ON THE BORDER

Exploring the Perspectives & Experiences of Street-Involved Children on the Thai-Cambodian Border

DAMNOKTOEK (Goutte d'Eau)

up!
to end violence

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Exploring the Perspectives & Experiences
of Street-Involved Children on the Thai-Cambodian Border

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A SPECIAL THANKS

Firstly, we would like to extend a warm thanks to the **young boys and girls involved in street-work in Poipet**. We are ever grateful to them for sharing their experiences and knowledge of their community, helping us to learn a little more about their lives and work. We dedicate this project to them.

To the both of these organizations, we at **up!** owe you a world of thanks.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, Poipet has become an area of Cambodia where street-living and working populations have uniquely proliferated. In part, this is due to the special economic and Free Trade Zone, which lies on the border between Cambodia and Thailand. Within areas such as these, governments allow for special business and trade laws in order to stimulate trade and job creation between countries (FIDA, 2008). This creates a fertile economic environment for large-scale foreign investment and free-trade across country borders. In Poipet, this area has become popular for casinos, tourism, and trade between the countries and also serves as the primary land-entry point between Thailand and Cambodia.

The promise of jobs and other economic opportunities within this area, and just over the border in Thailand have made Poipet an attractive destination for children and families from economically depressed areas throughout Cambodia. This is particularly relevant for the Cambodian provinces bordering Thailand (Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, and Oddar Meanchey), which are cited to have some of the highest poverty levels in the country (USAID, 2011). As a result, this area has become notorious for unsafe migration, trafficking, and various forms of child exploitation, which pose grave risks to the safety, development, and wellbeing of street-involved children on the border.

Despite this reality, there is a lack of basic information on the needs and vulnerabilities of these groups to such forms of migration and violence. Research into this issue has commonly focused its attention on household prevalence studies, which often belie the fact that a significant number of uniquely vulnerable children are not within households and do not regularly attend school, and are thus often absent from these large-scale prevalence studies. To address this issue, we have worked with local social workers and child protection experts to collect primary data from street-involved children through one on one conversations.

Thus, this project is intentionally smaller in scale. It aims to better preserve the individual voices of the children who find themselves, often both literally and figuratively, 'on the border', whether that be a geographical border between nations or a more symbolic border as they are marginalized within communities and from larger society. As we include their narratives, it is our hope that we are able to provide a deeper, more qualitative analysis of their perceptions and experiences on the streets.

We believe these findings to be useful, but ultimately insufficient. Much more work is yet to be done to understand the often hidden needs and vulnerabilities of such groups of children—particularly within the context of the rapidly developing ASEAN region. It is our desire that this brief baseline of information will aid in the development of new projects and initiatives and serve as a foundation for new and more nuanced research on vulnerable and/or overlooked people groups throughout the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The special economic and Free Trade Zone, which lies on the border between Poipet, Cambodia and Aranyaprathet, Thailand is an area where child street-involvement has uniquely proliferated. The area has become popular for casinos, tourism, and trade between the countries and serves as the primary land-entry point between Thailand and Cambodia.   Drawing children and families from economically depressed areas throughout Cambodia, the area has become synonymous for unsafe migration, trafficking, and various forms of exploitation, which pose grave risks to their safety, development, and wellbeing. Despite this reality, there is a lack of basic information on the needs and vulnerabilities of these groups. To address this issue, this study draws on primary data collected from 80 street-involved children living and/or working along the Thai-Cambodian border area Poipet and Aranyaprathet and offers an initial analysis of their key needs, vulnerabilities, and potential resiliencies.

This study employs both purposive and chain-referral sampling methodologies to explore the lives and experiences of 55 boys and 25 girls currently living and/or working within the Thai-Cambodian border area. Local social workers utilized semi-structured interviews with children and covered a variety of topics on the life, context, experiences, and perceptions of street-involved children with a particular focus on migration to Thailand, substance use, and experiences of various forms of violence. The study places a particular focus on the modes and frequency of migration and cross-border work among children and their parents and finds a strong majority of respondents who crossing the border into Thailand in search of various economic opportunities.

Children crossing the border for work into Thailand were found to have increased risk to various forms of violence, including arrest and detention. Children working on either side of the border cite high rates of physical, sexual, and emotional violence often perpetrated by a range of actors including: police, peers, adults, strangers and gang members. Sexual violence on the streets was cited by more than one-fourth of respondents and was nearly four times more prevalent among males in comparison to females. Despite this, neither males nor females seemed to perceive sexual violence as a danger for males. Drug use was also found to be a significant issue among street-involved boys in Poipet and were found to have a significant correlation with negative impacts on health, physical violence, sexual violence, and education. Drug use was also associated with higher experiences of physical violence.

This paper outlines a call to action for a more nuanced and informed discussion on the vulnerabilities of street-involved children and youth.   It aims to provide an information resource for social service providers, policy makers, child protection advocates, and social researchers working with these groups throughout the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Street-Involvement

According to UNICEF, a street-child is one for whom the street 'has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood' (Williams, 1993). This definition understands 'streets' in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wastelands, and so on, in addition to 'street' in the more traditional sense of the word (1993). Broadly, street-children are understood within two overlapping categories: children *on* the street and children *of* the street. Children on the street are those who are street-based, but commonly return home at night to sleep (Woan, et al., 2013). Children *of* the street are those who rarely, if ever, return home to sleep. It is generally agreed upon that the majority street-children in low and middle income countries are *on* the streets, as opposed to *of* the streets (2013).

The term street-children is somewhat difficult to define in that it represents a uniquely broad and diverse groups of people, often coming from equally diverse circumstances. In view of these efforts to identify and classify these groups of children, it should be recognized that the social realities that underpin these groups are diverse and nuanced. Thus, generalizing the experiences with one overarching term can be discriminatory and/or stigmatizing (OHCHR, 2011) and may remove the focus on other marginalized children (Panter-Brick, 2002). Emerging terms as 'street-active', 'street-connected', or 'street-involved' are increasingly used, and refer to a broader definition of "children for whom the street is a reference point and has a central role in their lives" (Thomas de Benitez, 2007). For the purposes of this study, the author has chosen to use the term 'street-involved' to describe study participants.

Street-Involved Children Globally

While the population of street-involved children around the world is unknown, current estimates suggest their numbers to be in the tens of millions— a number which is believed to be growing due to population growth and increases in migration and urbanization (UNICEF, 2012). These estimations are greatly contested, however, as these populations are frequently on the move, are often unregistered, and commonly exist outside of formal societal structures, making formal data collection difficult.

Poverty is commonly cited as a driving factor for street involvement. Although, the true causes or are often much more complex and involve both 'push' and 'pull' factors. As for push factors, family breakdown for violence within the family can be a significant trigger for street involvement among children and youth (Reale, 2008; Patricia, et al., 2011). In many cases, leaving a violent or unstable home environment can serve as a form of agency and resilience (Veeran, 2004). 'Pull factors' can also play a role in a child 'choosing' street involvement. These factors can include seeking adventure, excitement, and a sense of freedom or an escape from strict norms, rules, or family expectations (Butler, 2009).

One of the main assets of street-involved children is their ability to work and gain income. Most street children work in informal jobs in a wide range of areas including begging, washing windshields, scavenging, rag picking, street-vending, etc. At times, street-involved children may manage multiple and diverse jobs throughout a single day in response to shifting demands from morning until night (Thomas de Benítez, 2011). Employment in this context is generally insecure with income fluctuating from day-to-day, which makes planning for the future difficult. Many street-involved youth are often at high-risk to be exploited and trafficked, which is facilitated by a lack of close family ties and/or being young in age.

Street-Involved Children in SE Asia

The wide majority of the world's street-involved children are from low and middle income countries, such as those within the Southeast Asia region. Despite this reality, the overwhelming majority of research on street-involved children and youth has been conducted in high-income nations, such as the US, UK, and various European cities (Woan, et al., 2013).

Certain cultural factors within the SE Asia region can lead to an increased incidence of street-involvement among children in some families. In most Southeast Asian societies, older children carry a social obligation to contribute to their families' earnings. Among families living in poverty, child street-involvement can be commonplace and even socially expected within families. In some cases, the importance of family responsibility and fulfilling the duty of caring for one's parents and siblings also leads to children making independent decisions to migrate in search of economic opportunities (Beazley, 2003). Within Cambodia, it is difficult to adequately discuss street-involved children without also discussing child migration. Street children are typically found in urban areas, often having migrated from provinces in hopes of finding better economic and employment opportunities (Damnok Toek, 2013). In particular, the Cambodian provinces bordering Thailand (Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Oddar Meanchey) are cited to have some of the highest poverty levels in the country. This is suggested to have a direct impact on the high migration rates for this area, as well as the school dropout rates, which are cited to be among some of the highest in the nation (USAID, 2011). Within some villages in this area, as many as 78% of families are cited to have at least one member who has migrated to Thailand (ADIC, 2003).

Poipet and Its Socio-Economic Context

Poipet is located in the Northwest of Cambodia and serves as the main land-border crossing into Thailand from Cambodia. A recent demographic study using, capture-recapture research methods estimates 636 children between the ages of 13 and 17 to be sleeping directly on the streets in Poipet (Stark, et al., 2017), with significantly more who are street-based, but who may return to a home regularly or semi-regularly. Given the city's easy access to Thailand, Poipet has become a key destination for economically depressed Cambodians and their children, offering the hope of earning from the thriving

cross-border trade, and the many Hotels and Casinos within the Thai–Cambodian border area (Damnok-Toek, 2013). Despite these perceptions, economic opportunities for unskilled laborers are scarce—a reality which often leaves migrants in unstable economic conditions (2013). Within the inter-border area between Cambodian and Thailand is a Special Economic Free Trade Zone (FTZ), which is an area in which the Cambodian and Thai governments allow for special business and trade laws to stimulate business and trade. Zones such as these have proliferated in recent years to promote economic growth, improve industrial competition, and to attract foreign investment (FIAS, 2008). The FTZ that lies between Cambodia and Thailand has become popular for casinos, tourism, and trade between the countries and has attracted children and families from economically depressed areas who migrate looking for economic advancement. Despite the economic hopes upon which many of these zones are built, FTZ's have been criticized for numerous negative social and economic impacts including various forms of labor exploitation and poor working conditions (2008), as well as making a notable contribution to the outgrowth of child sexual exploitation and abuse among children living and working within these contexts (ECPAT, 2016).

As the development community has become increasingly aware of children's vulnerability to violence and exploitation in the Mekong region, there has been a greater number of studies looking at children's experiences of violence within homes and schools, such as the UNICEF Violence Against Children (VAC) surveys in Cambodia (2013; 2004). In the most recent VAC survey more than half of both males and females ages 18-24 cite physical violence and more than 4% of females and 5% of males cite experiences of sexual violence before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2013). While these studies can be helpful, large studies such as these are often driven by household surveys or interviews among school children, which may overlook people outside of schools, those who are unregistered, or those who do not live in houses. Recent studies looking at the experiences of such groups in Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines have found rates of physical, sexual, and emotional violence to be significantly higher than indicated within large-scale demographic surveys. One study, looking at street-involved children in Kampong Som (2014) finds 38% of street-involved males to cite experiences of sexual violence on the street (Davis & Miles, 2014), nearly 33% higher than those reflected within demographic surveys.

