Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles
- Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group

Advocacy Skills

- Influencing skills & persuasion
- Networking and motivation skills

⁶⁸ http://www.unicef.org/lifskills/index_whichskills.html

Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills

Decision making / problem solving skills

- Information gathering skills
- Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others
- Determining alternative solutions to problems
- Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation

Critical thinking skills

- Analyzing peer and media influences
- Analyzing attitudes, values, social norms and beliefs and factors affecting these
- Identifying relevant information and information sources

Coping and Self-Management Skills

Skills for increasing internal locus of control

- Self esteem/confidence building skills
- Self awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, rights, strengths and weaknesses
- Goal setting skills
- Self evaluation / Self assessment / Self-monitoring skills

Skills for managing feelings

- Anger management
- Dealing with grief and anxiety
- Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse, trauma

Skills for managing stress

- Time management
- Positive thinking
- Relaxation techniques

Annex 12: Discussion about Cambodia’s Status as “Tier-3” Country

In June 2005, Cambodia was rated as one of the worst countries in the world in terms of trafficking and placed under Tier III in 2005 by the US State Department.

“Cambodia is a source, destination, and transit country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor. A significant number of Cambodian women and children are trafficked to Thailand and Malaysia for labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Cambodian men are primarily trafficked to Thailand for labor exploitation in the construction and agricultural sectors, particularly the fishing industry. Cambodian children are trafficked to Vietnam and Thailand to work as street beggars. Cambodia is a transit and destination point for women from Vietnam who are trafficked for prostitution.”⁶⁹

Trafficking in Persons Report for Cambodia (Tier 3)

Released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

June 3, 2005

The Government of Cambodia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. Cambodia is placed on Tier 3 for its lack of progress in combating severe forms of trafficking, particularly its failure to convict traffickers and public officials involved in trafficking. During the last year, the Cambodian Government failed to take effective action to ensure that those responsible for the raid on an NGO shelter for trafficking victims were held accountable and brought to justice. The Cambodian Government's failure to act calls into question Cambodia's commitment to combating human trafficking. Cambodia's anti-trafficking efforts remained hampered by systemic corruption and an ineffectual judicial system. The government must take aggressive measures to prosecute and convict traffickers and public officials found to be involved in trafficking, and confront the corruption in its judicial system that hampers prosecutions of traffickers.

The US State Department, mandated by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), monitors and evaluates governments' actions to combat trafficking based on compliance with the TVPRA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Governments that do comply are placed in Tier 1. For other countries, the State Department considers whether their governments made significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance. Governments that are making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards are placed in Tier 2. Those countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts do so are placed in Tier 3.

Finally, the Special Watch List criteria are considered and, if applicable, Tier 2 countries are placed on the Tier 2 Special Watch List. As required by the TVPA, in making determinations between Tiers 2 and 3, the Department considers the overall extent of human trafficking in the

⁶⁹ Trafficking in Persons Report, US State Department, 2005

country; the extent of government non-compliance with the minimum standards, particularly the extent to which government officials have participated in, facilitated, condoned, or are otherwise complicit in trafficking; and what measures are reasonable to bring the government into compliance with the minimum standards in light of the government’s resources and capabilities.

Increasing incidence of trafficking in persons including cross-border and regional destinations and sources has put trafficking on the agenda of the RGC, donors and many NGOs for many years. Although part of a global phenomenon, the greatest part of human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation however takes place within the country. Trafficking in women and children is a thriving business especially in Phnom Penh and increasingly so in urbanizing border areas such as Banteay Meanchey, Sihanoukville, Koh Kong followed by other fast growing provincial capitals like Siem Reap, and Battambang.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ MOWVA, 2002

Annex 13: Individual Stories

Story of one Vietnamese girl, aged 10, recently received into an after-care shelter in Phnom Penh in early 2006. She was born in Phnom Penh and has lived in that city all her life.

One girl, aged 10, who was rescued by the police from the house of a paedophile where she had been abused with other girls. She came from a family of traffickers; her aunt sold her to a brothel six months previously, with the agreement of her parents, who lived off her earnings. She lived in the brothel and was allowed monthly visits with her family.

The aunt had sold her own child, and most other children in the family were also sex workers. One cousin was returned from the brothel and the aunt was told she was too young. Another aunt in the family was powerful (her relative works in the government) and wealthy; when one neighbour had a disagreement with her, the aunt called for some soldiers who came and took that neighbour away; the neighbour was never seen again.

