Measuring the Number of Trafficked Women and Children in Cambodia:

A Direct Observation Field Study

Part –III of a Series

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ABSTRACT

Using statistical estimations based on actual counts, Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) estimated the number of sex workers in Cambodia in 2002 as 20,829 with 5,250 in Phnom Penh. They also estimated that 2,488 women and children had been sexually trafficked in Cambodia. Since the late 1990s, a much higher figure of 80,000 to 100,000 trafficked women and children in Cambodia has been circulating in Phnom Penh.

This paper reports the results of a detailed count of trafficked persons in Cambodia conducted throughout the country, both in terms of underaged workers and those working by force, fraud, or coercion. It investigates the figures of 80,000 to 100,000 and follows them to their sources. It offers recommendations on U.S. policy toward trafficking in women and children in Cambodia and Southeast Asia, based on the observations of trafficking venues, the motivations of the individuals involved, and the methods used in trafficking.

The study is Part-III of a series on trafficking in SE Asia of which Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) is Part –I. Part-II concerns the way the 80,000 to 100,000 figure originated, how it came to be accepted as true, and how it diffused throughout a sizeable portion of the NGO community in Phnom Penh concerned with trafficking in persons. Portions of Part I and Part II are summarized in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000

The U.S. government defines ***trafficking*** in terms of *knowingly obtaining by any means – often by force, fraud, or coercion – any person for involuntary servitude or forced labor*. ***Trafficking for sexual exploitation*** is defined in the (U.S.) Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 as *trafficking in which a commercial sexual act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age* (Department of State, 2001).

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 required the Department of State to file an initial *Trafficking in Persons Report* among other reports. This report was filed by the State Department in July 2001 (Department of State, 2001). It states:

> Based on reliable estimates, as the Congress has noted, at least 700,000 persons, especially women and children, are trafficked each year across international borders. Some observers estimate that the number may be significantly higher. (Department of State, 2001, p. 1).

Types of Trafficking

Trafficking of persons may be divided into source, transit, and destination trafficking. *Source trafficking* concerns the origin point of trafficked persons. *Transit trafficking* concerns persons in transit for the purpose of trafficking from a source point to a destination where trafficking will occur. *Destination trafficking* concerns persons currently in a trafficked situation at their present location. Both source and transit trafficking are difficult to detect since there is often little visible evidence to suggest that they are other than normal human activities. The motivation for traffickers is primarily to obtain money from third parties for the services of those trafficked. Thus, trafficking may also be classified concerning the source of funds obtainable from trafficking. In Cambodia, cases of trafficking of men for maritime labor and children for begging have occurred. Traffic in selling Cambodian babies to foreigners has been well documented, but current restrictions by the Cambodian government have greatly curtailed that trade. Much of the current trafficking in Cambodia concerns women and children trafficked as sex workers. That is the focus of the present study.

Questionable "Estimates"

In addressing the problem of trafficking we need to know its size, in order to plan and implement a practical and effective anti-trafficking strategy. Overestimates as well as underestimates of the size of the problem and the number of victims may result in the failure to allocate resources efficiently and an ultimate failure of the effort.

Any measurement, any estimate, is worth no more than the methods used to produce it. If we do not know the methods then we have no way of determining the worth of the estimate. References to a "rigorous methodology" that do not specify what that methodology is, are in fact equivalent to producing mere guesses through no reliable method whatever. For a method to be rigorous it must be fully explicated since non-replicable methods are inherently non-rigorous.

Beginning in the late 1990s, the figures of 80,000 to 100,000 trafficked women, and 5,000 to 15,000 children involved in commercial sex in Cambodia, began to gain credence. It may be instructive to follow the path this information has taken to enter the public debate on trafficking in persons.

The *NGO Statement to the 2001 Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia* contains the following statement:

> Child prostitution and child trafficking have become grave problems in Cambodia. In Phnom Penh, there are an estimated 10,000 - 15,000 child prostitutes (NGO Statement, 2001).

Similarly, Perrin, Majumdar, Gafuik, and Andrews (2001) use the term *sex slave* for victims of sexual trafficking in their report for their Future Group *The Future of Southeast Asia: Challenges of Child Sex Slavery and Trafficking in Cambodia*. They state:

> Despite these significant challenges, ranges of figures on the size of this problem in Cambodia have been made public. On the higher end, it is estimated that there are between 80,000 to 100,000 prostitutes and sex slaves in Cambodia. By far the lowest statistic for the number of prostitutes and sex slaves in Cambodia is between 40,000 to 50,000. With a population of just 10-12 million, Cambodia's sex slave and prostitution problem is enormous. Indeed, more than 1 in 150 people in Cambodia are sex slaves or prostitutes (Perrin, et al., 2001, p. 13).
>
> It can be expected that at least 1 in 40 of children born in Cambodia will be sold into sex slavery. The number of sex slaves and prostitutes has peak (*sic*) and has normalized as a well-established phenomenon in Cambodia (Perrin, et al., 2001, p. 13).

They go on to state that there were 17,000 sex slaves in Phnom Penh in 2001, with 80,000 throughout Cambodia (Perrin, et al., 2001, p. 14).

Also in 2001, the Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia under the heading of "Trends in Sexual Slavery" reported the number of trafficked women and children as "17,000 in Phnom Penh, 30% under 18 years old, 80,000 to 100,000 nationwide" (CRF, 2001, p. 14). The Child Rights Foundation cites the "Cambodia Human Development Report 2000 of the Ministry of Planning & the National 5Year Plan against CSEC" as the source of these numbers.

None of these groups – the NGO 2001 Consultative Group, the Future Group, and the Child Rights Foundation – studied the problem. They simply reprinted what other reports had said. Yet the sources cited by these reports do not support the numbers given in the quoted reports above. The Cambodian National Council for Children (2000) *Summary Five Years Plan against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children, 2000 – 2004* does not mention the number 80,000 to 100,000, either in the context of sex workers or as a number of trafficked women and children, and either in it's draft (February 1999) or final form (17 March 2000). The CNCC report lists only the 14,725 sex workers found throughout Cambodia as given in the National Assembly study of 1997, discussed below.

The *Cambodia Human Development Report 2000 of the Ministry of Planning* (CHDR, 2000) clearly states the "80,000 – 100,000" figure, as cited by CRF (2001), but in reference to the total number of <u>sex workers</u> in Cambodia, which then became 80,000 – 100,000 <u>sex slaves</u> in the

reports of many NGOs to the media, including that of the CRF (2001) quoted above. Since the CHDR (2000) is an official government report and is prepared with the assistance of UNDP, it will be instructive to follow the numbers in CHDR (2000) to their respective sources.

CHDR (2000) states:

> It is estimated that there are 80,000 – 100,000 commercial sex workers in Cambodia, with 17,000 of these being in Phnom Penh alone (Sophea, 1998; Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia, 1995). Of the CSWs in Phnom Penh, about 30% are estimated to be under 18 years of age. This would put the population of child CSWs at about 5,000 in Phnom Penh. Needless to say, these are very rough estimates. (CHDR 2000, pp. 36 -37).

Three important numerical estimates appear in this quotation:

1. The number of sex workers in Cambodia is said to be 80,000 – 100,000.
2. The number of sex workers in Phnom Penh is said to be 17,000.
3. The number of child sex workers (those under 18) in Phnom Penh is said to be 5,000 (CHDR 2000, p. 36).

Sources Given in CHDR (2000) for Numerical Estimates

"Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia, 1995"

While CHDR 2000 lists HRVC (1995) as one of two sources for the 80,000 – 100,000 figure, this is not what HRVC (1995) reports. Rather it states:

> The staff, using raw observation, interviews, and other methods of information gathering, had carried out the appraisal in 11 provinces, with Phnom Penh as the 12 area where the appraisal was conducted. The staff went to a total of **516 places** where sex workers reside and work. The **total of sex workers ages 17 and up** working or residing in the areas where the appraisal was conducted is **3,919**. The **total of those ages 17 and below is 1,800** (Boldface as in original; HVRC, 1995, p. 2).

No other figures relating to numbers of sex workers, either in Phnom Penh or in Cambodia as a whole, are given in HVRC (1995). The number of under-aged sex workers across 12 provinces is given as 1,800 in HVRC (1995), as opposed to the 5,000 under-aged workers suggested in Phnom Penh alone by CHDR (2000).