Labor Exploitation

The Thai city of Aranyaprathet (adjacent to Poipet) serves as the entry point for many Cambodian adolescents migrating into Thailand in search of work (Capaldi, 2014). These groups are often found working in Thailand's agricultural and fishing industries, or its rapidly growing construction sector, often helping to support family members still in the Cambodian province (2014). In a study looking at 76 child migrants to Thailand (Cambodian and Burmese), all Cambodian independent child migrants were found to have travelled into Thailand without the correct legal status to work (2014). Among some of the issues reported among migrants were harsh working conditions, not being paid in full, physical violence, and overworking (York, 2013). Further, lacking proper legal documentation can greatly increase the vulnerabilities of migrant laborers, as such groups are less likely to seek

assistance in cases where they are mistreated (Walsh, 2011). In one analysis involving the largest systematic consecutive sample of trafficked people collected to date, focusing on the Mekong Subregion, 14.2% of the sample were under the age of 18, and 6.1% were under the age of 14 (Pocock, et al., 2016). Males within this sample were found to be particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation, with men making up to two-thirds of trafficked and forced laborers—many of whom suffer abuse and extreme occupational hazards (2016).

Sexual Exploitation

For many street-involved children, the exchange of sex for money or other forms of remuneration can become a necessary means for survival (Marshall, et al., 2009). Such forms of "survival sex" often happen within a variety of contexts including, sexual victimization, forced or coercive sex, and oppressive power dynamics (Tyler, et al., 2006). Until recently, any in-depth research on this topic in low-income countries, such as Cambodia, has been virtually non-existent (2009). Despite the paucity of research, Asia is cited to have some of the highest rates of child sexual exploitation in the world (UNICEF, 2001; Ward, 2004), an issue which is commonly associated with travel and tourism. The association of sexual exploitation with travel and tourism is especially relevant in southeast Asia as it is the region in which the phenomenon first became globally known (ECPAT, 2016). While Cambodia and Thailand are understood as key destinations for traveling offenders, local offenders are often overlooked by national and international efforts against child sexual expectation (ECPAT, 2016). Recent baseline studies on street-involved Children in Kampong Som (Sihanoukville), Cambodia finds 18% of boys and 14% of girls citing providing sexual services to adults in exchange for money, food, or other forms of remuneration (Davis & Miles, 2014; 2017). In a similar study in Manila, Philippines, more than one-fourth of boys disclosed the same (Davis & Miles, 2015).

In Cambodia, the commercial sexual exploitation of children is understood to occur within one of two categories. The first of these is establishment-based sexual exploitation, which often occurs in brothels, beer gardens, KTV, and massage establishments (Keane, 2006). This has significantly reduced for girls in the past few years, except in KTV bars where 9% were found to be under 18 years of age (IJM, 2013). Secondly, street-based or opportunistic sexual exploitation, is often facilitated personally by a sex offender or an intermediary, who approach children directly on the streets, or in other public areas for the purpose of starting a relationship with the child which will ultimately lead to sexual abuse (2006). This second type of exploitation is often much more difficult to monitor as the children and the locations where the abuse takes place commonly fluctuate.

Substance Use

Drug use and harmful alcohol consumption significantly increases the risks faced by children on the street due to a greater likelihood of participation in risk-taking behaviours (NIDA, 2003). These risks are further increase due to a lack of access to information on safer sex and harm reduction during substance use considerably increase the threat of HIV/AIDS transmission (2013). In a systematic literature review of 108 articles on

street-involved children in low and middle-income nations, substance use was the most common issue discussed with usage prevalence rates ranging from 35%-100% (Moan, et al., 2013b). Common factors associated with substance use among street-involved children were: being male, being older in age, lacking family contact, depression, and previous experiences of abuse (2013b).

Research also suggests a significant link between drug use and sexual abuse. The impact of childhood sexual abuse is devastating and can include post-traumatic stress disorder, increased anxiety, depression, sexual promiscuity, or increased rates of suicide (Paolucci, Genuis & Violato, 2001). In this context, survivors have been found to resort to drug use as a coping mechanism, or form of "emotional avoidance" to numb the pain of the traumatic experience (Polusny and Follette, 1995 cited in Lalor & McElvaney, 2010, p.13). This connection was also found in previous research among street-involved children in Chiang Mai (Davis, Fiss, & Miles, 2016). In this study, a disproportionately high amount of street-living youth were found to have resorted to drug use when compared to non street-living youth. The harsh realities of living on the street, frequent and repetitive exposure to stress, pressure to tolerate hard jobs, a deficit of emotional support and sense of belonging combined with street-life subculture and drug-induced group rituals are all contributing factors to the high rate of drug use when living on the street (2016).

Gender and Vulnerability

Boys have been found to disproportionately outnumber girls among street-involved children—particularly in developing countries—where greater than 70% of street-working children are understood to be male (WHO, 2000). Recent prevalence studies on childhood experiences of violence in Cambodia and the Philippines (including sexual, emotional, and physical forms of violence) have shown boys to be significantly more vulnerable to some forms of violence in comparison with girls (VAC-Cambodia, 2013; VAC-Philippines, 2016). Further, qualitative studies in the same region have found street-involved males to be almost twice as likely to experience sexual violence, in comparison with street-involved females (Davis et al, 2017; Davis, Fiss, & Miles, 2016). In addition, males are known for demonstrating higher levels of self-confidence, risk taking behaviors and having more outgoing personalities within many cultures, which can increase their vulnerabilities to unsafe migration and violence (Capaldi, 2014).

Looking particularly at sexual violence, the sexual abuse of boys is often overlooked within families and communities in Southeast Asia, due to a traditional narrative which seems to preclude that males are not at risk of abuse or exploitation (Frederick, 2010). Boys are often assumed to be capable of protecting themselves and the existence of male sexual abuse is often ignored or denied. Research on sexual violence against males in transitional contexts echoes a similar reality that even when male victims come forward to report sexual violence, the sexual nature of their violence tends to be ignored, often miscoding sexual violence as physical forms of violence, even when similar violations against women are recognized as sexual (ICJT, 2015). These assumptions about male resilience can reinforce the idea that males are inherently "stronger" and thus more psychologically resilient, more

able to protect themselves, and able to recover more easily from trauma than adolescent girls (2010:7). As a result, families and communities are often less vigilant with boys (2010) and cases of abuse against boys are less likely to be reported (Frederick, 2010; Holmes, et al., 1997).

In addition, a 2003 study analyzes the phenomenon of higher suicide and premature death rates among males and finds traditional forms of masculinity to be a key risk factor (Möller-Leimkühler, 2003). This reality is echoed in a 2007 World Health Organization report, which finds that males who have current food insecurity, high levels of work stress, unemployment, or have sex with other men, are more likely to suffer from depression in comparison with their female counterparts, indicating specifically gendered health risks for males (WHO, 2007).

Gangs and Social Identity

Street-involved children are also an easy prey for gangs and violent groups. Despite having families, though relations are often fluid and mobile, attempts to recreate family structures and strong social ties with peers on the streets that substitute family are usual. This can be done by joining a gang, living in groups, or creating friendships through informal networks of other street children. Identifying to a group enables street-connected youth not only to gain status and satisfy their need for belonging, but also to find security, physical protection and emotional support (UMP, 2000).

For instance, street-involved children in Yogyarta, Indonesia, created a specific subculture, with a formal structure, norms and values called "Tikyan". This comprises codes on aspects of life as diverse as hierarchy in work, body art, and drug use, to a range of common clothing, attitudes and vocabulary. Establishing a new identity once on the street enables to transcend the stigmatising label of 'street child', and give positive meaning to often-difficult experiences by providing a sense of belonging. This survival strategy can also empower youth. In effect, street-children in Yogyarta were able to demonstrate active resistance to state control and negative stereotypes by re-interpreting their realities in a more positive light through a newfound valued identity (Beazley, 2003).

METHODS

Research Sampling

This study employs both purposive and chain-referral sampling methodologies to conduct 80 semi-structured interviews with Cambodian street-involved children on and around the Thai-Cambodian border in Poipet, Cambodia. The interviews were conducted with 55 boys and 25 girls living and/or working on the streets within five key areas: Long Kleur Market (Thailand), Kbhal Spean, Poipet Village, Phsar Akeak (Paliliay 1), and Phsar Kandal Village. The interviews were conducted by for social work professionals from Damnok Toek[1] (DT), Cambodian organization and ChildSafe[2] member which has worked with vulnerable children and their families in Poipet since 2003.

Prior to collecting data, extensive fieldwork was conducted with local experts from DT to gain a more full understanding of the context and experiences of local street-based populations and the work already being done with these groups. In addition to this, local mapping was conducted with the data collection team and field experts from Damnok Toek in order to establish key sectors where street-involved children could be found, as well as basic information of their demographics. Based upon this mapping, target sample sizes for location and gender were created. The male to female ratio in this study [55 boys to 25 girls] reflects the findings of this studies mapping, and is similarly reflected in recent national enumeration of street living in youth in Cambodia. This study finds males to comprise 64.32% of street living youth aged 13 to 17 (Stark, et al., 2017).

Inclusion Criteria

This study required six key criteria for inclusion in the study's sampling. For inclusion, all respondents needed to be:

1. Street-working or street-living girls or boys
2. Aged between 10 and 18 years old
3. Not living in a residential structure (NGO or government) nor benefiting from close case management from any social service provider
4. Freely consenting to participate
5. Not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the interview
6. Having no identified risk of harm by participation in the interview.

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[1] For more information on Damnok Toek and there work in Cambodia, see:
http://www.damnoktoek.org/html/
[2] ChildSafe a global child protection movement. For more information see:
http://thinkchildsafe.org/

Ethical Considerations

All interviewers were practicing social workers from the local community and underwent ethical and research-focused child protection training with a licensed child trauma psychologist based on UNIAP Ethical Guidelines for Human Trafficking Research (2008) prior to beginning data collection. During this training, role-playing and field testing exercises were utilized in order to familiarize interviewers with the research instrument, to aid them in empathizing them with the feelings of the child being ask questions, and to prepare them for situations in which they would need to make referrals for respondents.

During data collection, each interview was conducted as a semi-private dialogue between the respondent and social worker, to which each respondents gave verbal and written consent. Interviews were conducted in prearranged, safe locations which were identified through fieldwork prior to data gathering. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose and the nature of the questions and assured confidentiality. Respondents were informed that their names would never be recorded on the research form and that they would be able to stop the interview at anytime if they feel uncomfortable, or skip any question. Lastly, for respondents needing social services, legal protection, or health services either a direct referral was made, or referral information was made available.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study was a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering a variety of topics the life, context, and experiences of street-involved children with a particular focus on migration to Thailand, substance use, and experiences of violence. The initial foci for this baseline study were decided as an agreement between leadership of DT and up! International.