The girl's father is violent, and beat the girl regularly along with her younger brothers. He also beats the girl's mother; he has had many wives. After one fight the mother took her youngest child age 2 down to the river and drowned her.

The story of one girl, ‘W’, aged 12 who was admitted to an after-care shelter in April 2006.

Her father was a thief and his brother was a gangster. The father was killed by a large number of people who stabbed him 30 times and threw his body into the water. The girl's mother became depressed after this and began using drugs.

There were two daughters in the family. The older daughter began using drugs also. They had no money so the older sister became a sex worker. When they couldn't buy drugs they self-harmed, cutting themselves. They would send the younger daughter, ‘W’, out to buy drugs in the middle of the night. ‘W’ used drugs but not as frequently.

The mother was also a sex worker and would take ‘W’ to work with her at the brothel: the girl's stepfather is a pimp.

After ‘W’ was sold for the first time, she agreed to be a sex worker in order to support the family. She was recently rescued by police from the brothel and taken to an after-care centre.

Story of another trafficked girl, this one who was brought to Cambodia from Vietnam in 2005. She was 12 years old when she was sold into a brothel.

One girl, 12 years old, is Vietnamese recently rescued from a brothel in Phnom Penh where she was forced to serve up to eight men a day. Her family sold her into the brothel in order to pay for their debts. In Asia even young children are expected to help support their family.

At first the young girl was upset about being rescued from the brothel because she felt she has let her family down. She had no formal schooling, is unable to read and write but speaks Vietnamese and Khmer. The only future she saw was being in the brothel. It took her a while to get used to living in a foster home. But now she is doing much better.

Today the girl goes to the informal school proudly wearing her new school uniform which all the girls wear. She is studying in Grade 1. The staff members at the foster home are helping to build her confidence

and self-esteem by encouraging her to take up activities such as horse riding, sewing, and hairdressing.

Life can sometimes still be a struggle for this little girl. She still suffers from high anxiety, sleeplessness and fear, but experienced counsellors are assisting her to get through her trauma and to help her to begin to heal. For this girl, it is sadly not possible to go back to her home in Vietnam as her family is highly likely to resell her. Security for her safety is also a major issue but all steps are taken to provide 24 hour security in order to protect her. The foster home staff members hope that she will bond with her house mother and as she heals and learns to feel secure, that she will grow both educationally and emotionally into a happy healthy young woman.

Another trafficked girl: aged 11.

Another girl, 11 years old, was rescued from a brothel during a raid in the well known ‘red light’ district on the outskirts of Cambodia’s capital city. This girl is Vietnamese; she was trafficked to Cambodia, one of thousands of young Vietnamese girls from impoverished areas forcibly brought to Cambodia to work in brothels.

She was taken to an NGO shelter for trafficked and sexually abused girls. Reintegration back to her family was investigated but it was found she remained high risk for re-trafficking with her family involvement in commercial sex work and the decision was made that she was in need of long-term, secure care. The child was then brought to a specialized foster home. Here she is able to study at the program’s school everyday, learn computer skills and she is doing very well with English study.

The foster home’s staff has made contact with the girl’s family and she is able to visit her family at a neutral location once a month where she proudly shows them her certificates for computer learning and photos

of visits to a Phnom Penh water amusement park. She is an intelligent girl with leadership skills and huge potential for the future.

A story of violence

When one young Vietnamese girl’s mother died; and when her brother and sister departed to find a job, she was left to live with her father. She was only 13 years old when she was raped first by her cousin and then her father. She moved to another province to live with her aunt but once her aunt found out she had been raped the aunt told the girl to leave the house as she thought that the girl had now been tainted. The girl then asked a bus driver to take her to the province in the South of Cambodia where her brother and sister were working. Instead of taking her there he took her to a brothel where he sold her - she was only 14 years old.

The brothel owners treated her very badly. They frequently beat her and gave her electric shocks. When she refused to sleep with a man they would inject her with drugs, which would make her incoherent and compliant. Some days she was forced to see up to 10 men, some days she would fall unconscious from the drugs during the sex and some days she bled a lot.