In fairness, HVRC (1996), the Annual Report of Human Rights Vigilance Cambodia for 1995 – 1996, does mention the number 17,000 sex workers, but not in reference to Phnom Penh as listed by CHDR (2000), and not as a finding of any HRVC study. It states:

> The Cambodia Women's Development Association estimates that the current number of women and children being prostituted in Cambodia is 17,000. (HRVC, 1996, p. 26).

But the Cambodia Women's Development Association did not issue this 17,000 estimate or any other such estimate in any of its published reports from 1994 to 1997 (CWDA, 1994; CWDA, 1995a; CWDA ,1995b; CWDA, 1997). An interview with the director of CWDA on 28 July 2003 confirmed this. She stated that it is possible that someone from CWDA might have

made such a statement orally to some other person, but it has not appeared in any CWDA report to her knowledge. There is no CWDA study of the number of sex workers in Cambodia.

While it is not cited as the source by HRVC (1996) or by CHDR (2000), the 1996 UNICEF situation report on Cambodia states that "17,000 sex workers were active in Phnom Penh in 1994" (UNICEF, 1996, p. 144). UNICEF (1996) cites no source and no study for this statistic. The statement simply appears in a sidebar in the margin of p. 144, and nowhere else in the publication, without any form of reference or attribution, and without any discussion or explanation in the text itself, and out of context with the surrounding textual discussion. Thus, the 1996 UNICEF situation report for Cambodia (UNICEF, 1996) appears to be the source for the CHDR (2000) claim of 17,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh. It is equally possible that the 17,000 number first appeared in HRVC (1996) with the misattribution to CWDA, since it was not possible to establish which was published first between HRVC (1996) and UNICEF (1996). In either case, the number simply appears in print, apparently out of nowhere, with no study to justify and support its existence.

In summary to this point:

(a) CHDR 2000 is incorrect in citing HRVC 1995 as the source of the 17,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh figure;

(b) HRVC 1996, not cited by CHDR 2000, does say 17,000 sex workers in Cambodia, but not in Phnom Penh, but lists CWDA as the source for this number; but

(c) CWDA is in fact not the source for the 17,000 figure either for Phnom Penh or for Cambodia;

(d) UNICEF (1996) may be the source of the 17,000 figure since that publication lists no other source for the number, but the source may be HRVC (1996);

(e) HRVC (1995) does not provide support for the 80,000 – 100,000 figure as suggested in CHDR 2000;

(f) HRVC (1995) does not say 5,000 sex workers under 18 in Phnom Penh as suggested by CHDR 2000, but rather 1,800 spread across 12 provinces including Phnom Penh; and

(g) the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2000* appears to have created the 5,000 estimate of child sex workers in Phnom Penh based on incorrect information, and counter to what its cited sources report.

Sophea, 1998

The second source cited in CHDR (2000) for the 80,000 – 100,000 sex workers in Cambodia figure that the CRF changed into '80,000 – 100,000 sex slaves,' is an ILO/IPEC presentation made in Bangkok in January of 1998.

The figure of '80,000 – 100,000 sex workers in Cambodia' appears only once, in a table on page 8 as: "Total Prostitutes in Cambodia: (*Unicef, 1996*) 80,000 – 100,000" (Sophea, 1998, p. 8). Thus, Sophea (1998) cites UNICEF as the source of the 80,000 – 100,000 estimate of sex workers in Cambodia. No claim is made, confirmed by interviews with ILO/IPEC officials in the Spring of 2003, that this is an ILO/IPEC finding.

There is no mention of a UNICEF publication in the brief reference list on p. 17 of Sophea (1998). A search of the library of UNICEF in Phnom Penh for all publications from the 1994 to 1998 period that mention a number of sex workers or a number of trafficked women in

Cambodia or Phnom Penh, yielded two reports. They are UNICEF's 1995 and 1996 situation reports on Cambodia.

UNICEF (1995). There is no mention in UNICEF (1995), the 1995 Cambodia situation report – which includes as Appendix 2 the NGO Report Summaries available at that time – of any study of sex workers that found 80,000 to 100,000 workers. The closest statement to that effect appears on p. 4 of UNICEF (1995) to the effect that in 1995, NGOs estimated, without a study to confirm these estimates, the presence of 10,000 to 15,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh. No NGO mentions any data or studies in the Appendix 2 reports that would support such a conclusion, and none of them mention in their reports, figures even close to the 10,000 to 15,000 Phnom Penh sex workers UNICEF (1995) says are estimated by these NGOs. It is possible that the 10,000 to 15,000 figures were provided by some NGOs orally, while their written reports list only the actual numbers found.

UNICEF (1996). UNICEF (1996) is cited as the source of the 80,000 to 100,000 sex workers in Cambodia figure on p. 8 of Sophea (1998), but such numbers are not mentioned anywhere in UNICEF (1996), including the out-of-context sidebar discussed above. No UNICEF documents available in the Cambodia office in Phnom Penh support the 80,000 to 100,000 figure.

Summary of Problems with Published Numerical Estimates

Most current published estimates of the numbers of sex workers, under-aged workers, and trafficked women and children in Cambodia, cannot be relied upon. Publications by NGOs and international organizations often print incorrect numbers that have no basis in fact. These errors appear to be quite unintentional, and may originate in something as simple as a typo. But the error is printed, and others then cite it uncritically as fact. Other published reports then cite such numbers uncritically and without checking their validity, and then those reports in turn become the source for further such printed estimates.

Two Empirical Studies

An empirical study of these numbers that is seldom cited was and is available from the Cambodian National Assembly (1997). It estimated 14,725 brothel workers throughout Cambodia, and is considered further in the Discussion section below.

In 2002 a second study, by Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey, calculated the number of trafficked women and children in Cambodia using empirical social scientific research methods.

To measure these numbers in Phnom Penh, Steinfatt, et al., (2002) used

(a) A Geographic Mapping Study of Phnom Penh, along with
(b) Data from the Phnom Penh Municipal Tourism Department,
(c) Data from UNDP on the number of sex workers on Routes 1 and 5, and
(d) An additional City Block Sampling study of Phnom Penh.

These results from Phnom Penh, and from Highways 1 and 5, were extrapolated to Cambodia using proportionality assumptions, measurements of highway lengths, and related statistical methods. The study provided the best currently available estimates of trafficking numbers in Cambodia as of June 2002. It used several assumptions based on information provided by the U.S. CDC, CARE, and other international organizations from their observations throughout the

country, and from a separate study of Thailand, in order to extrapolate the results to all of Cambodia. These assumptions were:

(1) The proportion of indentured sex workers is equal to the number of trafficked persons. Trafficking seldom involves kidnapping. It is normally done through an indentured contract with the family of the trafficked person.
(2) The proportion of indentured sex workers is not constant across Cambodia, but varies with the nature of the city and the area.
(3) The proportions of sex workers and indentured workers found in Phnom Penh can be used together with population data and city and area types to calculate national estimates based on these Phnom Penh proportions.
(4) The impact of tourism is to double the number of sex workers in smaller cities dependent on tourism as an economic base.
(5) The UNDP findings for Routes 1 and 5 are representative of the other national highways when corrected for vehicular traffic proportions.
(6) The proportionality assumption of population determining the number of sex workers extends to towns and villages as well as to smaller cities.

In addition to these six assumptions, one important factor in trafficking not measured by Steinfatt, et al., (2002) was the age of the workers.

Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) studied destination trafficking through data collection in Phnom Penh and on Highways One and Five, and through data extrapolation to the rest of Cambodia. The present study was designed to gather data throughout Cambodia in 30 days. Thus, data on age and trafficking status were necessarily obtained using low time-consumption methods of data gathering. The current study extended the data collection phase of Steinfatt, et al., in a rapid assessment to study destination trafficking throughout Cambodia, to the extent possible with available time and resources, so that extrapolation concerning the countryside would be based on direct countryside observations. The ages of sex workers throughout the country were also studied. The methods used follow closely those described in Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002), and Steinfatt (2002). The present study employed the U.S. government definitions of trafficking.

METHOD

Research Team

The Primary Research Team consisted of the Principal Investigator and one Primary Research Assistant, a Khmer national who speaks English and Khmer, and is familiar with much of the countryside. Secondary Research Teams were formed from local residents in each of the provinces during the days the primary team was in residence in that province. This was done by recruiting moto drivers, and local men in villages where no moto drivers were evident, to share their knowledge of local sex work venues. At least three males were independently asked for the location of all sex work venues in each locality.