Prior to creating the research instrument, social workers from DT, along with the principal investigator, conducted focus group discussions street-involved children from Poipet. Children were asked questions about when, how, and why they cross the border to Thailand, including their perceptions of life and work in both Cambodia and Thailand. In addition to migration, children discussed what kinds of violence they see happening on the streets, where it happens, and why they think it exists, among other discussions. These initial conversations help the research team to develop a better understanding of children's understanding of and interaction with migration, violence, and substance abuse within their communities.

Based upon these focus group discussions, the research team develop unique sections of the research instruments focusing on migration, street-involvement, and substance use catered to the local context. Working with social workers from DT, other sections of the research instrument were adapted for the local context from previous research instruments used to gather holistic baselines of information from street-involved children (See: Miles & Davis, 2014; Miles & Davis, 2015; Miles & Davis, 2016).

This initial draft instrument was translated into Khmer, first by an external translator, then adapted and carefully readjusted by the team of social workers from DT. This process was crucial, as the staff's knowledge and experiences with street-involved children, familiarity with language used on the streets, and their input on specific areas of youth's lives was invaluable. This participative process also enabled an increased ownership of the questionnaire and of the research project by the team and increased self-confidence prior to interviews. Reviewing the instrument multiple times with the team of interviewers was additionally key to ensure clarity, testing relevance, order of questions, and levels of comfort among the interviewers, whilst specifically taking in account cultural and linguistic subtleties unknown to the research coordinators who were not Khmer.

Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative, were used during the data interpretation. The data was entered in the IBM SPSS software that is used for statistical analysis. The qualitative answers were also faithfully transcribed. On open-ended questions, a qualitative approach was used to analyze the data, whereby the lead researcher systematically categorized answers and identified common emerging groups and themes. Questions were specifically cross-tabulated for this paper to further understand the experiences of violence amongst the respondents. Data is presented with emphasis on gender-disaggregated information, as a main focus of this paper is uncovering boys' and girls' differences and commonalities in respect to violence on the streets.

RESULTS

Demographics

Age

Ages of respondents ranged 10 years, the youngest being eight years of age and the oldest being 18, with an average age of 12.8 years.   Males and females were found to have nearly identical ages, with males citing an average age of 12.9 years and females citing an average age of 12.3 years. Further, among both males and females, the youngest was eight years of age and the oldest was 18.

Parents & Caretakers

More than one third of respondents [35%] cite that at least one of their parents had died, with 29% of respondents citing to have lost a father. The majority, 53 people or 73%, cite living with at least one biological parent. This was found to be more common among females [84%] in comparison with males [67%].

The research understands that living with a particular person may not necessarily imply that this person also cares for them. Thus, respondents were asked about the main person who looks after them. This was an open ended question and respondents were able to respond with any person or a combination of persons as necessary. The responses were then later broken into categories and analyzed. Slightly more than one third of respondents say that they are taken care of by both the mother and the father [26 people or 36%]. Slightly less than one third cite that they are taken care of only by their mother [23 people or 30%]. To a lesser extent, respondents are taken care of by a grandparent [12 people or 16%], or a father [5 people or 6%]. The responses included three people who were taken care of by friends, to people who were taken care of by gang members, two people who are taken care of my other relatives, one person who is taken care of by siblings, and one person who cites that he's taken care of by no one.

Females note that they see their caretakers more regularly in comparison with males, with 100% of females citing that they see their caretaker every day. In contrast, only 75% of males describe seeing their caretaker every day. Among those who do not see their caretaker every day, three males [6% of males] cite they see their caretaker every couple of days, three males [6% of males] cite they see their caretaker once a week, and four males [8% of males] cite they see their caretaker every couple of weeks.

Education

Children were asked about when they last attended school. Seventy-five percent cite that they haven't attended school Home during the current school year. With 9% siding that they attended school last year, 32% citing that they attended school more than one year ago and 25% citing that they have never attended school. School enrollment was similar between males and females, however among those who were not currently attending school, females were slightly more likely to have never attended school [36% of females, in comparison with 20% of males]. Further, nearly all respondents [96%], cite that the last grade of school that they had completed was at the primary level. Only two respondents indicate enrollment in a secondary level education.

Street-involvement

Housing

Due to the diversity of street-involved groups and their often inconsistent housing arrangements, simply asking respondents where they sleep at night may not adequately capture the respondents vulnerabilities. In order to accommodate this diversity the research asked to respondents a series of qualifying questions about where they sleep, how often they sleep there, why they sleep there, where else they sleep, as well as their personal feelings while sleeping in these various locations.

Initially, the majority of respondents, 54 people or 72%, cite that they lived in a house with family members or a carer. Beyond this, 12% cite that they live in a house with people who are not their family. Only 16% cited sleeping on the streets in this initial question. However, among those who cite sleeping in houses, only 80% say they sleep there regularly. Eleven percent say that they sleep there 4-6 nights a week and 9% say that they sleep there only

1-3 nights in a week. Asked where else they commonly sleep, 11 cite sleeping on the streets, three cite sleeping in a drop-in center, and two cite sleeping with extended family members.

Taking these inconsistencies into account, 33% of respondents sleep on the streets at least sometimes—nearly double the number of respondents who initially cited sleeping on the street. Sleeping on the streets is nearly twice as common among males with 40% of males (19 people) sleeping on the streets at least sometimes, in comparison to 20% among females (5 people). Among those who sometimes sleep on the streets, four cite that they do this because of work—describing that it is sometimes too late to go home once they have finished their work. Three describe sleeping on the streets in order to avoid violence at home, while another three cite having nowhere else to sleep. Two respondents cite that being high from drug use prevents them from returning home, and another cite that insufficient (broken or damp) housing forces them to sleep on the street, among other reasons.

Sleeping on the streets at least sometimes:

Males

40%
(19 people)

Females

20%
(5 people)

→ Because of work (4)
Nowhere to sleep (3)
Violence at home (3)
Avoiding home (2)
Due to being high (2)
Insufficient Housing (2)
Friends (1)

Income Generation

Children were found engaging in a diverse range of jobs on the street. Begging was the most common type of work mentioned with slightly over half of children [53%] citing to engage in this type of work. Following begging, scavenging through trash for recyclable materials was cited amongst slightly more than one-in-five respondents [21%]. Pulling carts across the border was mentioned by six [8%] children and selling items along the streets were mentioned by another six [8%] children. To a lesser extent 'construction' was mentioned by two children, 'farming' by two children, collecting grasshoppers by two children, 'carrying pigs' by one child, and 'childcare' by another one child. While begging and scavenging were common among both males and females, other areas of work seemed to be more gender-specific, such as cart pulling for males and street-selling (often with their parents or carers) among females.

Overall, children cited working for an average of 6.8 hours a day, the minimum being 1.5 hours and the maximum 16 hours. While male and female average working hours were

similar, some of the longest working hours were cited among males with one male citing to work around 16 hours per day.

Interviewers asked children to describe both the good and bad things that they see about street-involvement. This was done so as to take into account not only push factors leading children into street involvement, but also pull factors that may incentivize these groups to stay on the street. Considering the positive things about street involvement, children saw the ability to earn money as a key reason for staying on the street among slightly more than half of children [53%]. This response was more commonly mentioned among females [65%] in comparison to males [48%]. Secondly, 18 children [27%] cited 'nothing' was good about streets involvement. To a lesser extent, children mentioned social relationships and freedom as positive aspects of street-involvement.
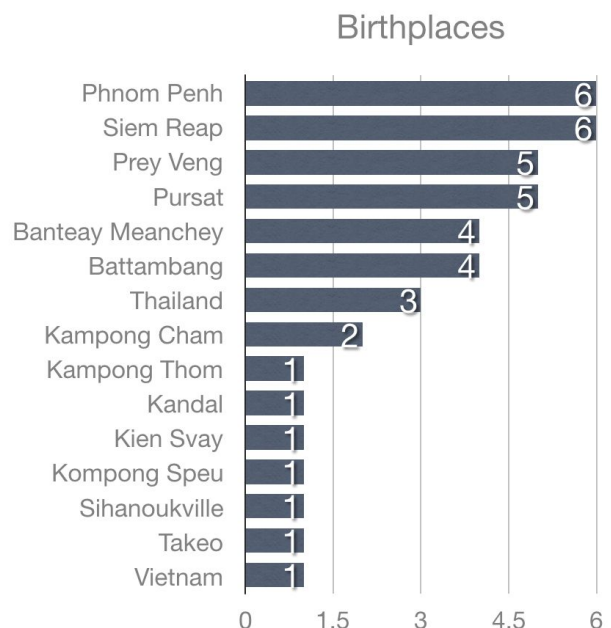
Considering the negative aspects street-involvement, children gave a diversity of responses. Physical violence was a key negative aspect of street involvement, mentioned by 15 children [30%]. This was more commonly mentioned among males, with 12 males [34%] citing physical violence and three females [20%] citing the same. Apart from physical violence, seven children [14%] cite "being arrested" as a negative aspect of street involvement. This was more commonly mentioned among females [27%, in comparison with males [9%]. Beyond this, six children [12%] cite that having no education is a negative aspect. This is more commonly mentioned among females [27%], in comparison with males [6%]. To a lesser extent, 'being robbed' was mentioned by 9% [all males], 'hot weather' was mentioned by 9% [all males], 'no money' was mentioned by 9% [all males], and 'verbal violence' was mentioned by 9% [all males]. Other categories include: 'discrimination', 'drug use', 'embarrassment', 'hard work', 'hunger', and 'poor sleep'.

Migration

Migration to Poipet

The majority of respondents [63%] were born outside of Poipet and had migrated to the area. Migration to the Poipet area from elsewhere was more common among females (78%) in comparison with males (55%). Most commonly, respondents were born in other Cambodian provinces, including Phnom Penh (6 people), Siem Reap (6 people), Prey Veng (5 people), Pursat (5 people), Banteay Meanchey (4 people), Battambang (4 people), and Kampong Cham (3 people) among others (6 people). Four respondents were born outside of Cambodia, including three in Thailand and one in Vietnam.

Birthplaces

Birthplace	Count
Phnom Penh	6
Siem Reap	6
Prey Veng	5
Pursat	5
Banteay Meanchey	4
Battambang	4
Thailand	3
Kampong Cham	2
Kampong Thom	1
Kandal	1
Kien Svay	1
Kompong Speu	1
Sihanoukville	1
Takeo	1
Vietnam	1

On average respondents had been living in the Poipet area for 6.9 years, the shortest amount of time since migration was one month and the longest amount of time was 18 years. Males, on average, cited to have migrated to Poipet more recently than females (an average of 4.6 years in comparison to 7.5 years).

Most commonly, respondents cite that they migrated to Poipet for begging [20 people or 48%] or to look for employment [12 people or 29%], indicating that poverty may be a driver for migration. Other reasons for migration mention include debt [3 people], and poverty [3 people], among others. The majority [77%] cite that they migrated with their immediate family. Others cite migrating with extended family [13%], with siblings [4%], alone [4%], or with friends [2%].