One day a man visited the brothel and was kind to her. He told her he wanted to take her as his wife. He helped her to leave that place but instead of taking her to be his wife he sold her across to Thailand to another brothel. This situation was even more difficult than the first place. She was sold to a business man in Thailand. The man rented a house for her to live alone. He didn’t love her, he just took her for sex. One day she asked him if she could go to the market but she wasn’t allowed to go alone, instead he found a boy to go with her. She told the boy she felt sick and asked to go to the toilet. At that point she was able to run away.

When she returned to Cambodia she met another man and they had one child together. But her mother in law didn't like her and refused to have her as a daughter in law and the girl was asked to leave. The girl later found a job at a garment factory. Then she heard that her husband had taken another wife. After a while the garment factory closed because no orders were coming in. Then the young woman heard through another woman about a shelter in Phnom Penh that helped women in need like her.

She came to the shelter on her own accord. There she gave birth to her daughter. During her stay at the shelter she learned literacy and took the sewing skill training. However, when she finished learning she was unable to find a job because her child was still small. The shelter staff saw that her situation was very difficult and had pity on her because she had no parents or other

family to care for her. They gave her a job as a cleaner at the shelter so that she could earn a living. This young woman has a great desire to improve her reading and writing and to learn English. Before, when she couldn't read or write and it was very easy for her to put her trust in everyone, making her vulnerable. Now she feels she has changed a lot. She knows how to read and write and is more confident because of a lot of encouragement from the staff. She has hope again. Now she studies English and is top of her class. In the future she hopes she will be able to get a better job. Now she is saving for the education of her child. She wants to buy land and have a house of her own. She says it depends on how much she saves. “I have a new life now and I thank God for that.” She goes to a local Khmer church every Sunday.

“Another example: There's a family of Vietnamese immigrants living in a wooden shack next to abandoned railroad tracks on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. The mother, who says she is 70, though I peg her as closer to 50, has 13 children, none of whom have an income except for her two youngest daughters, whom she periodically sells into debt bondage as prostitutes. With this many kids and lots of grandkids and cousins, somebody is always getting sick or hurt and needing medical attention. So the mother borrows money from her neighbors at the going rate of interest, 20 percent a month. Soon she is way over her head in debt and has no way to pay it off except by selling her daughters again. She's been doing it since they were about 10. She recently sold the older one, her name is Nee, now 17 years old, to a brothel in Taiwan for \$1,000, and was getting ready to sell the youngest one, Auk, now 15 years old, in the same way for the same amount, but Auk ran away. Now, the mother says, she is worried sick about her.

Auk, hidden away in a house on the other side of town, is also worried and scared. If she refuses to do her mother's bidding, she will risk breaking her "mother-daughter relationship," essentially cutting herself off from her family forever, meaning she will live and die alone and then spend many rebirths in pain and suffering. Nee was a good girl and willingly left home to work in Taiwan. She calls Auk on her cell phone and says she doesn't know what city she's in and has to sleep with six or seven men a night and that her stomach hurts, but she's not going to come home until the \$1,000 is paid back because their mother needs her help. The mother says she cries for her daughter in Taiwan every night, but what can she do? She owes money that must be paid back, and there is no other way.

In a Brothel Atop Street 63: The intimate face of slavery in Cambodia -- where buying and selling children is a family business. Scott Carrier. Mother Jones. March/April 2006 Issue.

Annex 14: Question Framework Documents per Stakeholder

Annex 14.1 NGO’s Question Framework

Annex 14.2 Children - PRA Framework

Annex 14.3 Teachers Question Framework

Annex 14.4 Shelter Staff Framework

Annex 14.5 Case Study – girl/s in shelter

Annex 14.6 Pastors/church leaders Question Framework

Annex 14.7 PRA Framework: Community Socio-economic Picture

Annex 14.8 PRA Framework: Community Organisation

Annex 14.9 PRA Framework: Families in Community

Annex 14.10 PRA Framework: Girls in Shelter

Annex 14.11 PRA Framework: Women in Trade

Drawing from PRA exercise with girls in shelter. 2006.



Annex 15: Guide/Tools Utilised by Research Team

Annex 15.1.: Introduction to PRA with children

Annex 15.2: Instructions about conducting PRA with children

Annex 15.3.: Instructions for community PRA tools

Annex 15.4.: Male FGD Questions

Annex 15.5: Child PRA intro and instructions_VN

Annex 15.6: Community general tools_VN

Annex 15.7.: Community map_VN

Drawing – children’s PRA activities. 2006.