Phnom Penh

Venues

Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey collected their Phnom Penh data in June of 2002. They did not gather sufficient data on the age of workers in enough establishments to provide reliable estimates

on ages. The areas studied in June 2002 were revisited in June and July 2003 to count the number of persons under the age of 18 who were available as sex workers and to confirm previously obtained data on trafficked women. Two areas were revisited once each month from February through August to obtain sequential data on change versus stability in the sex worker population of those areas.

Counting Underaged Sex Workers

After arrival at the venue, the team member entered each business and counted the number of apparently under-aged workers in evidence *(nYngOb)*. He asked if there were other young workers available, especially even younger workers. The manager was then asked if it would be possible to see more young workers either now or later, and how many there would be in total. This last number was used as the management report of the number of underaged workers *(nYngMn)*. The ethnicities of the younger workers were also requested (*nYngKmMn*, *nYngVnMn, nYngOthMn*). In addition, the age of younger workers present was measured using the method of the National Assembly (1997, p. 3) for younger workers, by observation of the external appearance and speech of the workers. The obtained *nYngMn* was always larger than *nYngOb,* and *nYngMn* was used as the best estimate of the number of underaged workers available.

Visual counts of the number of underaged sex workers in Phnom Penh were conducted in late January 2003, and then again at least once each month concluding on August 9. The mean number of underaged sex workers during July and August visits was used in computing the number of underaged sex workers in Phnom Penh in Table 3 below. These counts do not include street children who may be involved in sex work, unless they are connected in some way with a brothel. Measurement of age is considered in detail in the discussion section below.

Cities, Towns, and Villages Outside of Phnom Penh

Definitions

General Population Census of Cambodia. The General Population Census of Cambodia 1998 (NIS 1999a; 2003) reports population counts using the traditional province/district/ commune/village divisions as the geographic frame. These geographic divisions cover the entire land area of Cambodia. While data collection for the census was done professionally and carefully, the definitions used in reporting the census make the results difficult to apply to the present study. All persons residing within the surveyed section of the traditional geographic boundaries of an area designated as a district, commune, or village were counted in the census as residing in that demographic unit. Thus, census designations such as "village" do not necessarily refer to collections of dwelling units in close proximity and visible to the eye, but often to a sizeable geographic area with widely scattered dwelling units. The census report definitions make the census difficult to use in locating and in designating sex work venues, since the location of such venues is sensitive to population density, not to the number of dwelling units scattered across a sizeable geographic area.

In addition, the entire land area of whole provinces such as Kep, Pailin, and Sihanoukville is classified as "urban" in the census reports, in keeping with these provinces' classification as "towns." "Town" and "city" are not census defined terms, and are not used in the census reports aside from noting, for example, that three entire provinces – Sihanoukville, Kep, and Pailin – are defined as "*Krong*" (towns) (NIS, 2000, p. xv), and in a reference to "provincial headquarter towns" in explaining that the entire districts containing these towns will be treated as "urban" (NIS, 2000, p. xvii). In other words, the census designates entire *districts* within the

province/district/commune/village divisions, the largest geographic subunit within each province, as either entirely "urban" or entirely "rural." Vast areas of entirely rural landscape in most provinces are thus "urban," while relatively large population concentrations may be found in some districts designated as "rural." All ratios, percentages, and numerical comparisons involving rural and urban differences provided in the census must be understood with these definitions of "urban" and "rural" in mind.

This Study. For the purpose of the present study, the terms *city, town, village, special settlement*, and *rural areas* are used as defined below since the boundaries of these units are more visible to the eye when collecting research data.

- The ***cities*** of Cambodia were defined as Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampot, Koh Kong, Phnom Penh, Poipet, Siem Riep, Sihanoukville, and Takhmau.

- ***Town*** is used to indicate a built-up locality with at least a few substantial buildings forming a business section and a collection of dwelling units surrounding this section, which is smaller than the listed cities and larger than villages.

- ***Village*** designates a collection of dwelling units, usually without substantial buildings forming a business section, and usually with 250 or fewer residents in the collectivity.

- ***Special settlement*** designates a government defined resettlement area that often appears new or temporary. Such areas are visibly different from *villages,* as defined in this study.

- ***Rural areas*** are small collections of scattered dwelling units, usually with 50 or fewer residents living near to each other, but not in the proximity characteristic of a *village*.

Data Collection

The primary research team traveled to 23 of the 24 provinces of Cambodia. The exception was Ratanakiri, where information was gathered by researchers from CARE using the same methods described below for the other 23 provinces. Within each province, the largest city or town in each of the provinces was visited, as well as all other major towns. One such major town was missed in each of four provinces, for a total of four such missed towns. In all, 31 such towns were visited. No less than six villages in each province were visited, at least three along the more heavily traveled rural routes, and another three designated by the Primary Research Team as "difficult to access." Across Cambodia, 163 such villages were visited. Special settlements were studied when they were encountered. Eight special settlements were visited. Rural areas between the cities, towns, and villages were also observed for evidence of sex work activity. These visits occurred between June and August, 2003. Travel was by jeep. A motorcycle was used to approach sex work areas.

Location of Venues

The research methods detailed in Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002), and in Steinfatt (2002), were employed to obtain the data. For each Cambodian city outside of Phnom Penh, a minimum of five moto drivers in different parts of the city were asked to produce a map by driving researchers to sex work locations. In towns and villages at least three moto drivers or local men were employed. Taxi drivers in any urban area of the world are generally quite familiar with the locations of sex venues within their territory, since they make money from both

passengers who want to go there, and from the business which may give them a kickback from the customer's payout.

Each informant was asked to show the researcher, viewed as a potential customer, every location in the city – major, minor, and “hidden” – where sex could be purchased. The inclusion of "hidden" locations not often visited, was emphasized. It was made clear that these locations must include places where the poorest of the poor might buy sex, as well as the rich and foreigners. The driver then took the passenger to each of the locations known to him. In cities, this normally took several hours for each driver, while in many villages there were no sex work venues. When such venues did exist in a village they could all often be surveyed in 15 minutes since they were necessarily close to each other and usually had few workers.

Some of the locations consisted of individual buildings and businesses, while others were collections of multiple structures and businesses. For each city, the fourth and fifth drivers selected were unable to add any new locations beyond those produced by the first three drivers. In one city the second through fifth drivers produced no new locations. In towns and villages no new information was ever added beyond the second person questioned. On this basis, the moto-driver/local-citizen produced map of sex venues was assumed to be essentially complete in each city, town, and village. These venues were well known to most respondents, and were relatively easy to locate for anyone hailing a motorcycle taxi, the common method of transportation in Cambodia.

Some venues where sex is available were not open during the day or evening hours of the visit by the research team. Such venues are typically restaurants, karaoke parlors, and night clubs. In addition, the sex workers at guest houses often arrive for work in the evening hours though the guest house is always open. Massage parlors and brothels are 24 hour businesses. The managers of guest houses were interviewed in the normal manner, as were the managers of restaurants, karaoke parlors, and night clubs when they were open. When establishments identified by the secondary research team as sex work venues were not open, each secondary team member was asked independently about how many workers he had personally seen at the site, their ethnicities, whether there were younger workers, and whether the women were free to leave the establishment. The averages of these responses across secondary team members were used as surrogates for *nMn, nKm*, *nVn, nOth, nYngMn, nYngKmMn*, *nYngVnMn, nYngOthMn,* and *nIndt.*

Observation Counts, Management Interviews, and Number of Workers

The individual businesses operating in each mapped venue area were visited by one of the two members of the primary research team. Data collection was conducted as described for Phnom Penh, above. In addition to the age data collected in Phnom Penh, the team member entering each business counted the number of workers observed (*nOb*). He then presented this number to the manager by stating that he was scouting this venue for his employer and wondered if there were only *nOb* workers, or if there were others that worked there even on a part time basis. The number of total workers given by the manager (*nMn*) was noted. The team member then asked the manager about the price structure. The number of Khmer, Vietnamese, and workers of other ethnicities was also requested (*nKm*, *nVn, nOth*). Age data were gathered as described for Phnom Penh, above. The obtained *nMn* was always larger than *nOb,* and the management estimate was used as the best estimate of the number of workers, *nW*, as well as for the number of Khmer, Vietnamese, and other ethnicities of the workers and the number not free to leave. Similarly, the obtained *nYngMn* was always larger than or equal to *nYngOb,* and *nYngMn* was used as the best estimate of the number of underaged workers available.