Crossing the border

A key focus of interviews involved developing an understanding of the vulnerabilities involved with crossing the border for work in Thailand. Key questions asked during this section involved why they cross the border, who they crossed with, how long they stayed, when they crossed, and by what means they crossed— legal or illegal.

Nearly one-third of respondents report that they never cross the border to Thailand, but rather are involved in street-work on the Cambodian side of the border. For the remaining majority, 23 respondents [31% of all respondents] cross with a family member, 21 respondents [28% of all respondents] crossed with a friend, four respondents cross alone, and four cross with 'someone else'.

Among those who do cross the border, the majority or 29 respondents [39%] cite crossing the border quote 'every once in awhile', with similar representations from males and females [39% and 38%, respectively]. Eight [11%] cite that they cross the border 'every day'— all of whom were male. Ten people [13%] of respondents cite that they cross the border a 'few times a week' with similar representations of both males and females [12% and 17%, respectively]. Only six people [8%] cite that they cross the border quote a few times a month"— cited by three males and three females.
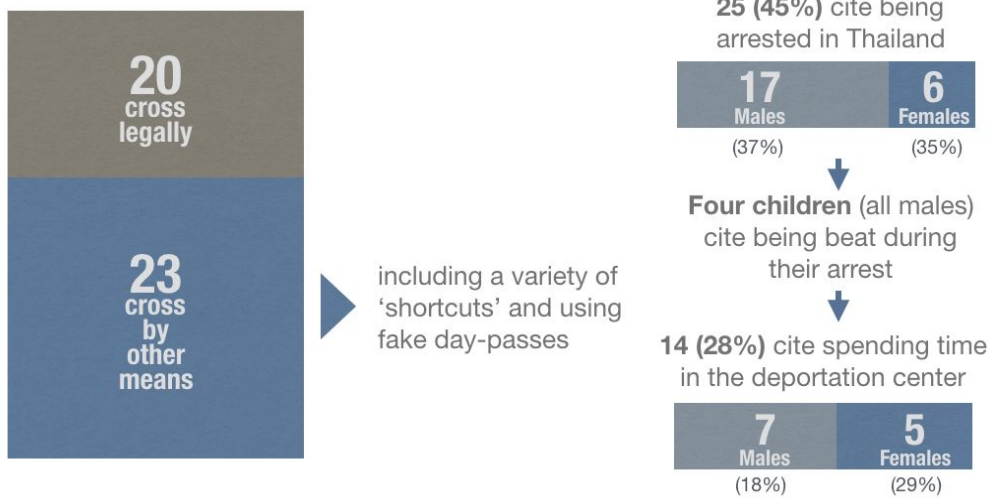
Why do you cross the border to Thailand?

2% 2%
2%

Work / Find money
94%

* Nearly all cross the border for income generation.

* Females seem more likely to migrate to do specific work (80%) in comparison with males (48%)

* Male are more likely to cite going "in search of money" (48%) in comparison with females (7%).

● Work / Find money
● Accompanying parent
● Hanging out
● Looking for work

The stated purpose for crossing the border into Thailand seems to be unanimous with nearly all respondents [45 people or 94%] crossing the border for income generation. Among those who crossed the border for work, females seem more likely to migrate to do specific work with 80% citing a variety of tasks or jobs that they would do across the border in order to earn money. Males, on the other hand tended to be more vague in their responses with 48% citing that they crossed the border "in search of money".

How do you cross the border?

20
cross legally

23
cross by other means

including a variety of 'shortcuts' and using fake day-passes

25 (45%) cite being arrested in Thailand

17 Males	6 Females
(37%)	(35%)

Four children (all males) cite being beat during their arrest

14 (28%) cite spending time in the deportation center

7 Males	5 Females
(18%)	(29%)

Among those who crossed the border, only 21 people [45%] report crossing the border through the 'legal' entrance into Thailand. Despite entering Thailand through the quote 'legal' entrance, it is uncertain as to whether these respondents actually enter legally. One respondent of the group who uses the legal entrance, cites that she passes through the legal entrance by using a fake day pass. Anecdotal information from field practitioners indicates that the usage of fake passes may be more common than is indicated by this data. Crossing the border legally involves acquiring a day pass to cross the border (about 0.25 USD) which can be used for one day, or possessing other official documentation which allows you to enter Thailand for a longer period of time.

Parent migration

The majority, or 60% of respondents [43 people], cite that their parents migrate to Thailand for work. In all but three cases, the parents migrate and leave the children behind in Cambodia. Among those whose parents migrate for work, a wide variety of income generating activities are described. Among the more commonly described is construction, cited by eight people. Five respondents [14%] cite their parents engage in begging or scavenging in Thailand and another five [14%] cite that their parents pull carts—which are also some of the most commonly described income generating activities for children as well. Further, five children [14%] cite that their parents pick fruits and vegetables in Thailand, and four [11%] cite that their parents gut fish. To a lesser extent, three children [8%] cite that their parents prepare insects to sell, three [8%] engage in selling various items, two [6%] oversee child beggars, and one [3%] works as a butcher.

When migrating to Thailand for work, children described their parents to be gone for a varying lengths of time. For the majority of respondents, 11 people [30%], their parents are gone only during the day and return in the evenings. Yet, for another significant group of respondents, 10 people are 27%, their parents seemed to be gone indefinitely with

respondents indicating that they had left a long time ago and did not give a definitive time as to when their parents may return. Similar to this group, four people [11%] cite that their parents left more than one year ago and give no definite time as to when they may be back. For the remainder of respondent's parents, six people [16%] cite that their parents visit from Thailand on a yearly basis, four people [11%] cite their parents are gone for 1-6 months at a time, while two respondents [5%] cite that their parents are just gone for a few days at a time.

Given the sometimes long absences of parents, it was significant to find out who takes care of respondents while their parents are away. For 15 respondents [41%], there is another parent who looks after the child, 12 people [32%] cite that they are taken care of by a grandparent or a sibling, and eight people [22%] cite that they are left on their own while their parents are gone.

Interviewers asked respondents what they believe their parents needed the most. While overall responses were diverse, the majority of responses involved meeting their family's basic survival needs, with 20 people [61%] citing that the parents needed money, four people [12%] citing a need for food and the remainder citing items such as debt relief [one person], milk for a baby [one person], a sugarcane press [one person], assistance in opening a business [one person], and help finding work [one person].

Violence

Physical Violence

Prior to discussing the respondents' personal experiences of physical violence, the research team first wanted to understand the level to which children witness violence on the street. A strong majority of respondents, 52 people [70%], cite that they have witnessed another child being beaten, slapped, choked, or burnt on the street. This was slightly more common to be reported among males than females [74% and 63%, respectively]. Among those who cite witnessing such violence on the street, 11 people [21%] cite that they see this nearly every day. While the majority, or 30 people [58%], cite they see this happen only 'every once in awhile'.
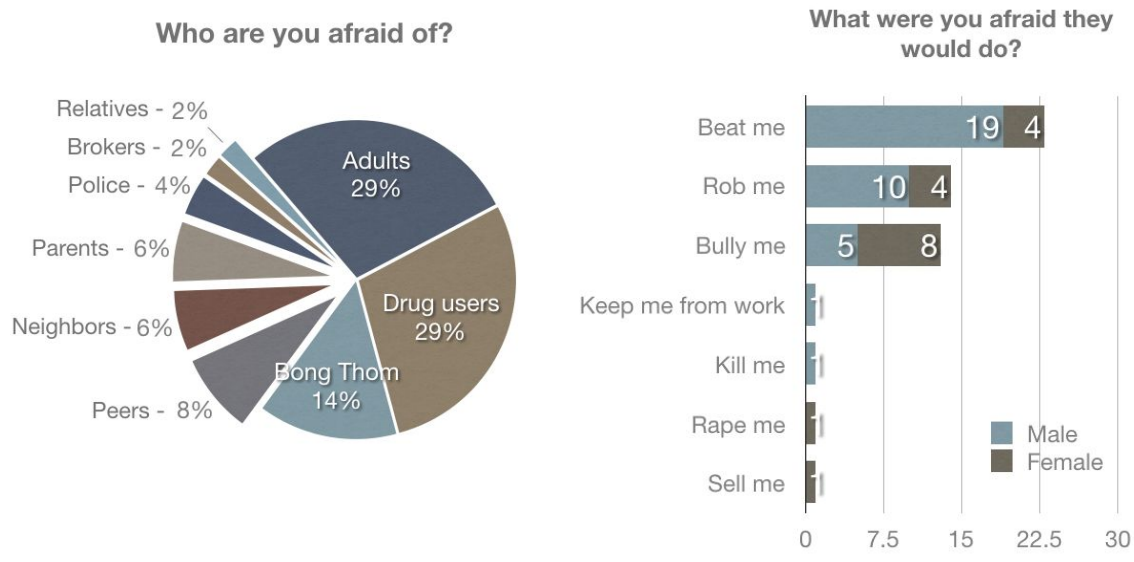
With regards respondents personal experience of violence, 50 people or 66% of children, cite experiencing various forms of physical violence while on the street. Among this group, 35 are male [69% of males] and 15 are female [60% of females]. Further, nearly one third, [20 people or 31%] cite instances in which they had been hurt or threatened with a weapon. Of this group, 14 were male [36% of males], and six were female [24% of females].

Children were also asked about a variety of persons within their community that they might experience violence from including: parents or guardians, a 'bong thom' (older youth, gangster, or bully), another adult, police officers, and/or peers. Physical violence from parents was among the most common to be reported, with 20 people [26%] citing that they had experienced such violence. Violence from parents was significantly more common among females in comparison with males [58% to 15% respectively of males]. Physical violence from a 'bong thom' or older youth/gangsters was second most common, With 19 people [24%] citing that they had experienced such violence here it this was significantly more prevalent among males and comparison with females with 31% of males [18 people] citing violence in comparison with 5% of females [one person]. To a lesser extent, 13 children [17%] cited physical violence from another adult, With slightly more males citing such violence in comparison with females [19% to 11%, respectively]. Another 13 children [17%] —all of whom were male—cite experiencing violence from police, which represents 22% of the males in the study.

Fears of violence on the street

Questions were asked pertaining to children's fears of violence on the street. A strong majority, 52 children [70%], cite being afraid that someone would kill or injure them on the street. This was cited by 74% of males [37 people] and 63% of females [15 people]. When asked who they were most afraid of, responses were diverse. 'Adults' and/or 'drug users' were most commonly mentioned with 14 children [29%] mentioning fears of adults and 14 children [29%] mentioning fears of drug users. Following adults and drug users were fears of older youth ('bong thom'), mentioned by seven children [14%]. This was more commonly mentioned among males [6 people or 17% of males, in comparison with one person or 7% of females]. To a lesser extent, peers (by four people), neighbors (by three people), parents (by three people), police (by two people), brokers (by one person), and relatives (by one person) were also mentioned.

