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Young Person’s Guide to Combating Child-Sex Tourism
WHAT IS ECPAT INTERNATIONAL?

ECPAT stands for End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes.

ECPAT International is a network of organisations in over 75 countries working to end the exploitation of children and young people.

WHO IS A CHILD?

In this publication we use the term ‘children and young people’ or ‘child and young person’ to describe anyone aged 18 years and under.

We also sometimes just use the word ‘child’ or ‘children’ to mean anyone under 18 years old.
Welcome to this guide, which has been written to inform children and young people about child-sex tourism. We hope you will find it interesting and useful. If you want to know more after reading the guide, you can find the addresses of organisations working to end child-sex tourism on page 19.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (or 'CSEC' for short) is a type of sexual abuse of children. (Remember that ‘children’ here means anyone aged 18 years or younger).

Commercial sexual exploitation happens when someone (normally an adult, but it can be another, typically older, young person) sexually abuses a child, and pays to do this. The abuser can pay in money or they might give something else in exchange, such as food or a favour.

Many times the payment does not go directly to the child or young person who is abused, but instead is given to someone else who has power over them.
Child-sex tourism is a particular kind of sexual abuse. It normally happens when someone travels to a place and while there sexually abuses a child or young person who lives locally. For example, a person might go on holiday and then abuse a child who lives in a village or a community nearby. We call the person who sexually abuses the child or young person an ‘abuser’, an ‘offender’ or a ‘child-sex tourist’. Calling someone a ‘child-sex tourist’ can be misleading though, as child-sex tourism does not always mean that the abuser is a foreign tourist on holiday. The abuser may be someone from the same country who has travelled to another part of the country for other reasons, perhaps for business or work.

The main thing about child-sex tourism is that the abuser is someone who does not usually live in the place where they sexually abuse children and young people, although they may stay there for a long time.

Sometimes the abuser will pay the child or young person, but in many cases the abuser will pay another adult or an older child or young person. This other person is often called a ‘third party’ or an ‘intermediary’. The intermediary is taking advantage of the child or young person who is abused because they are making or encouraging them to be sexually abused so that the third party can get some benefit.

Although the abuser often pays money to sexually abuse the child or young person, in other cases they give something else needed or wanted by the child or young person, or the intermediary, such as a present or food or a special favour.

Remember that sexual abuse does not always involve touching, sometimes the offender may only want to take pictures or film the child or young person naked. This is called ‘non-
contact sexual abuse’ because it is still a sexual act carried out for the pleasure of the abuser.

Because the child or young person is being taken advantage of we say that they have been ‘exploited’. Since the abuser is giving money or something else to sexually abuse the child or young person, this is thought to be a kind of ‘commercial transaction’ because they are paying to abuse the child or young person. For these reasons, the correct way of describing what has happened when a child or young person is sexually abused by a tourist or a traveller is to say that they have been ‘commercially sexually exploited’.

IS CHILD-SEX TOURISM NEW?

Child-sex tourism has been happening for many years. However, in the last 15 years, people have begun to realise how often it happens and how seriously it can affect the children and young people involved.

This has led to many organisations, communities and governments becoming very concerned about child-sex tourism. There are now many efforts being taken to try to end child-sex tourism, and to give help to children who have been abused.

Taking Action – Example from the region of Africa

In The Gambia, the Child Protection Alliance is actively promoting the participation of children and young people. This includes getting young people to discuss issues that concern them, including child protection, and submitting declarations to the Government for action.
WHERE DOES CHILD-SEX TOURISM HAPPEN?

Child-sex tourism can happen anywhere, although it tends to happen where there are many visitors to a place, such as popular tourist resorts, either for holidays or pilgrimages, or where people are travelling through, such as transit or border towns. Places which have become known for child-sex tourism can ‘attract’ people who want to abuse children and young people.

If countries have taken many steps to make sure that child-sex tourism is not allowed and that abusers are caught and punished, then abusers may start to visit countries nearby where the law is thought to be not very strict in protecting children and young people from child-sex tourism. This increases the risks to children and young people in those neighbouring countries.

CASE STUDY 1:

Mr B is from North America, but has a house in South Asia where he stays for many months working as a volunteer teacher. He often drinks in bars where there are many tourists.

Mr B knows that some of the tourists have sex with the young women who work in the bars and restaurants locally. Sometimes when he has been drinking Mr B will pay to have sex with a young woman without asking if she is over 18 years old.

He knows this is wrong really, but believes that since lots of people do it, and the locals do not seem to mind, then it must be OK.
WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?

A common, but wrong, idea about child-sex tourists is that they are old, foreign men. This is not true. Abusers can be women, but are usually men. They can be young and can also be from the same country as the child or young person who is commercially sexually exploited. They may be alone or travelling with friends or family. Sometimes they are married, and they may even have their own children. Abusers do not have to be rich, although normally they have more money than the child they are commercially sexually exploiting.