Measuring Ethnicity. In the context of sex work venues, ethnic terms are commonly used to refer to physiological characteristics and biological origin, since that is of interest to some potential customers. Political considerations, such as whether an ethnically Vietnamese individual was born in Cambodia or in Vietnam, are not part of the normal pattern of customer interest. Local Khmer and Vietnamese customers do not need to ask who is "Vietnamese" or "Khmer" since the physical differences are usually obvious, especially to Khmer and Vietnamese. An additional obvious difference is the ability of Vietnamese persons in Cambodia, regardless of citizenship or place of birth, to speak Vietnamese. Most Khmer persons do not speak Vietnamese. Those who do are often Kampuchea Krom, persons of Khmer ethnicity from the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. Additionally, the behavior patterns of many Vietnamese sex workers, regardless of place of birth, are strikingly different from those of most Khmer workers. Most Khmer women engaged in sex work are reserved and quiet, while Vietnamese workers are more animated and assertive in approaching prospective customers. Foreigners unfamiliar with these differences will sometimes ask about ethnicity, so the question is not entirely unexpected or out of context when addressed to a manager. The majority of Cambodian direct sex work venues are worker-segregated, having either all Vietnamese or all Khmer workers. Derks (1998) provides cultural background on the trafficking of Vietnamese to Cambodia.

Measuring Indentured Status. The team member then asked how many of the workers were working off a debt or were otherwise not free to leave (*nIndt*), as some potential customers he knew were particularly interested in being with such workers. These questions were asked in a conversational manner as might be used by a potential customer, in English if the Manager spoke basic English, and in Khmer if not.

Reliabilities

To estimate the reliability of data obtained from only a single data gathering session, eight businesses, one in each of eight different towns, were visited by different team members on two different days, at different times during working hours. Previous studies in Thailand (Steinfatt, 2002), and one in Cambodia (Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey, 2002) have established that management estimates, given to potential customers or their representatives, are a valid method of obtaining such counts The reliability of the estimates so obtained was 98% for *nW*, 94% for *nKm, nVn, and nOth, 90% for nYngMn, nYngKmMn*, *nYngVnMn, nYngOthMn,* and 98% for *nIndt.* On this basis, the use of a single research team member interview to gather data in the majority of venues was presumed to be reliable. All reporting of results and calculations in tables and graphs involve only straightforward arithmetic counts, sums, and percentages.

RESULTS

Sex Workers Located

Observed

Across the 24 provinces of Cambodia, 5,317 workers available for selling sex were observed directly in sex work establishments (see Table 1 and Figure 1). Of these, 2,328 were in Phnom Penh; 1,885 were in the cities of Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampot, Koh Kong, Poipet, Siem Riep, Sihanoukville, and Takhmau; 1,038 were in towns; 47 were in villages; and 19 were in special settlements. No workers were observed in rural areas completely isolated from villages and other housing units.

Table 1
Number of Sex Workers in Cambodia
2002 – 2003

Location	***Observed***	***Estimate of Additional Unobserved***	***Estimated Total***
Phnom Penh[1]	2,328	2,922	5,250
Other Cities[2]	1,885	256[7]	2,141
Towns[3]	1,038	5,086[8]	6,124
Villages[4]	47	3,799[9]	3,846
Special Settlements[5]	19	876[10]	895
Rural Areas[6]	0	0	0
Totals	5,317	12,939	18,256

[1] Phnom Penh data from Steinfatt, et al., (2002).
[2] Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampot, Koh Kong, Poipet, Siem Riep, Sihanoukville, Takhmau.
[3] *Town* designates a built-up locality that is smaller than the listed cities and larger than villages.
[4] *Village* designates a collection of dwelling units, usually with 250 or fewer residents.
[5] *Special settlement* designates a government defined resettlement area.
[6] *Rural areas* are small collections of scattered dwelling units, usually with 50 or fewer residents.
[7] (13.56% of 1,885) = 256: Steinfatt, et al. (2002) City Block Sampling Venues correction.
[8] (183 towns/31 visited) = 5.9. (4.9 additional X 1,038) = 5,086. (5,086 + 1,038) = 6,124.
[9] (13,339 villages/163 visited) = 81.83. (80.83 additional X 47) = 3,799. (47 + 3,819) = 3,846.
[10] (377 special settlements /8 visited) = 47.125. (46.125 additional X 19) = 876. (876 + 19) = 895.

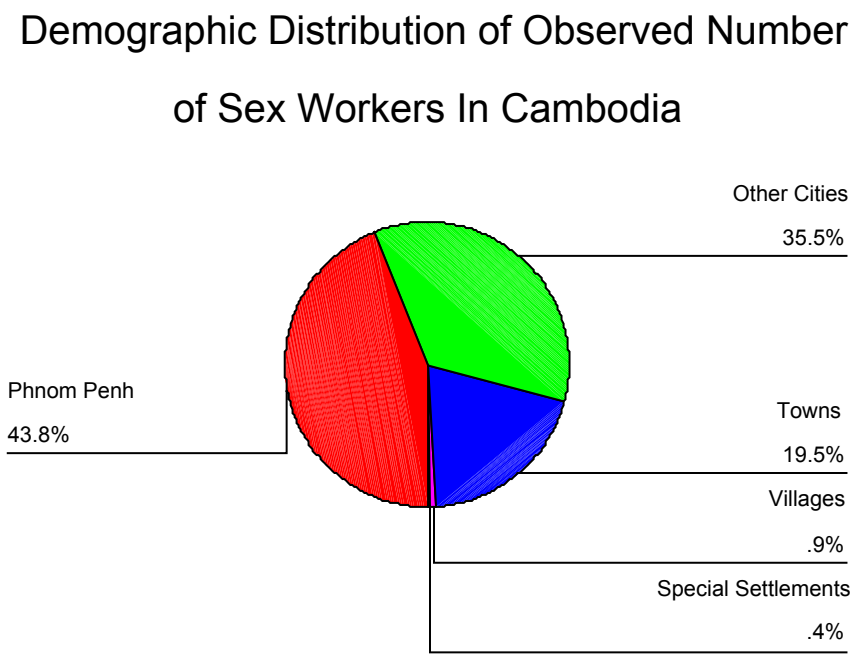

Figure 1

Estimated

In addition to direct observation of sex work venues, Steinfatt, et al., (2002) used counts from the Municipal Tourism Department, and observation of 44 randomly selected city blocks within Phnom Penh, to estimate the existence of an additional number of 2,922 sex workers in Phnom Penh for a total of 5,250. The city block sampling study suggested an additional proportion of 13.56% workers should be added to the observed count to correct for the existence of unobserved workers in Phnom Penh. The observational methods used in the present study were the same as used in Steinfatt, et al., and the same correction is appropriate for the remaining cities in Cambodia, each of which was observed. Thus, in addition to the 1,885 observed workers in other cities, an additional proportion of 13.56% or 256 additional workers is used as an estimate of existing workers who were not directly observed in the other cities, giving an estimated total number of sex workers in Cambodian cities outside of Phnom Penh of 2,141. The standard error of the proportion .1356 is .04384 (Blalock, 1972, pp. 206, 211-213), which gives a 95% confidence interval for the proportion from .0497 to .2215 (1.96 x .04384 = .0859; .1356 +/- .0859 = (.0497 < .1356 < .2215). Thus, with 95% confidence, the number of additional workers in other cities should be between 1,979 and 2,303, with 2,141, the best estimate, used in Table 1 and Figure 2.