Most commonly, children cite fears of being beaten [23 people or 42%]. This is described nearly twice as frequently by males as by females [53% to 21%, respectively]. Being robbed is the second most common fear cited buy children with 14 people or 25% describing such fears. Being bullied was described by a similar number of children [13 people or 24%]. To a lesser extent, being kept from work, being killed, being raped, being sold, and 'being bitten by mosquitoes' was described each by one person.

Who are you afraid of?

- Relatives - 2%
- Brokers - 2%
- Police - 4%
- Parents - 6%
- Neighbors - 6%
- Peers - 8%
- Bong Thom 14%
- Drug users 29%
- Adults 29%

What were you afraid they would do?

	Male	Female
Beat me	19	4
Rob me	10	4
Bully me	5	8
Keep me from work	1	
Kill me	1	
Rape me	1	1
Sell me	1	1

Perception of vulnerability to violence

Boys and girls were asked what they perceive to be the key dangers for girls on the street and what they perceived to be the key dangers for boys. This was an open-ended question allowing respondents to answer in whatever way they preferred. As a methodological note, this particular question seemed to be somewhat confusing to children as the concepts of perception and reality are often not easily differentiated within this socio-cultural context. As a result, there is a lower 'n-value' for these two variables with 25 respondents citing their perceived as dangerous for girls and 23 respondents citing their perceived dangers for boys.

What are the dangers for boys and girls on the streets?

Dangers for Girls
- Rape — 9
- Hit by cars — 4
- Similar dangers to boys — 4
- Trafficked — 3
- Arrest — 2

(n= 19 male and 6 female respondents)

Dangers for Boys
- Beaten — 6
- Hit by cars — 6
- Similar dangers to girls — 4
- Arrested — 2
- Robbed — 2

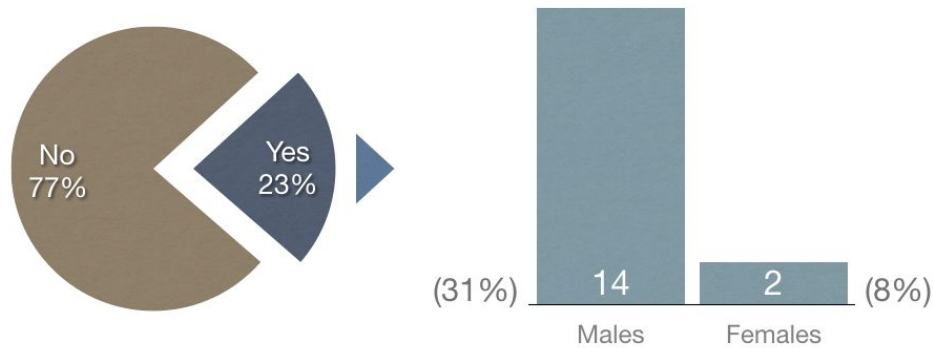(n= 17 male and 6 female respondents)

25

With regard to children's perceived dangers for girls, the most common response was that girls were vulnerable to rape, mentioned by nine people. In particular, children commonly specified rape by drug users on the streets. Secondly, children perceive the girls were vulnerable to being hit by cars, mentioned by four people. Another four children cited the girls have faced similar dangers to boys on the street. And lastly, three people cite the girls were in danger of being trafficked, and two cited that they were in danger of arrest. With regard to the dangers for boys, the most common responses included dangers of being beaten, Mention bye six people, And being hit by cars, also mention by six people. Further, four people cited that boys faced similar dangers to girls. Lastly, two people cite boys were in danger of arrest, and two believed them to be in danger of being robbed.

Sexual violence

Conversations about sex—particularly sexual violence—are challenging to have with young respondents. Understanding this, interviewers took special care in carrying out this section of interviews. In addition, the flow of conversation during interviews were structured as such so that conversations on highly sensitive topics such as sex and sexual abuse were approached delicately only after discussing numerous other facets of the respondent's life, and after some sense of rapport had been built. Interviewers began discussions by asking them if they were aware of any adults in their communities who might have asked them to do things that they were not comfortable with. Further questioning explored the respondents awareness of peers who may have been sexually touched by an adult, and then the subject of their own experiences of sexual violence discussed.

Children were asked if any adults on the street had done things to them that made them feel uncomfortable or that they did not like. Slightly more than one-fifth of children describe such instances. While this question intentionally did not ask about sexual encounters specifically, numerous responses from children described or alluded to various forms of sexual violence. Four males describe adults two had grabbed or caressed their private parts, another describes "[an adult] put my penis into his anus". Another males cites being invited "to walk into the woods or wonder around at night", but gives no further details of the encounter. While females are not as descriptive of specific sexual violence, two females give allusion to potential sexual violence. One female describes an adult asking to sleep with her and hug her, while another cites that an adult "closed the door with the two of us alone".

Has an adult ever touched you inappropriately in the genital area?

No 77%

Yes 23%

(31%) 14

2 (8%)

Males   Females

When asked directly about sexual touching, nearly one-fourth, or 16 people [23%] cite instances in which an adult had touch them inappropriately in the genital area. This was more common to be described among males, with 14 males [31%] citing sexual touching and two females [8%] citing the same. Among the 16 people who describe sexual touching by an adult, 11 cite that this had taken place between one and five times [10 males and one female]. Further, one respondent, a male, cites that this nature of touching happens to him 'all the time' or 'regularly'.

Seven respondents, or 11%, describe experiences of sexual violence that have gone beyond just touching. Among this group were six males [14% of males] and one female [4% of females]. For respondents, all males, cite instances in which they were physically forced to do something sexual. Among this group, three cite that this has happened 1-5 times, and one cites that this happens 'all the time' or 'regularly'.

Commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC)

The study also sought to understand the occurrence of CSEC or 'commercial sexual exploitation of children' among children on the street. Seven children, or 10%, describe instances in which they, their families, or someone else had received money, food, or a gift in exchange for the child providing sex or sexual services to an adult. Among the seven children were six males [13% of males] and one female [4% of females]. Among the items provided in exchange for sex, respondents describe being provided with a number of items including food, shelter, and money. One responded cites being provided with one plate of fried noodles and 8 Thai baht, while another cites being invited to sleep in a guest house for the night.

Pornography

Pornography can be used as a means of 'sexualizing' or grooming children for further sexual abuse. Understanding this, children were asked about instances in which adults on the streets had shown them pornographic pictures or videos.

Nearly one third, or 22 children (31%), cite being showing pornographic images or videos by adults—among these respondents, 17 were male [36%] and five were female [21%]. Among these 22 children, 10 people or 45% cite that these images or videos were shown to them by strangers, five people or 23% cite pornography was shown to them by coworkers on the streets. To a lesser extent, children cite being shown pornographic images or videos by older youth [three people], people at an Internet shop [two people], and 'friends' [two people].

Emotional violence

Emotional violence is understood as a form of psychological abuse which has a high probability of damaging a child's mental health and/or well-being as well as their moral, spiritual, or social development (UNICEF, 2013). This study's assessment of emotional violence centers around three general areas including: bullying and harassment, verbal abuse [on the streets and at home], and a self-assessment of the child's feelings and their responses to negative emotions.

Harassment and verbal violence on the street

Nearly half of respondents [29 people or 43%] describe various people on the street who take money or other items from them by intimidating them or making them afraid. Beyond this, a strong majority of children, 59 people or 83%, describe instances in which people on the streets yell or curse at them. While these experiences are described by both male and female respondents, they are somewhat more commonly described among the males [87% of males and 75% of females]. The majority of respondents cite that they experience the most verbal abuse from peers [12 people or 40%] and police officers [10 people or 33%].

The actors in instances of verbal abuse are notably different between boys and girls. For boys, the majority of verbal abuse on the streets comes from police officers with nine boys [41%] citing such forms of violence. Following this, seven boys [32%] cite verbal violence from peers. To a lesser extent, boys cite verbal violence from "other street workers" [4 or 18%] and security guards [2 or 9%]. For girls, the majority of verbal violence on the street comes from peers, cited by five people [63%]. Following this one girl cites violence from police, one cites violence from 'other street workers', and another cites violence from security guards. Largely, children seem to indicate that the verbal violence experience on the street is due to their street involvement. Beyond this, children indicate receiving violence because they are not working or not working hard enough on the streets. Lastly,

children indicate a variety of verbal altercations with peers or older youth on the street due to drug use, not sharing drugs, and unfair division of earnings, among other reasons.
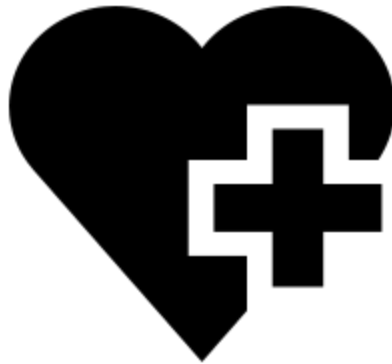
Verbal violence at home

Within the home, 51 children [80%] cite instances in which people yell or curse at them—the majority of whom were parents or stepparents [70%] or grandparents [18%]. Asked why they thought these people yelled at them, the majority of children [16 people or 64% of those responding] indicated that parents or caretakers were violent because they felt that the child was not working enough, not earning enough, lazy, or not doing their chores. To a lesser extent of five people [20%] cites being yelled at for not coming home, three cites being yelled at for disobedience, and one cites that he is yelled at when his parents or caretaker becomes drunk.

Emotional health

With regards to emotional health, children were invited to reflect on their various experiences on the street and were asked how they feel that these experiences have affected their feelings or behaviors. This was an open ended question and children could respond in any way they liked, whether it be positive, negative, or neutral. The majority of respondents, 19 people [66%] cite a variety of positive impacts including the ability to socialize or make new friends on the streets. Others cite the ability to earn money or having increased freedoms as a result of being street-involved. Nearly one-fourth, or seven people [24%] cite negative impacts associated with their street involvement including drug use, having no access to education, and having no money. Lastly, three people [10%] cite that their experiences on the street at had no effect on their feelings or behaviors.

Additionally, children were asked about what emotional support they have when they are feeling angry or sad. While the majority, 52 children [75%] are able to cite at least one person who they are able to go to, 17 children [25%] cite that they do not have anyone. Among those who have someone that they go to when they are feeling angry or sad, the majority, 28 people [61%], cite having a family member or carer including parents, grandparents, siblings, or an aunt or uncle to go to. The remainder, 18 children [39%] cite going to members of their peer group when they are sad or angry.
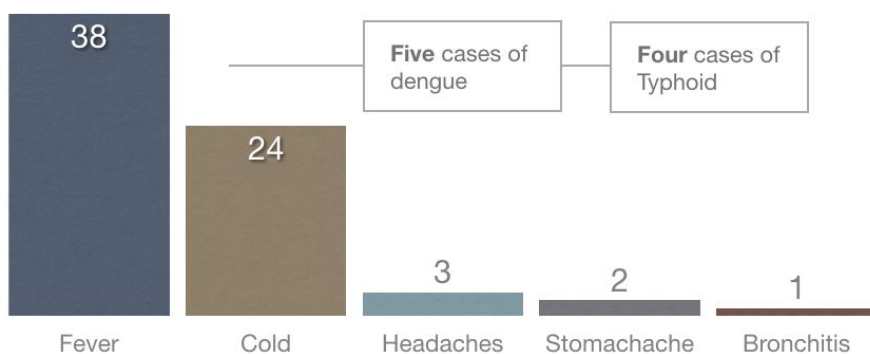
Health

General health

A variety of illnesses are reported among street-involved children with a strong majority, 63 people for 83%, citing a number of illnesses including fever, Cold, headaches, stomach aches, and a case of bronchitis. The most common illness cited was fever, with 38 people [53%], describing the condition. Of these 38 cases, a number were quite serious with five reported cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever, and four reported cases of typhoid fever. Lastly, having a cold was commonly reported by 24 children [33%].