CASE STUDY 2:

Mrs A is visiting Africa for the first time. She is 40 years old and divorced from her husband. While on holiday in an African country she had sex with a boy who was 17 years old and who was a waiter at her hotel.

She did not mind paying as it made her feel young and attractive again, and she thought it was fun. She also thought that she was helping the African boy who was poor.
SITUATIONAL ABUSERS

These are people who do not travel to a place in order to abuse a child or young person, but end up abusing because they can. This might be because they are offered the opportunity to abuse or because they see child-sex tourism happening and think that it is OK to do it there. We know that most abusers are situational abusers.

PREFERENTIAL ABUSERS

These are people who travel to a place because they know that they will be easily able to sexually abuse a child or young person while they are there. They can have many reasons for doing this, sometimes because they like the idea of having sex with someone who is young.

A special category of preferential abusers are ‘paedophiles’. These are adults who are considered to have an illness that means that they prefer to have sex with children. Many times people who want to have sex with children and young people convince themselves that what they are doing is right and that money or gifts given to the child make it OK.

CASE STUDY 3:

Mr J is a delivery driver for a food company. His route from the capital city to the smaller towns takes him through many poor villages. Sometimes Mr J offers poor children from the villages food in exchange for sex.
WHO ARE THE CHILDREN WHO ARE ABUSED THROUGH CHILD-SEX TOURISM?

Both boys and girls can be commercially sexually exploited. Frequently children and young people who are abused in this way come from poorer families, but not always.

Sometimes children and young people become involved in order to get money for things that other people would consider luxuries (such as a new mobile phone) and not to survive. This is referred to as being ‘victims of consumerism’.

Often children and young people who are victims of child-sex tourism live or work in situations that increase their risk of either coming into contact with someone who wants to abuse them or where they are vulnerable to exploitation. This can be because they come from minority groups, are working or living on the streets, or come from a home where there are neglected or mistreated.

What about children and young people who agree to have sex? Don’t they have a right to make their own decisions?

Although some children and young people may appear to agree to be commercially sexually exploited, the reasons for doing so mean that usually they are not really making a real choice and are forced to do it.

It must be remembered that children and young people have a right to be protected, and that it is adults’ responsibilities to do this.

To protect all children it is important that no children are exploited, even if some children and young people say that they agree to being abused.

For this reason, the commercial sexual exploitation of anyone under 18 years old is internationally considered a crime.

Why do we say ‘victims’ and not ‘survivors’?

In this publication we use the term ‘victims’ to describe children and young people who have been commercially sexually exploited. We do this because we know that sometimes children and young people are blamed for what has happened to them, and we want to keep reminding everybody that children and young people are commercially sexually exploited because of crimes committed against them.
Being abused through child-sex tourism can cause a lot of harm to children and young people. The exact type of harm depends on the individual, but it is not uncommon for children to have health problems such as infections (including HIV/AIDS) or disabilities or growth problems because they have not had enough food or have been beaten. Pregnancy is also a risk for girl children.

In addition to physical problems, children and young people can also suffer emotionally and mentally. They may feel embarrassed or ashamed about what they are made to do, and feel bad about themselves. Sometimes, children and young people may try to harm, or even kill, themselves. They may also take drugs or drink alcohol to try and make themselves feel better. Being able to trust people again may be very difficult.

**CASE STUDY 4:**

J is 16 years old and has a job renting out sun loungers on the beach. Most of the money he earns he gives to his family.

Sometimes tourists offer to pay for sex, and will also buy him a meal and beer. J is pleased when this happens because he has extra money to spend on himself.

He knows that if his family found out they would be upset. J worries about “catching AIDS” but he is too frightened to ask anyone in case they tell his family.
Another common problem that children face is being isolated and rejected. They may not be accepted if they go back to their families. When they are adults, children and young people who have been commercially sexually exploited can find it hard to get a job as they often have missed a lot of school or have had few training opportunities.

Some children and young people say that they are not being harmed by being involved in child-sex tourism. However, as they get older they often change their mind and say that they did not realise the effect of the abuse when they were younger.

**CASE STUDY 5:**

L is 9 years old. She comes from a poor family and so was sent to work with her uncle selling flowers to tourists. She has to earn a certain amount of money everyday otherwise she is beaten.

L’s uncle does not care how she earns the money, so when she is not able to sell enough flowers she will offer to have sex with tourists.

**CASE STUDY 6:**

M is 13 years old. She was taken from her village to a popular holiday resort at the other end of the country. She is kept locked up in a house and not allowed to leave.

Men come to the house and she is forced to have sex with them. M never sees any of the money, although she knows that the person who owns the house is paid by the men.

**Taking Action – Example from the region of South Asia**

In Nepal, young people from the YPP project have just started working with other young people working in bars and restaurants in Kathmandu. The young people are involved in educating others about the dangers of sex tourism, and offer support to those at risk.
WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT CHILD-SEX TOURISM?