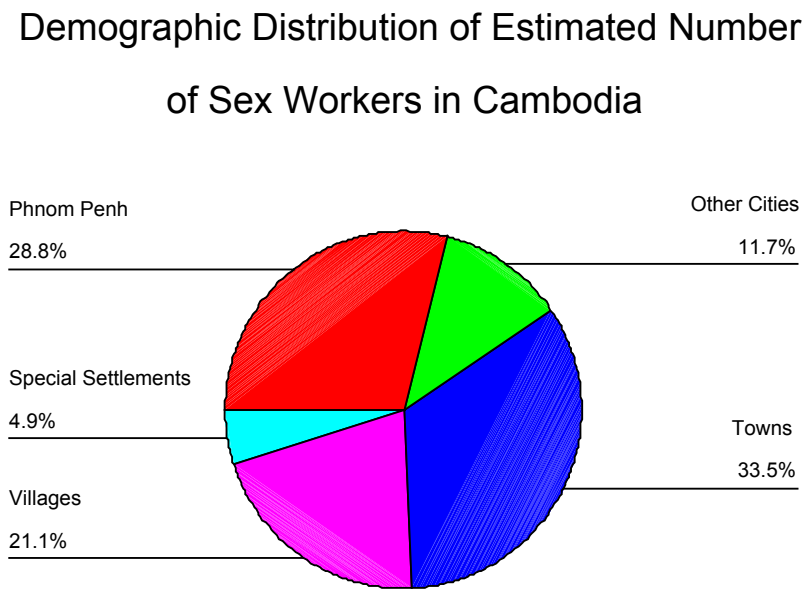

Figure 2

This 13.56% is not a reasonable estimate of missed workers in towns and villages throughout Cambodia, since, unlike the cities, many towns and villages in Cambodia were not directly observed. An additional number of unobserved sex workers may be expected to exist in these unobserved towns, villages, and special settlements. Their number was estimated by assuming that the towns, villages, and special settlements studied provide a reasonable picture of the number of such workers in unstudied locations.

Of the 183 districts listed in the census (NIS, 2000, p. xi), 31 district towns were studied, and 1,038 sex workers were observed in these 31 towns. The 183 district towns were divided by the 31 visited towns to give 5.9 sets of 31 towns, and 5.9 times 1,038 equals 6,124, the estimated total number of sex workers in Cambodian towns. Similarly, of the 13,339 villages listed in the census (NIS, 1999b, p. 2), 163 were studied with 47 sex workers observed in these 163 villages.

The 13,339 villages were divided by the163 visited villages to give 81.83 sets of 161 towns, and 81.83 times 47 equals 3,846, the estimated total number of sex workers in Cambodian villages. There are 377 special settlements listed in the census (NIS, 1999b, p. 2), and 8 of them were studied, with a total of 19 sex workers observed in the 8 settlements. The 377 settlements were divided by the 8 visited giving 47.125 sets of 8 settlements. Assuming 19 sex workers as the best estimate for each of the 47.125 sets, yields 895 as the estimated total number of sex workers in special settlements in Cambodia.

While some of the populated areas surveyed were clearly rural, in gathering these data, the primary research team sought out towns and villages on more traveled routes, on road intersections, and with larger populations, in order to maximize the likelihood of locating sex workers and trafficking victims. Thus the estimated numbers in Table 1 should be high-side estimates since the unobserved towns, villages, and special settlements are likely to have a smaller proportion of sex workers when compared with the observed locations due to lower average population density.

Sex Worker Ethnicity

Ethnicity was conceived and measured as the ethnic origin of the individual, not as country of birth or country of citizenship. Thus *Vietnamese,* as used in this report, refers to persons of Vietnamese descent, regardless of citizenship or country of birth. Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) determined the ethnicity of 2,058 observed sex workers in Phnom Penh (see Table 2 and Figure 3). Of the 2,989 sex workers observed outside of Phnom Penh for the present study, ethnicity was obtained for 2,487, with 77.4% of the workers identified as Khmer, and 21.1% Vietnamese (see Table 2 and Figure 4). Throughout Cambodia, 65.5% of the sex workers located were Khmer and 32.8% were Vietnamese.

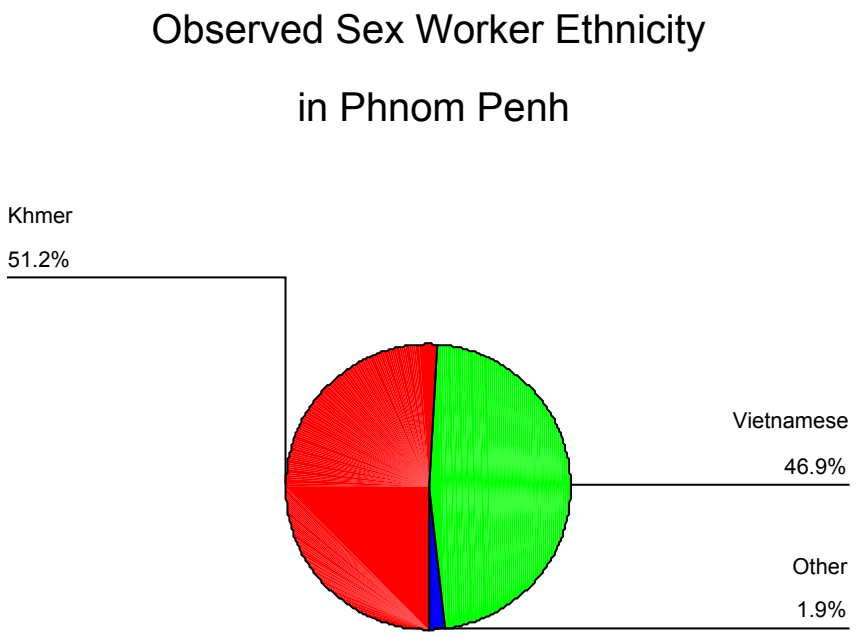

Figure 3

Table 2 Observed Distribution of Sex Worker Ethnicity in Cambodia 2002 – 2003				
	Khmer	***Vietnamese***	***Other***[1]	
Phnom Penh	1,054	965	39	N = 2,058
Outside Phnom Penh	1,925	525	37	N = 2,487
Cambodia Total	2,979	1,490	76	N = 4,545

[1] Composed of Lao, Chinese, Cham, and Khmer Leu.

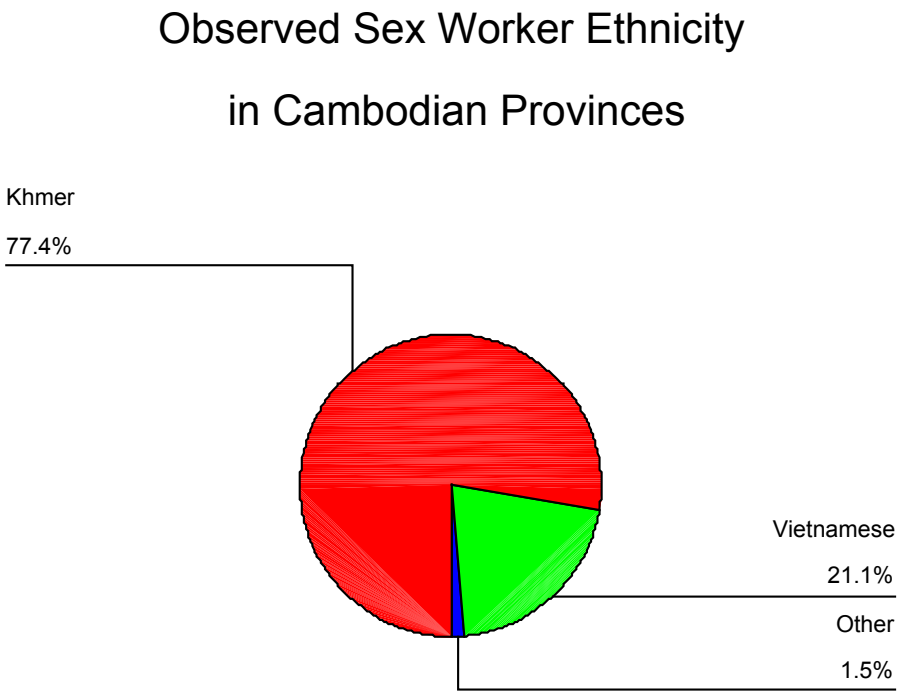

Figure 4

Trafficking

Observed

The U.S. definition of sexual trafficking consists of two categories: persons forced, deceived, or coerced into sex work, and persons under the age of 18 induced to perform a commercial sexual act. Coercion, deception, and trickery normally appear in the form of an indentured contract, a debt owed by the worker that must be paid before she can leave the employ of the brothel.

Workers were counted as indentured if, through management identification, they were either currently indentured or had been indentured in the past. Not all indentured workers are

trafficked. Some workers are well aware of the implications of signing an indentured contract and do so willingly. For purposes of this study so as not to miss any possibly trafficked persons, all persons ever trafficked, those with indentured contracts past or present, were counted as trafficked.