83% cite being sick
over the past 3 months

Five cases of dengue	Four cases of Typhoid			

Fever | Cold | Headaches | Stomachache | Bronchitis

Further, children were asked where they seek treatment when they get sick. The majority of children, 36 people [60%], cite buying medicine from local pharmacies, 18 people [30%] cite visiting a doctor, two people [3%] cite that they ask an NGO for medicine, and four people [7%] cite that they do not receive treatment. Among children who cite having dengue, typhoid, or bronchitis within the past three months, seven people [77%] say that they visited a doctor, while two people [22%] say that only purchased medicine from a pharmacy.

Sexual health

Among children 13 to 18 years of age, only a minority, seven people [20% of the group], have had any sexual health education. Considering all ages, only 11% have had sexual health education. Children were also asked about their general knowledge of HIV as a sexual health risk. The majority of children, 39 people [56%], cite that they have never heard of the disease, and are thus not aware of its risks. Among those who say that they have heard about HIV, more than half, 18 people [58%], cite that it is transmitted through sex, and seven people [23%] cite that it is transmitted through blood. To a lesser extent, three children cite that they do not know how it is transmitted, one cites that it is transmitted through manicures, and one cites that it is transmitted through sharing food.
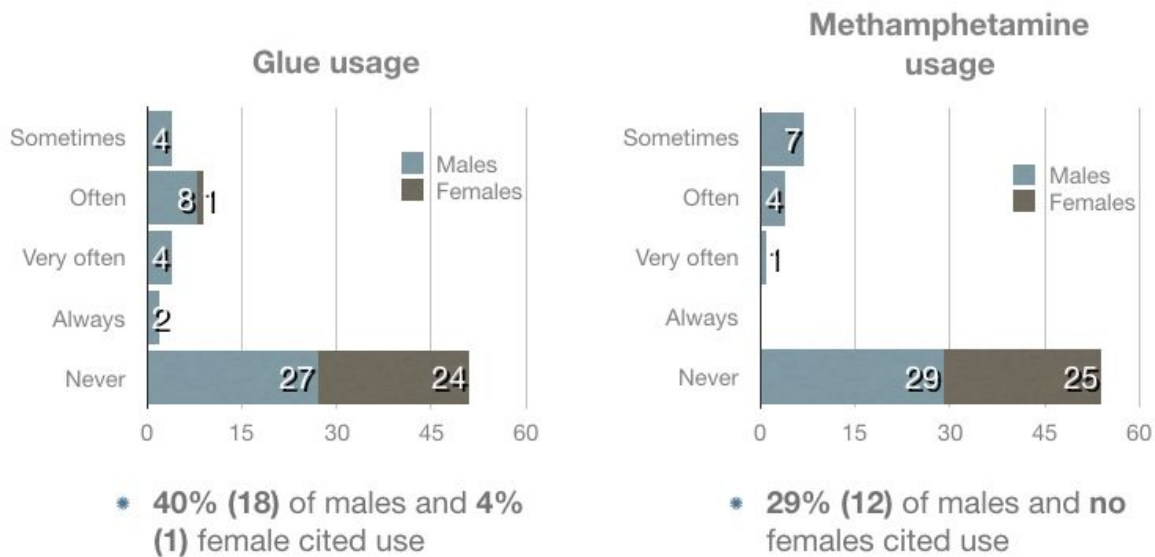

Substance use

Throughout multiple sections of interviews, children commonly mention drug use and drug users as sources of violence and obstacles to personal development. Notably, the use of substances (alcohol, glue, and methamphetamines) seems to be almost entirely gender specific with only five females using any substances at all.

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among Street involved youth, with 29 respondents [38%] citing at least some usage.   Glue was used by slightly more than one fourth, or 19 children [27%]—of whom all but one was male. Considering only males, 18 people or 40% of all males use glue, with eight males [18%] citing that they use it 'often', four males [9%] citing that they use it 'very often', and two males [4%] citing that they use it 'always'.   The average age children began using glue was 10.8 years of age with the youngest being six when he first started and the oldest being 14 years of age.

Glue usage

	Males	Females
Sometimes	4	
Often	8	1
Very often	4	
Always	2	
Never	27	24

* **40% (18)** of males and **4% (1)** female cited use

Methamphetamine usage

	Males	Females
Sometimes	7	
Often	4	
Very often	1	
Always		
Never	29	25

* **29% (12)** of males and **no** females cited use

The use of "ice" or crystal methamphetamines is cited by 12 children [18%]—among this group all are males. Looking only at the males, these 12 boys represent 29% of all males. The average age that boys began using methamphetamines is 12.6 years of age, with the youngest being eight when he first started and the oldest being 16 years of age.

Further, children were asked to discuss some of the effects of using drugs— both positive and negative. Overall, respondents seem to have a keen and diverse awareness of the negative effects of substance use on their health, their relationships, and larger society. Among the negative effects mentioned, 'having poor health' or 'brain damage' was most commonly mentioned has a negative impact by 13 people [52%]. Beyond this, 'addiction' was mentioned by four people [16%], 'loss of control' by two people [8%], and 'being hated by people' by two people [8%], among other responses.

* **Nearly half** of males **(17 or 49%)** cite that they have tried to stop using drugs

* **More than half** of males **(19 or 59%)** cite that they want to stop using drugs

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- Damages health (13x)
- Addiction (x4)
- Loss of control (x2)
- People hate me (x2)
- Become violent (x1)
- Brings suffering (x1)
- Legal consequences (x1)
- Parents disapprove (x1)

POSITIVE EFFECTS

- "Feels good" (x5)
- "Having fun" (x1)

In addition to their awareness of the negative effects of substances, nearly half of males [17 or 49%] cite that they have tried to stop using drugs in the past and more than half of males [19 or 59%] cite that they currently want to stop using drugs. Among those who have tried to stop using drugs, six cite that they have tried to stop using glue, and five cite that they have tried to stop using methamphetamines. Regarding females, there is no sufficient data as no females cite using drugs apart from one who cites using glue.

Males were asked what they believe would help them to stop using drugs. The largest portion of respondents, six people [43%] believe that staying at home or having a greater connection with their family would help them to stop using drugs. Others cite education [2 people] as being necessary, getting help from an NGO [2 people], and having no money [2 people] as being useful in helping them to stop drugs. Further, greater than one third, five people [36%], cite that they do not know what would help them to stop using drugs.

DISCUSSION

Migration

Poipet has become a significant destination for Cambodian migrant workers looking for economic benefit, due in part to the perceived opportunities offered by the large-scale foreign investments and cross-border trade within the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). This reality is clearly reflected in the data with nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) indicating migration to Poipet from other Cambodian towns and provinces—nearly all of whom (98%) came in search of work or for other financial reasons. Apart from this initial migration to Poipet, some children indicate migration further into Thailand. Over the last decade, the Thai Government's policies have become increasingly difficult for asylum seekers and urban refugees. In many cases, refugees and asylum-seekers are not distinguished from illegal migrants, making them more prone to arrest and detention (UNHCR, 2008).
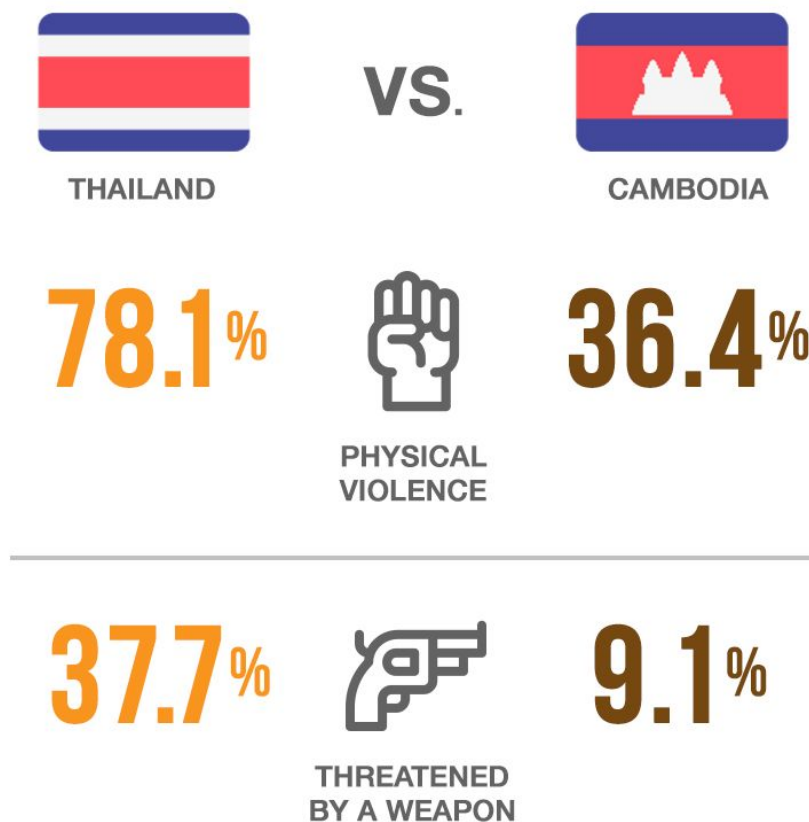
Migration to Poipet

Migration exposes children to a variety of vulnerabilities both on arrival and along the migration route, especially when they migrate alone. The 2016 US Trafficking in Persons report highlights that children are being trafficked to Special Economic Zones and border areas, such as Poipet (US Department of State, 2016). With regard to child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), trafficking is reportedly increasing to meet the growing demand of Asian tourists and migrant and expatriate workers for sexual services from children (2016)— with particular vulnerabilities notable within Special Economic Zones, such as Poipet (ECPAT, 2016).

Among those who migrated in Poipet, the majority (58%) indicate migrating between the ages of 4-9 years. Only three children indicate migrating to Poipet alone or with friends—all of whom were older, between the ages of 13 and 18. Further, children who were 10 years or older at the time of migration are 54% more likely to be living on the streets and 28% more likely to report experiences of sexual violence, in comparison to those who migrated prior to the age of 10. This suggests a notable connection between the age at which children migrate and their vulnerabilities in housing and to sexual violence. In other words,

the older a child is at the time of migration, the more likely they are to sleep on the streets and to experience sexual violence. This seems to run contrary to the idea that older children are less vulnerable in migration than younger ones. While this idea may be true, it should also be considered that older children may be less likely to be afforded care and supervision due to the assumption that they are more capable of taking care of themselves, which could in turn increase their vulnerabilities to sexual violence and insecure housing. More research in this area is needed.

