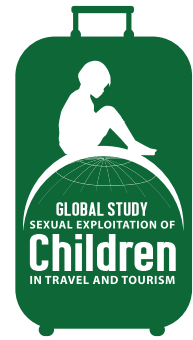


EXPERT PAPER

HOW TO MEASURE THE PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING



INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

INTRODUCTION

In the last 15 years, there has been significant growth in the number, and quality, of anti-human trafficking strategies and programs. In 2014, the Walk Free Foundation estimated that funding from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) countries to combat human trafficking grew to US\$124 million per year or approximately US\$1.2 billion over the last ten years.¹ But despite the growth in funding and programs, reliable data on the scope of human trafficking, including child sex trafficking, remains limited. Lack of hard data undermines prioritization of scarce anti-trafficking resources, limits identification of effective strategies and threatens the credibility of the global anti-trafficking community. Failure to develop reliable methods to measure and analyze child sex trafficking could even lead to decreased funding for anti-trafficking programs in the future as donors become disillusioned by the inability to evaluate the impact of their funding.



Over the last ten years, International Justice Mission (IJM) has developed several unique methodologies to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in our project areas. IJM is a global organization that protects the poor from violence. In Southeast Asia, IJM's offices in Cambodia and the Philippines combat child sex trafficking by partnering with local authorities to rescue child sex trafficking victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

¹ Ucnikova, Martina (2014). "OECD and Modern Slavery: How much aid money is spent to tackle the issue?" *Anti-Trafficking Review*, No. 3 (2014). Accessed 15 June 2015. http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/68/66#_ftn9.

Measuring or quantifying child sex trafficking is challenging because its victims and perpetrators are a “hidden population,” one for which no sampling frame exists, and identification of participation or membership in the population could be potentially threatening (whether socially, physically or legally) for an individual. IJM attempts to overcome this by combining established sampling methodologies with undercover data collection. This allows trained data collectors to observe systematically, quantify and verify if an individual is a minor without alerting potential perpetrators, causing further harm to trafficking victims or having a negative impact on non-victim sex workers.

Snowball Sampling

One of the sampling approaches IJM has used in conjunction with undercover data collection is “snowball sampling.” Snowball sampling was first developed in the 1960’s as a non-probability approach to collect data on hidden populations. In 2006, IJM worked with Crime & Justice Analysts (CJA), a group of U.S.-based researchers, criminologists and law enforcement officials, to develop a methodology to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Metro Cebu, the Philippines. This methodology used intermediaries such as taxi drivers, hotel staff, and local residents, who were asked to direct data collectors to locations where trafficked minors could potentially be found. These locations included brothels, bars, hotels, streets and other locations. After collecting data at the locations they were referred to, the CJA team then collected data at all other commercial sex locations identified in the same area. Once all locations in an area had been visited, the data collectors engaged a new intermediary and moved on to a different area.

The CJA team, using this methodology measured the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Metro Cebu in 2006 (prior to IJM opening an office), in 2008 and 2010. The CJA team concluded that the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Metro Cebu decreased from 6.6 percent in 2006 to 1.5 percent in 2010. This means that during the 2006 study, almost seven out of every 100 commercial sex workers identified by the CJA team was a minor. During the 2010 study, less than two out of every 100 identified sex workers was a minor.²

Time-Space Sampling

Another sampling methodology IJM has used is time-space sampling (TSS). Time-space sampling involves the identification of a comprehensive list of areas (or locations) that members of the target population congregate. TSS was developed in the late 1980’s and is considered by many researchers to be the standard method for HIV behavior surveillance among at-risk populations in the United States.³ One of the key benefits of TSS is that it approximates probability sampling by randomly selecting mapped locations as a proxy for randomly selecting members of the target population. This allows inferences to be made regarding the population through the use of a randomized sampling.⁴

IJM has used time-space sampling to measure child sex trafficking prevalence in Cambodia, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic. These studies involve two distinct phases. During the first phase, IJM constructs a comprehensive list of locations within the study target area where concentrations of commercial sex workers can be found. This list is developed based on a review of existing studies and reports

2 The 2010 CJA Prevalence Study Report, which compares data across all three studies, is available at www.ijm.org.
3 MacKellar, D. e. (2007). Surveillance of HIV Risk and Prevention Behaviors of men who have sex with Men—A National Application of Venue-Based, Time-Space Sampling. *Public Health Reports*, 122, pp. 39-47.
4 Raymond, H. F. (2007). *Resource Guide: Time Location Sampling (TLS)*. San Francisco: San Francisco Department of Public Health, HIV Epidemiology Section, Behavioral Surveillance Unit.

on prostitution and child sex trafficking in the area, undercover mapping of commercial sex locations, and consultation with NGO partners. In the second phase, the study team randomly selects locations to visit from the comprehensive list of mapped locations. The sample size is calculated to yield a statistically significant sample, with a five percent margin of error.

In 2012, IJM used this methodology to measure the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, Cambodia. During the study, data collectors visited 232 locations that were randomly selected from a list of almost 1,000 mapped locations in the three cities. Based on the data collected at these locations, the study team estimated that the prevalence of child sex trafficking in the three target cities was 8.16 percent. Using the same methodology, IJM repeated the study in the same cities in early-2015.⁵ The findings of this latest study are being finalized.

CONCLUSION

The development and implementation of these studies have been a challenging and resource-intensive process for IJM, but the data they have produced has been invaluable because it provides focus and clarity to IJM's anti-child sex trafficking strategies by replacing myths and opinions with hard data. A 2012 prevalence study conducted by IJM in Angeles City, the Philippines, provided evidence that the prevalence of child sex trafficking in establishments and locations frequented by local Filipino sex customers was twice as high as the prevalence in locations frequented by expat sex customers. Similarly, a 2014 prevalence study conducted in the Dominican Republic indicated that while prevalence was 5.8 percent in establishments such as bars and nightclubs, it was almost 25 percent in parks, beaches, and street areas.⁶

That data has helped focus IJM's anti-trafficking activities in both countries to the areas of greatest need and has directly led to rescue dozens of sex trafficking victims by local law enforcement officials. It has also greatly assisted IJM and its partners to measure and evaluate the impact of past anti-trafficking efforts and guide future initiatives. IJM hopes that dissemination of its prevalence study methodology and results will foster further development of innovative approaches to measure and quantify human trafficking.

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⁵ The 2012 Cambodia prevalence study is available at www.ijm.org. The 2015 Cambodia Study Report is currently being drafted, and will be made available once it is finalized.

⁶ The 2014 Dominican Republic prevalence study is available at www.ijm.org.