All of the indentured workers observed in the provinces were in cities and towns, with the majority in cities. No indentured workers were found in villages or rural areas. Older teenaged sex workers were less likely to be found in towns and villages and primarily were found in cities. When found, they were often working by choice, and were never observed to be indentured when located in villages. That is, in all observed venues in villages, we found no teenaged sex workers who were indentured, though they were found occasionally in towns, and primarily in cities. Those judged to be under 16 by our measures were found only in cities, particularly Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Koh Kong. While those under 16 were usually indentured, twenty under-aged Vietnamese workers in Phnom Penh were found to be working without a debt contract. The numbers of underaged and indentured workers observed in Cambodia are given in Table 3, and illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, respectively. A total 1,074 persons classified as trafficked, either by indentured status or by underaged status, were observed. This number is 20.2% of the 5,317 observed sex workers from Table 1. The ethnic distribution of these 1,074 is given in Table 4.

Table 3
Observed Number of Trafficked Sex Workers by Trafficking Category, Location, and Ethnicity in Cambodia 2002 – 2003

Trafficking Category	***Location***	***Ethnicity***			***Totals***
		Khmer	***Vietnamese***	***Other***	
Under 18[1]	Phnom Penh	57	89	0	146
	Provinces	21	31	0	52
	Under-18 totals	*78*	*120*	*0*	*198*
Indentured[1]	Phnom Penh	31	610	8[2]	649
	Provinces	94	133	0	227
	Indentured totals	*125*	*743*	*8*	*876*
	Phnom Penh totals	88	699	8	795
	Province totals	115	164	0	279
	Trafficked Totals	203	863	8	1,074

[1] Persons under 18 who are also indentured are listed in the figures for "Under 18"
[2] Chinese.

Underaged Sex Workers in Cambodia by Ethnicity and Location

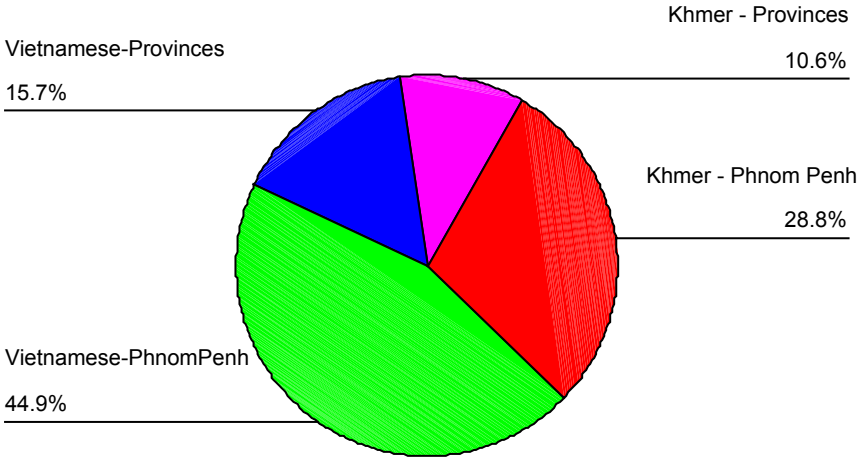

Figure 5

Ethnicity and Location of Observed Trafficked Women and Children

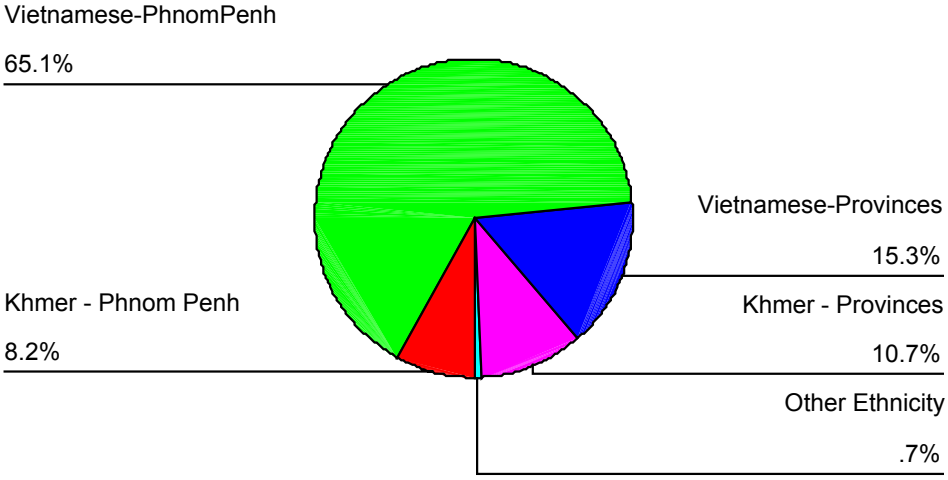

Figure 6

Table 4 Observed Proportion of Indentured Sex Workers by Ethnicity in Cambodia 2002 – 2003			
	Khmer	***Vietnamese***	***Other***
Proportion of Total Number of Indentured Workers	18.9%	80.4%	0.7%
Proportion of Ethnic Category Indentured	6.6%	61.9%	–
	N = 1,074		

Estimated

In addition to the observed trafficked individuals in Table 3, other unobserved individuals are trafficked in Cambodia. Applying the observed proportion of 20.2% indentured uncritically to the 18,256 estimated number of sex workers throughout Cambodia (see Table 1) would produce a sizeable overestimate of 3,688 trafficked women and children in Cambodia. This process would assume that the extent of trafficking found in cities and more populated areas, which are disproportionately represented in the sample, can be applied directly to less populated areas with far lower observed rates of trafficking. A more reasonable approximate method is to add the 13.56% undercount percentage for cities to the city totals and to double the numbers obtained for towns and villages to represent unsampled areas. Applied to the data of Table 3, these assumptions would predict a total of just under 2000 trafficked women and children in Cambodia, with the great majority in the cities. While more precise estimates could be made, the differences between them would be small, and would depend on arguing the merits of one set over another. Thus, 2000 is the best current estimate. The relationship of observed untrafficked to observed trafficked sex workers in Cambodia, by ethnicity, is illustrated in Figure 7.

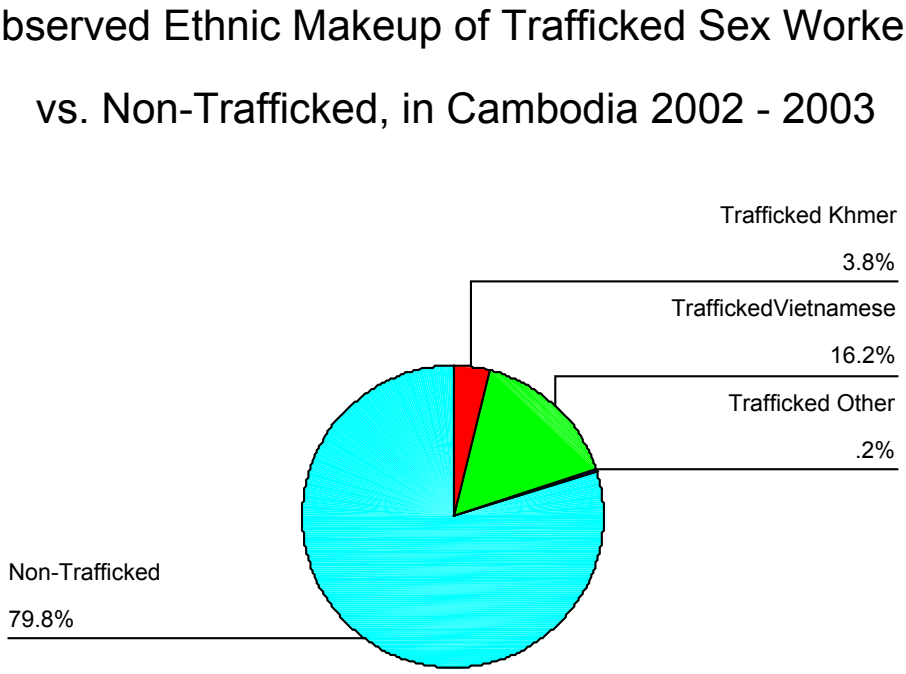

Figure 7

DISCUSSION

The number of sex workers and the number of trafficked women and children observed during the course of this study are summarized in the Results section above. They are substantially smaller than the estimates commonly printed concerning human trafficking in Cambodia that are discussed in the introduction to this report, and are based on the results of careful observation.