Crossing the border for work

A strong majority of respondents (71%) cross the border into Thailand in search of various economic opportunities. Most street-involved children within this sampling, however, seem to stay within the border area and do not migrate further into Thailand. When children cross the border, they often do so during the day—sometimes staying overnight—in order to engage in various forms of street-work on the other side of the border. There are notable vulnerabilities to violence indicated among these groups of children, in particular, vulnerabilities to physical and sexual violence.

THAILAND VS. **CAMBODIA**

78.1% PHYSICAL VIOLENCE **36.4**%

37.7% THREATENED BY A WEAPON **9.1**%

In addition to the 14 children (26%) who cite physical violence from police, qualitative data also echoes experiences and concerns about violence from Thai police and security guards while working in Thailand. Further, data indicates children who cross into Thailand for work are 2.1 times more likely to report physical violence (78.1% versus 36.4%) and 4.1 times more likely to report being hurt or threatened by a weapon (37.7% versus 9.1%) in comparison with those who solely work on the Cambodian side of the border. This reality is

also reflected in focus group discussions prior to data gathering where children indicated instances in which they or a sibling had been threatened with a gun because they had crossed the border illegally and were engaging in street-work.

Arrest, Detention, and Repatriation:

There is no official 'deportation center', under the Thai government, on the Thai-Cambodian border. Thus, children detained while working on or near the border, are often brought to the Immigration Office in Aranyaprathet and detained until they can be repatriated. Among street-involved children in Poipet, this is understood as 'being taken by the cage car', which refers to the enclosed vehicle that children are placed in as they are taken to the immigration office in Aranyaprathet. The Immigration Office is responsible for the daily reception of undocumented Cambodians from all over Thailand. Children detained here are likely to be mixed with a wide variety of undocumented persons waiting for repatriation. While there is no deportation center in Aranyaprathet, in 2016, Damnok Toek opened a center which can receive children and do interviews, family tracing, assessments, and any needed referrals so as to minimize the time children have to spend at the Immigration Office.

Undocumented and unaccompanied children working deeper into Thailand are more likely to be brought to one of the detention centers throughout Thailand and held until enough undocumented Cambodians have been detained to fill a deportation truck (usually 60-80 people). These people will then be brought to the Immigration Office in Poipet for repatriation.

Twenty-five children or nearly half of the sampling (45%) cite being arrested in Thailand. Slightly more than half of this group describe being 'taken by the cage car' or detained over the border in Thailand. Four children describe being beat by police upon their arrest. Among this group, all are male. Further, focus group discussions prior to data collection indicate anecdotal accounts of males being threatened by police with weapons and one boy who cites being thrown from a roof. On the other hand, while females were much less likely to indicate physical violence from police, they were more likely to have been detained ('taken in the cage car'), in comparison with males (31% of females versus 19% of males). When males were arrested, they were more likely to experience physical violence or simply chased back to the Cambodian side of the border.

Further, children taken to the deportation centre were found to be twice as likely to be using glue and/or methamphetamines. While more detailed data is needed in order to discuss this phenomenon at length, it is important to note the potential traumatic impact of arrest or deportation on a child. Experiencing an arrest or deportation, even when there is no explicit physical or psychological violence involved, can cause significant trauma for a child—or at the very least be a source of stress. This can have a negative effect on his/her mental health and wellbeing. In this context, resorting to substances is a common coping strategy to deal with such forms of emotional distress (UNICEF, 2012). It is unclear if the children were already using drugs when taken to the deportation centre or if they resorted

to drug use at a later stage. More research is needed in this area to explore the connections between arrest, trauma, and drug use.

Migration to Thailand

While few street-involved children indicate migrating further into Thailand for work, a significant number of the children's parents do—often for long periods of time—leaving the children alone or with limited supervision. Just over half of children (51%) indicate that their parent(s) migrate to Thailand for work. Contrary to what might be expected, children whose parents migrate to Thailand for work are 1.4 times more likely to be currently or recently enrolled in school in comparison to those children whose parents do not migrate (39% in comparison with 27%). This could be due to the possibility that parents who do not migrate for work are more likely to utilize their children in work on the streets, thus preventing them from attending school regularly. Similarly, children whose parents migrate to Thailand for work may also be more able to provide funds allowing for children to remain in school. More research is needed to understand this phenomenon.

LEFT ALONE	LEFT WITH A SIBLING	PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
24%	18%	92%

Despite being somewhat more likely to be in school, there are also some vulnerabilities associated with parental migration. Among those children whose parents had migrated, 24% are left alone and 18% are left with a sibling while their parents are out of the country for work, which may leave children vulnerable to increased risk on the streets. Among children left alone or with a sibling, all but one (92%) indicate experiences of physical violence, largely from older youth, police, and other adults on the streets. In more than half of these cases (53%) children indicate their parents are gone for at least a month at a time, with more than a third indicating that they are unsure of when their parents will return.

Children whose parents and/or carers may be unable to develop strong and consistent bonds with their family. A stable family unit is the prime form of protection for children. It is through this that strong relations between children and parents are able to develop (UNICEF, 2012). For many children in Poipet, it might not be possible to develop these links due to the high rate of parent migration. In this context, children may feel isolation or disconnect from their family or caretakers and resort to street-involved peer groups and/or substances as a means of recreating 'family' ties within their peer groups. This is a significant consideration as developing strong ties with the family unit serves as a

protective factor in terms of overcoming emotional distress in future life and favoring resilience**.**

Poipet (or its adjacent Thai city, Aranyaprathet) is commonly known as the entry point to Thailand for many Cambodian migrants found in Thailand's booming construction sector and in the agriculture and fishing industries (Capaldi, 2014). One Terre Des Hommes (2014) study finds that children may initially cross deeper into Thailand with family members, but once they feel confident in making the journey, they will later return as an independent child migrant (Capaldi, 2014). Further, this study finds that many children from rural areas in Cambodia often end up in such jobs as restaurant staff, street vendors, domestic labourers, construction workers and laborers within the textile and manufacturing sectors. This is said to be due to as the perception of there being better paying work in Thailand, thus pulling youth away from work in rural areas, such as Poipet (Capaldi, 2014). This is further supported by findings from a 2016 report (unpublished at the time of this writing) on migration patterns among rural Cambodians (Sampson & Sokleap, 2016), which finds that Cambodians migrated because they perceived job opportunities and earning potential in Cambodia was not sufficient. This study also found a majority of its respondents had dropped out of school in order to migrate to Thailand and support their families (Sampson & Sokleap, 2016).

Substance Use

Drug use was found to be a significant issue among street-involved boys in Poipet with 40% of males indicating use of glue-type inhalants and 29% of males indicating use of crystal methamphetamines. International data on youth substance abuse among associates being male with a higher risk of substance abuse, along with being older in age, lacking family contact, depression, and having previous experiences of abuse (Moan, et al., 2013). Levels of drug use in Poipet were found to have a significant correlation with negative impacts on health, physical violence, sexual violence, and education. Substance use at an early age can be a significant obstacle to development. International data also indicates children who use drugs are at greater risk of dropping out of school (NIDA, 2003) and have a greater likelihood of remaining in a cycle of poverty into their adult life. Further, drug use can severely impact children's physical, emotional, and psychological health. It is at this stage that such areas of development are most crucial. This may have significant

effect on their adult life, future well-being, and potential to engage as active citizens within society. Additionally, the cost of drug use to a country's health, social services, and judiciary system is great.

Drug Use and Experiences of Violence

Drug use was also associated with higher experiences of physical violence. Among users of crystal methamphetamines and/or glue nearly all (95%) also cite instances of physical violence (in comparison to 54% among those who do not cite using meth and/or glue). The majority of the physical violence experienced from drug users is from older youth or bullies ("bong thom") (68%), police (50%), and 'other adults' (41%). It is also notable that half of drug users cite violence from police officers.

There is also a significant correlation between drug-use and sexual violence among street-involved children, with more than two-thirds (68%) of drug-using children citing sexual violence in comparison with 10% of non-drug-using children. Further, nearly three-fourths (73%) of children who use drugs cite being shown pornographic images by adults in comparison with 18% of non-drug-using children. This is significant in that pornography is commonly used by perpetrators of CSEA to groom children for sexual exploitation (Fordham, 2005). This is supported by nearly one-third (30%) of drug users who cite being offered food, money, or gifts in exchange for providing sexual services to adult, in comparison to 4% of non drug users. This link between sexual violence and use of substances was also clear in a previous study carried out in Chiang Mai (Davis, Fiss & Miles, 2015), where the rates of sexual abuse toward drug-users was found to be significantly higher in comparison with those that were not consuming any substances.

Drug Use and Social Connectedness

Higher rates of violence and lower levels of family/social connection is notable among drug users in Poipet. It is valuable in this context to consider that lack of mutual attachment, as well as a chaotic home environment, are also considered significant risk factors for children to abuse drugs (NIDA, 2003). In addition, aggressive behavior is also considered a risk factor for drug abuse, which can have further negative impact on a child's social relationships at school or within a community (2003). In view of this, it is important for street-involved children to establish a sense of belonging and connectedness to others in their family and community. Further, positive parental involvement in a child's life and having financial, emotional, cognitive, and social needs met are factors proven to prevent substance use issues in children (2003).

Data further indicates a significant correlation between family connectedness (or the lack thereof) and drug use. More than a third of children (36%) cite staying at home or having a greater connection with their families as being helpful in getting them to stop using drugs. In addition, a strong majority of children who use drugs (78%) cite that they are more likely to turn to friends or peers when they feel angry or sad and 16% of the same group (three children) cite that they have no one to go to. This is consistent with existing research which

finds a notable connection between social disconnect and drug addiction. These studies demonstrate that recreational use of drugs and drug dependency are two separate phenomena. Dependency, or addiction, is a symptom of social and emotional distress and a lack of strong bonds with others. With this lens, drug dependence reflects a "dislocation" (Polyani, 1944), "alienation", or "disconnection" (Alexander, 2010) of the individual from his or her community and its traditions. In this view, drug addiction is symptom of lacking purpose or belonging, reflecting the isolation of individuals from their families, communities, or wider society. Thus, recovery from addiction, as well as preventing new addictions, often lies in attempts to reconnect people with others and break the sense of isolation. This may be particularly relevant in view of the majority of parents who migrate to Thailand, the potential disconnect felt by their children, and its impact on substance use. More research is needed in this area.

Violence

Experiences of violence are common among street-involved children in Poipet and are cited to occur in a number of different settings including within the home and on the streets. Various forms of violence (physical, sexual, and emotional) often overlap and are perpetrated by a range of actors including: police, peers, adults, strangers and gang members. Children on the streets cite fears and experiences of violence as a notable issue — particularly violence from adults and drug users. Additionally, violence perpetrated by authorities, especially Thai law enforcement officers, was explicitly described by more than one-fourth of respondents. It is within this context that the use of drugs often occurs as a coping mechanism or to reinforce collective bonds. Exploitation, trafficking, and sexual violence are added risks. A number street-involved children—both girls and boys—were found to engage in transactional sex, often as a means of survival.