There are different kinds of laws. International law is normally made up of agreements between many countries. One example of this is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (written in 1989). This is known for short as the UNCRC or the CRC. The UNCRC states that children and young people have a right to protection from all kinds of abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation.

International agreements then have to be adapted to suit each country, which passes local laws (known as ‘domestic’ or ‘national’ legislation) to protect children and young people from commercial sexual exploitation.

In general the international law says that it is wrong to commercially sexually exploit anyone who is under the age of 18 years. This means that child-sex tourists are committing a crime.

Even though there are laws, often children and young people are still not properly protected. Sometimes this is because the domestic or national law is not as strong as international laws, and gives opportunities for offenders to escape prosecution/punishment. Many countries are trying to solve this by passing special laws to say that if someone abuses a child or young person while they are overseas they can be arrested and charged with a crime when they get home (known as ‘extraterritorial legislation’).

CASE STUDY 7:

Mr X likes to have sex with young boys. He thinks that this is right, but knows if he gets caught in his own country he will be in trouble. Mr X chats with other people like him on the Internet and gets advice from them about the best countries to visit and places to stay where he can have sex with children without needing to worry about being found out, or if the police do arrest him, where he knows that he can pay a bribe to avoid going to court.
be able to bribe the police or other officials to avoid going to court. Sometimes the abuser can pay ‘compensation’ to the child or young person, or their family, to persuade them not to take legal action and to keep quiet.

Sadly, another reason why it is hard to prosecute offenders is that in many places, and despite what the laws say, the child or young person is blamed for inviting the sexual abuse or they are not believed that the abuse happened.

Taking Action – Example from the region of East Asia & the Pacific

Hotels in East Asian countries from the international Accor group were the first to introduce measures to protect children in their hotels. Efforts include training staff and raising awareness with tourists. Following the success of the work in East Asia, Accor hotels in other regions are now becoming involved.

THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN TRAVEL AND TOURISM

The Code of Conduct is an international agreement that many organisations and companies working in the travel and tourism business (such as hotels, airlines and tour operators) have signed.

By signing the Code of Conduct these organisations have given a commitment to doing all they can to end child-sex tourism. This includes not working with other businesses that tolerate child-sex tourism. To learn more about the Code of Conduct, please visit: www.thecode.org
WHAT CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DO TO END CHILD-SEX TOURISM?

Children and young people can play important roles in the fight to end child-sex tourism, and as a young person, there are many things that you can do. This includes:

Spreading the word about child-sex tourism by talking to friends and family about what you have read in this guide, and raising awareness about the problem of child-sex tourism.

Encouraging your family when booking holidays and travelling to use companies and businesses that have given an agreement to do all they can to end child-sex tourism. Code of Conduct members have all given a commitment to act against child-sex tourism. Look out for the logo!

Speaking out if you see what you think is a case of child-sex tourism or are approached yourself. In many cases this means telling one of the adults you are with (especially if you are on holiday) and asking them to take action. Many things can be done, including involving the police, or where a foreigner is involved, contacting their embassy.

Joining in with an organisation working towards ending child-sex tourism. There are many local organisations working on this issue, but if you are stuck finding one try contacting one of the addresses on page 19 and see if they can help. There are many ways to get involved, from joining awareness-raising campaigns to becoming a “peer educator”. Alternatively start your own organisation, make a presentation or do a project at school to inform others.
Seeking help. If after reading this guide you realise that either you or someone you know is being commercially sexually exploited, please seek help. It can be difficult to stop a bad situation, but seeking help is the first step. Depending on your situation this might mean talking to an adult you trust, or going to the police or child protection services. If you are not sure about the best thing to do, consider contacting a local children’s organisation or a child helpline. You can also contact one of the organisations on page 19 and ask for their help.

SAFETY FIRST!
IT IS TEMPTING TO GET INVOLVED AND TRY TO STOP CHILD-SEX TOURISM, BUT ALWAYS MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE SAFE. ALWAYS LET AN ADULT THAT YOU TRUST KNOW ABOUT YOUR WHEREABOUTS OR WHAT YOU ARE PLANNING TO DO.

REMEMBER, NEVER PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER! THIS OFTEN JUST MAKES THINGS WORSE.
Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope that it has helped you understand more about child-sex tourism and what you can do to support the fight to end it.
ORGANISATIONS WORKING TO END CHILD-SEX TOURISM

There are many organisations working to end child-sex tourism. These are some of the largest, working globally. You can contact them for more information, or to find details about local organisations in your area:

ECPAT International – www.ecpat.net (and the Child and Youth Advisory Committee www.eicyac.org)
Plan International – www.plan-international.org
The Code of Conduct – www.thecode.org
Save the Children – www.savethechildren.net
UNICEF – www.unicef.org
UNWTO – www.unwto.org
World Vision – www.wvi.org