Comparisons with Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey

Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) used data from Phnom Penh and Highways One and Five to predict the number of sex workers and the extent of trafficking throughout Cambodia. The present study obtained data from brief observations throughout Cambodia. Thus, extrapolation to the countryside in the present study is based on direct countryside observations. Steinfatt, at al., (2002) estimated 20,829 sex workers in Cambodia. They report an indentured percentage of 31.2% in Phnom Penh, and estimate 2,488 trafficked women and children in Cambodia. The present study estimated 18,256 sex workers in Cambodia, an indentured percentage of 20.2% throughout Cambodia, and approximately 2,000 trafficked women and children in Cambodia. Thus, a principal effect of observing the countryside rather than estimating it from Phnom Penh and highway data was to lower the estimates in each of these categories.

Comparisons with National Assembly Study Results

The results of the present study are similar to the results found in the study by the Commission on Human Rights for the National Assembly (1997), the governing body of Cambodia. The National Assembly report represents the Cambodian government's best attempt to determine the extent of trafficking in women and children in Cambodia to date. It is based on an extensive and detailed study, conducted through interviews with local authorities, brothel owners, and sex workers throughout Cambodia, combined with direct observations by research assistants. The two studies are not directly comparable since the National Assembly report estimates 14,725 *brothel workers* in Cambodia (National Assembly, 1997, p. 3), ignoring sex workers outside of brothels, while the present study observed both direct and indirect forms of sex work finding 18,256 *sex workers* in 2002-3. The National Assembly study estimates 81% of the brothel workers to be Khmer and 18% Vietnamese. The present study found 65.5% Khmer persons and 32.8% Vietnamese persons among all sex workers, though the countryside figures of 77.4% Khmer and 21.1% Vietnamese are closer to the numbers obtained by the National Assembly. It is unclear from the National Assembly report whether ethnicity was determined by citizenship or by ethnic origin. Counting ethnic Vietnamese born or naturalized in Cambodia as Khmer, would produce a higher Khmer proportion in the National Assembly results.

A table on pp. 5 – 6 of the National Assembly report provides a detailed count of the number of brothel-based sex workers in each province. Unfortunately the numbers in this table do not match the summary numbers provided in the report. The figure of 14,725 brothel workers is reported on p. 3, while the detailed charts on pp. 5 – 6 sum to only 7,321 such workers throughout Cambodia, and no explanation is given for the discrepancy.

The National Assembly report makes clear the finding of 1997 that only brothel-based workers, often called *direct sex workers*, were trafficked (National Assembly, 1997, pp. 6 – 9), since indirect workers – "beer girls," guest house workers, bar workers, etc. – are always free to leave their jobs. This is a key indicator of trafficking since trafficked women often are not

allowed to leave the brothel by the owner. In *direct sex work*, the customer's payment is directly for sex, with no pretense of a payment for other services such as conversation and companionship. *Indirect sex work* provides other services such as that of a waitress or companion in addition to sexual services. Our findings matched those of the National Assembly in this regard. All trafficked women observed in the present study were either in brothels, or in locations marked as "massage" that were simply brothels advertised as massage parlors.

The detailed study by the National Assembly suggests that sex workers who are not free to leave are found only in brothels, as are under-aged workers less than 16 years old (National Assembly, 1997, pp. 6 – 9). This observation agrees with the experience of the Primary Research Team both in and outside of Phnom Penh. The present study found that virtually all of the sex workers employed outside of 24 hour locations were Khmer, 18 or over, and working through choice. Sex workers aged 16 – 17 were the only exceptions to the 24 hour location observation, some of whom were found in massage parlors not open during the day. Additionally, the National Assembly study found that younger children working in sex venues, those under 16, were always found in cities and large towns, and always in brothels (National Assembly, 1997, p. 9). Our findings agree with this assessment, but some children lived with their families in the vicinity and came to the brothel on call.

Results from the present study disagreed with the results of the National Assembly study in some regards. Specifically, our findings suggest that while most children in sex work are trafficked into it in some manner, that some children, particularly in areas near but outside of Phnom Penh, discover the existence of sex work as it operates close to their homes, and see in it a way to make money to help themselves and/or their families. The National Assembly report disagrees with the present report in that regard.

The Complexities of Measuring *Age*

Since one of the two conceptions of trafficking defined in the U.S. Trafficking Act of 2000 is *persons under 18 engaged in sex work*, a clear understanding is needed of the complexities of what appears at first glance to be a simple concept: *age*. This clear understanding is also needed in order to provide guidance in reducing trafficking.

Measures of Age in Previous Studies

As Steinfatt suggests in his detailed long term study of Thai bar workers, "Age data provided by a bar worker are suspect" (2002, p. 371). His research carefully crosschecked age reports with multiple forms of verification. This research with sex workers in Thai bars provides data on the veracity of verbal reports of worker ages given by sex workers, and of such reports by bar management when the worker's actual age was known. Steinfatt's data, gathered between 1988 and 1999, indicates that reports by sex workers of their own age were generally accurate, but were less reliable under two conditions: (a) when older workers were attempting to appear younger; and (b) when underaged workers were attempting to appear to be 18. The former bias was a minor but consistent factor. The latter bias was sporadic and occurred only when younger workers were faced with police pressure (Steinfatt, 2002, p. 372).

Management reports of worker age in Thai bars were accurate within the knowledge level of management with respect to the age of the worker in question. But management often did not know the age of bar workers, and this was especially true for workers over 18. In addition, such management reports tended to be absent or non-committal in situations when an accurate

response might produce trouble for the bar. In general, managers of sex work venues are motivated to inform customers of the availability and age of underaged workers since, for those who have such workers, that is how they make money. To hide the existence of underaged workers from a potential customer is counter productive.

> Any motivation to hide younger workers should be directed at official, police, or governmental inquiries, not at a customer. The bar's motivation with a customer should be to assume that asking the question implies an interest in a younger worker, and part of mamasan's job is to match workers with customers who are interested in them (Steinfatt, 2002, p. 372).

Based on these findings and assumptions, the present study used management reports of worker age as the principal measure of the existence of underaged workers, since in-depth interviews with individual workers were not possible within the time frame of this study. Steinfatt's Thai data (2002) suggest that methods such as management estimates and external appearance and speech, the methods used in this study, are usually accurate in measuring mean age within 5%, with management estimate errors as likely to overestimate as to underestimate age. The measurement of age through management estimates as employed in the present study is relatively accurate for aggregate data, when the concern is with total numbers and averages of groups. These methods provide a reasonable estimate of the number of underaged persons, but are not sufficiently accurate for legal purposes, as when applied to the question of the age of a specific individual. The more accurate methods discussed below involve access to each individual sex worker for questioning, and thus require a considerably greater time commitment for data gathering within each venue than was available in this brief study.

Different Conceptions of *Age*

While numerical age since birth is a simple concept in Western societies, it becomes a more complex question in Cambodian sex work venues. In all societies people often lie about their age when asked, and there is direct motivation to lie in some forms of sex work. Older workers may give a younger age when asked while persons under 18 may give an older age. Simply raising the issue of age in a potentially legal context may frighten some respondents into remaining silent or providing a fictitious number. The concern in this study is in distinguishing persons actually under 18 years of age from those 18 or over.

The age of younger children may be established by several relatively reliable observational methods such as the "external appearance and speech" method employed in the National Assembly study (1997, p. 3). Other more technical methods, such as the difficulty younger children experience in touching their opposite ear with their hand over the top of their head, can be used to distinguish ages among these younger children. But no such physical methods are available to distinguish reliably between 17 and 18 year-olds. Appearance provides a general guide but can be very deceiving in both directions, with persons over 18 sometimes appearing to be underage, and teenagers under 18 sometimes appearing to be more mature. Manners and speaking styles are of some help, but usually provide little reliable information. ID cards are generally not available, and certainly not in the research setting in a Cambodian brothel. People do not exchange such written information in such settings. While ID cards may be available to a researcher outside of the brothel setting, as when the person in question is in the care of an NGO, ID cards are easily faked, and the cards of sisters and friends can be borrowed.

The remaining method is to ask the person, the manager, and other persons who know the individual in question, about the individual's age. This method presumes two things:

a. the respondent knows the answer to the question; and

b. the concept of age used by the respondent is the same as that used by the questioner.

a. Is the answer known to the respondent?

(1) When the respondent is *not* the target individual.

The manager and other nearby persons often do not in fact know the age of the person in question. Usually, they have no direct knowledge of the person's age, knowing only what, if anything, the person or members of the person's family may have told them. They may or may not recall this information accurately when asked. Only persons who grew up with the person in question would have reasonably reliable information, and such persons are usually not found in a brothel setting. Family members might know, but even blood siblings often do not know the ages of their sisters and brothers, though they almost always know the rank order age of siblings. The four age measurement problems listed below also apply to the interpretation of *age* responses given about a target person by other individuals.