Gender and Sexual Violence

While sexual violence was nearly four times more prevalent among males in comparison to females (31% versus 8%), neither males nor females seemed to perceive sexual violence as a danger for males. Among both genders, the key danger for males was assumed to be physical forms of violence, such as being hit by cars, and the key danger for females was assumed to be rape—particularly rape by drug abusers. Contrary to these perceptions,

nearly one-third of males and less than one-in-ten females cite sexual violence. This phenomenon was particularly notable in the case of one boy who describes regular experiences of sexual abuse, including rape using physical force. Despite this violence, when asked about the key dangers faced by boys and girls on the street, the boy only acknowledges sexual violence as something experienced by females, and cites that males are only in danger of physical violence. This is likely due to the prevalent social constructs of masculinity and femininity, which tend to view females and physically weak and less capable of taking care of themselves and men as strong, fit, and more self-sufficient. In view of this, male victimization undermines these overarching ideals of masculinity (Weiss, 2010).

Despite the low frequency of females citing sexual violence, this does not preclude that females are less vulnerable, but it does raise some important considerations for future research looking at gender and violence. The discrepancies between the perception of vulnerability to violence and realities of experiencing violence seem to be considerable. Due to common cultural assumptions on gender, males are often considered to be less vulnerable to violence and often assumed to be innately more able to protect themselves (Frederick, 2010). Even in initial focus group discussions prior to data gathering, male and female street-involved children described similar assumptions that boys were less vulnerable on the streets because they "were more clever" than girls and thus knew how to run away from potential dangers.

It is also valuable to consider how these assumptions may potentially impact the supervision and general protection offered to males and females by their parents, caretakers, and/or families. It is likely that males are afforded much less supervision and protection, and thus may be more vulnerable to additional forms of violence. In future research, it would be helpful to explore the impact of patriarchal gender assumptions on male vulnerability to sexual violence, particularly among street-involved children.

In addition, practitioners in Poipet suggest anecdotal evidence from families that some younger females (younger than those included in the sampling of the study)—were being solicited for sexual abuse by visiting tourists to the Casinos within the Special Economic

and Free Trade Zone near Poipet.   While this information is anecdotal, it would be helpful for future research to explore this potential vulnerability among younger children in Poipet.

Gangs and Violence

Children within this study frequently describe violence from gang members—often referred to as *bong thom* (translated as "big brother"). Among the 21 children who cite violence from gang members, all but one (95%) are male. Despite the frequent mention of violence from gang members. Only a small number of youth, three boys aged 13-18 years of age, cite living with gang members. Among this group of three, all cite sleeping on the street, two have never attended school and one cites that he has not attended school for nearly 10 years. All three indicate daily use of drugs including glue-based inhalants and crystal methamphetamines.

Gangs in Poipet are cited as a clear source of insecurity, violence and a threat to children connected to the streets. The drive for participation in a gang can come from a need to establish identity, physical security, and emotional support— a need which can be particularly meaningful among youth coming from broken or chaotic family environments. Establishing a new identity once on the street can enable children to transcend the stigmatising label of "street children", and give positive meaning to often-difficult experiences by providing a sense of belonging (Beazley, 2003). This can be done by joining a gang, living in groups, or creating friendships through informal networks of other street children. Identifying to a group enables street-connected youth not only to gain status and satisfy their need for belonging, but also to find security, physical protection and emotional support (UMP, 2000).

Further, there is a significant statistical correlation with being male, using drugs and experiencing various forms of violence on the streets. While it is not possible to definitively conclude that one factor causes the other, it is important to consider how each of these factors (gender, drug use, and violence) interact with one another in the context of Poipet and how this impacts the safety of children on the streets. Males are traditionally thought to be stronger and more capable of protecting themselves within families in South and Southeast Asia and are often afforded less protection and family support as a result (Frederick, 2010). In addition, research has shown significantly higher rates of depression among males suffering from food insecurity, high levels of work stress, or unemployment in comparison with females (WHO, 2007), all of which are closely linked with an increased risk of substance abuse (NIDA, 2003). Much more research is needed to explore this correlation between males, masculinity, violence and substance abuse, particularly in the context of street-involved communities.

Violence Within Homes

While the majority of children (84%) cite having a house or other structure to sleep in, nearly one in five of these children are forced to sleep elsewhere regularly—the majority of whom sleep on the streets. Among those who have a home, but are unable to sleep there regularly, one third indicate either violence at home or feeling that home needed to be avoided. Within this context, nearly 38% of children indicate physical violence from parents and among the 55 children who indicate fears of severe injury or death due to violence, four cite that it was a parent or relative that they were afraid of. In particularly, one child (male, 12 years old) indicates being chased away from his home by his father due to alcoholism. These findings seem to indicate a potential need for greater focus on working with the home and family dynamics among street-involved children.

Sex Education

The study revealed an overwhelmingly high rate (89%) of children that have had no sexual health education. This is considerably higher that a UNICEF report (2016) which found that only 46% of males and 38% of females among the general youth population in Cambodia (between the years of 2010 and 2014) have comprehensive knowledge of HIV of youth. It is important to focus more on sexual health education for youth and even more so for street children who can be more prone to engaging in risky behaviors and may lack guidance and trustful relationships with an adult to confide in relation to these issues (SOTWC, 2016).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Experiences of physical, sexual, and emotional violence are common and often overlapping among street-involved children in Poipet and are perpetrated by a range of actors including: police, peers, adults, strangers and gang members. Further, drug use was found to be a significant issue among street-involved boys in Poipet, which was found to have a significant correlation with negative impacts on health, physical violence, sexual violence, and education.   In view of these findings, the following broad program initiatives are recommended for Children's rights organizations, donors, governments, and future research:

For Children's Rights Organizations:

- Drug Interventions focusing on community-building and social connectedness: It is important in this context for Children's rights organizations to employ a mixed-range of strategies to help lessen drug use and improve the lives of street-involved children in Poipet. Prevention strategies could include programs focused on reinforcing relationships and connections with families including parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders and other significant adults. For example, developing spaces for children to positively interact with their families and caretakers could be one possible intervention/approach. An initiative such as this could take place at a community drop in centre where NGO/social workers are present to encourage and stimulate positive interactions and activities as needed. Monks church leaders and NGOS should be encouraged to provide spaces for children to meet together in youth groups and children's clubs with positive peer pressure.

- **Building on resiliencies to prevent violence and substance abuse:** Social programming should also focus on building protective factors of resilience, reducing the risk of kids resorting to substances. In addition to specific drug rehabilitation programs, prevention initiatives could include life skills, positive parenting, sex education and peer education programs. Interventions such as these can take more time and effort, but can be more effective in the long term and contribute to goals for both prevention and rehabilitation.

- **School support:** Teachers should be supported to provide schooling to at risk children including those who are 'left behind'. Schools should provide catch up for children who may have got behind in school grades so they can catch up with their peers. Schools should be encouraged to identify children at risk of migration and help children to stay at school.

- **Expansion of peer mentorship:** Data shows that over half of children (51%) indicate that their parent(s) migrate to Thailand for work, with 24% of this group being left alone without a parent or carer. Violence and substance abuse among this group was found to be significantly higher in comparison with respondents who had regular contact with a parent or carer. Peer educator / network-oriented intervention strategies have been found provide positive impact among young Thai

youth, including a reduction in use of methamphetamines, increasing condom use, and lowering prevalence of STIs (Sherman, et al., 2008). While such peer-education is already underway in Poipet (implemented my Damnok Toek), expansions of these initiatives could be explored to include a strategic use of 'youth leadership' to support and inspire high-risk youth to pursue a more positive engagement with their community (Iwasaki, 2015). These initiatives could specifically target the needs of children whose parents migrate and leave their children alone or who are otherwise absent. Further, sexual and reproductive health education could be included into the expansions of these strategies to help improve the high rate (89%) of children who cite having no sexual health education.

- **Expanded training for NGO and health workers:** Special training should be provided for NGO and health workers on the impact of drugs on children and youth, care of children impacted by violence and how drugs hinder development and sexual health.

- **Engaging law enforcement to improve children's rights:** More than one fourth of respondents in this study indicate physical violence from police—something which was particularly notable among drug users and males crossing the border for work. In this context, it could be helpful for NGO's / children's rights organizations to build stronger relations with law enforcement officials on the border, for greater advocacy and continuing dialogue on upholding the rights of children. In addition, it would be helpful to provided trainings/dialogues with police, border guards, health workers, social workers, and immigration officers in child rights—particularly with regard to their treatment of street-involved and/or drug-using children.

- **Lobbying Thai and Cambodian Governments** for policy and program protections for street-involved children (see below)

For Donors:

- More funding is needed for holistic programs for youth who do not complete their education, gender-based violence, and a variety of health issues surrounding drugs and sexual health. In support of this, funding is also needed for professional education is needed for health and social workers.

- Increased funding is needed for programs working around substance abuse issues and also working on protective factors to prevent substance use issues. Currently there is a limited amount of donors and specialized agencies focusing on this topic. Further, in support of this, professional education in child rights is needed for police, border guards, and immigration officers—who come in contact with youth substance users and those who cross the border without proper documentation.

- Lastly, greater funding is needed for research and advocacy on street-involved youth— particularly boys and young men, whose vulnerabilities to a variety of violence often goes unnoticed or underappreciated.

For Governments:

- Special training should be provided for civil servants in children's rights, especially law enforcement and border officials, to ensure that children's rights for protection are put first in their responsibilities for children.

- Governments should work to uphold the the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and put forth legislation to end immigration detention of children. And until these changes are made, governments should make every effort to ensure that their detention is neither arbitrary nor indefinite (HRW)

- It is important for governments to consider effective alternatives to detention of children Adopt alternatives to detention which allow children to remain with their families/caretakers while their immigration status is being resolved (HRW, 2014).

- It is imperative that improved policy and program protections are made for street-involved children, including illegal immigrants in Thailand and children left behind in Cambodia.

For Future Research:

- Given the considerable sexual physical violence experienced by males in this study and the general unawareness of vulnerability to such violence. It would be helpful for future research to explore the impact of patriarchal gender assumptions on male vulnerability to sexual violence is needed, particularly among street-involved children.

- In addition, data indicates that a broad exploration of the impacts on children associated with migration of Cambodian parents to Thailand could be very helpful in mitigating some of the unforeseen vulnerabilities among children left behind by migrating parents. Further, more specific research in this context is need to understand the potential disconnect felt by children, and its impact on their vulnerability to substance use issues and/or other negative coping mechanisms.

- Lastly, future research should specifically broadly explore the experiences of Cambodian children who are arrested in Thailand and end up in detention as well as the connections between arrest, child trauma, substance use issues, and other negative coping strategies.

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