(2) When the respondent *is* the target individual.

It is not uncommon for rural and less educated people in Southeast Asia not to be certain of their own age.

b. Is the concept of numerical age the same for respondent and questioner?

If target respondents do know a numerical age for themselves, it may not be based on the same measurement concept common in more developed countries. Four different meanings are possible for any given numerical response to an age question, assuming that the target respondent actually knows his or her own age. The person may be calculating age based on:

(1) *Years since birth to current date, counting the first year as zero*.
This is the Western method commonly used throughout the developed world.

(2) *Years since birth to current date, counting the first year as one*.
This is a common rural method. It uses the same counting system employed in Western countries in counting stories of a building, beginning with the ground floor as the *first* floor, or days in school – the *first* day of school, the *second* day, etc.

Effect: Method (2) produces an age one year older than method (1).
17 in method (1) becomes 18 in method (2).

(3) *Years since birth to current date, counting the first year as one, and using the lunar new year as birthday*.
In addition to counting from one rather than from zero, persons using method (2) often do not know the month and day of their birth, and/or do not use it to calculate their age. They become one year older each year when others do, on the date of the lunar new year.

Effect: Method (3) produces an age between 12 to 23 months older than method (1).
17 in method (1) becomes 18.0 to 18.9 in method (3).

(4) *Years since first enrollment in government school to current date, with first year recorded as age "six," regardless of the student's actual age by any of the first three systems, at time of enrollment*.

Rural parents and poor urban parents in Cambodia often delay the start of schooling for their children due to economic pressures. It is not unusual for a child to begin school at the lowest grade level when they are age eight to twelve years old, measured under any of the first three systems. The mandate for government schools is for children to begin school at age six. If a school reports several children beginning school at an age older than six, questions may be raised at a higher level, that have to be answered. To avoid this, teachers commonly record the age of entering children as "six." Once recorded, the name and age of the entering child often becomes the official government record of the individual.

Effect: Method (4) produces an age that is usually younger than method (1). 17 in method (1) becomes an indeterminate age in method (4), usually varying between 18.9 and 12, and depending on both the choice of method (1), (2), or (3) as a starting point and the actual method (1) age at date of entry to government school.

Conclusion:

The complexities of the meaning of a proffered numerical age suggest that both written and oral questions concerning a person's age, when asked in the context of a Cambodia brothel, are likely to produce uninterpretable responses.

Best Practice: Ask for the Animal

The Chinese calendar uses a sixty-year cycle, with twelve animal-named years repeated five times. The majority of sex workers, as well as trafficked women and children in Cambodia, know their birth year animal by the Chinese calendar. In place of raising the issue of age, target individuals should be asked, personally, for their animal. This practice provides several advantages over asking for age:

1. The respondent usually knows the answer.
2. It eliminates ambiguities created by not knowing whether the first year is counted as zero or one.
3. It eliminates possible confusion created by entering school later than age six.

4. Asking for the person's animal is
   - more personable
   - less formal
   - less likely to be perceived as an age question
   - less potentially frightening, and
   - thus produces a more valid response than asking for numerical age.

5. Stating a false numerical age is easy given the ability to count.

6. Stating a false animal is difficult because it demands
   - knowledge of the order of animals in the Chinese system, and
   - the ability to determine whether an earlier or later animal will keep the respondent "out of trouble."

While people know their own animal, most children and teens are not certain of the exact order of the animals in the Chinese system. They just know *their* animal.

Chinese Calendar Animals and Years 1966 – 2013				
Animal	***Year***			
Horse	1966	1978	1990	2002
Sheep	1967	1979	1991	2003
Monkey	1968	1980	1992	2004
Rooster	1969	1981	1993	2005
Dog	1970	1982	1994	2006
Pig	1971	1983	1995	2007
Rat	1972	1984	1996	2008
Ox	1973	1985	1997	2009
Tiger	1974	1986	1998	2010
Rabbit	1975	1987	1999	2011
Dragon	1976	1988	2000	2012
Snake	1977	1989	2001	2013

If the respondent gives the Year of the Ox in an interview conducted after March 1 in 2004, she is either 18 or over, or 6 to 7. (Since the date of the lunar new year normally occurs in late January to February, a person born in the Year of the Ox could have been born in January of 1986.) The visual difference between persons who are 18 or more, versus 6 to 7, is obvious. If the year given is the Rabbit, the important visual distinction is between a person of 16 to 17 and a person of 29 to 30. While more difficult than the 18+ versus 7 distinction, this difference is still relatively obvious to an observer familiar with the appearance of Asian women. Knowing the *season* of the person's birth (hot, rainy, etc.) in addition to the animal, would allow the method-(1) age to be known within about four months.

Contracts

The issue of trafficking cannot be dealt with successfully without an understanding of the concepts of ***debt*** and ***contract*** as they apply to trafficked women and children. Khmer women are often tricked or kidnapped into their first work experience. This is usually not true for Vietnamese women and children. Trafficked Vietnamese women and children are normally motivated to stay in the brothel and work. While a few appear grateful to be "rescued," many such persons, especially Vietnamese, expend considerable energy in getting back to the brothel from which they were rescued. The explanation lies in the debt contract. It is usually an oral contract and is seldom written. The poor, particularly Vietnamese poor, do not trust banks. They almost never use them, but are constantly in need of funds and must borrow these funds. They borrow from friends and acquaintances who have extra money, and serve as loan agents themselves when they have extra money. This system would collapse if people were not scrupulously honest about acknowledging debts and the need to repay them in a reasonable period of time.

One method of acquiring power over others is to loan them money. If the debt cannot be repaid, a daughter may have to be sent to work it off. The family and the daughter will consider this debt a matter of great seriousness and family honor. The family likely could not survive in a Vietnamese community if the family had the reputation or even the hint of not paying its debts.

Yet not all trafficked workers with a debt contract are tricked or coerced into working in this way, nor are they usually brought to the brothel by a "trafficker," or by the brothel owner, or by someone who works for him. It is common for a family member, often the mother or an aunt, to bring a daughter from Vietnam to a brothel in Phnom Penh and request an advance payment. This may be referred to as "selling" the daughter by Westerners, but it is not perceived in exactly that way by Vietnamese.

An observation pointed out by a research associate is instructive. *The extent of control exercised by brothel owners over trafficked women and children appears to be related to the location where the advance payment for services occurs.* If the advance is paid in Saigon or elsewhere in Vietnam, the person working off the debt is relatively free to leave and return to the brothel at will, provided they are available for work during working hours. If the person is brought to the brothel and the payment is made there, the brothel owner will usually exercise considerable control over the individual so brought, not just initially but for the entire time period until payment of the debt. If the payment is made in Vietnam, the payee can be traced and there is little chance that the daughter in the brothel will attempt to leave. If the payee cannot be traced, as when a person simply appears at the door and asks for money, the owner will be motivated to be certain of the location of the collateral, the trafficked individual.

Attempts to control trafficking through rescue attempts will fail to the extent that the impact of the debt contract on the trafficked person's motivation and behavior are not taken into account. Rescued workers will rush back to the brothel at their first opportunity, and then will be open to severe sanctions and heavy controls by the brothel owner acting, as he sees it, to protect his investment.

If a trafficked woman or child on a debt contract fails to return to the brothel, either through choice or by restraint by government authorities or a well-meaning NGO, a message will go out to the family in Vietnam that the person is no longer working off the debt. The next daughter in line, often an even younger daughter than the one already working, will be sent to take the place of the "rescued" worker. If the person does eventually escape and return to the brothel, two daughters will be working there instead of one, and neither is likely to return home until the debt is paid.

Effects of Raids

While acquiring data on age in Phnom Penh brothels, we noted the numbers of under-aged workers at least once each month from February to August. A raid occurred on January 23, 2003 at Svay Pak, a brothel area north of Phnom Penh, and our first measurement occurred on January 29 when 8 underaged workers were observed to be available in brothels. In late February that number had increased to 24, and then to 46 in two separate March measurements. A major police raid led by the International Justice Mission occurred on Saturday, March 29. On April 3, getting a count was difficult since managers were sensitized to persons asking about underaged workers. We obtained a count of 12. On April 21 our count was 35, and on May 7 the count was 49. It did not decrease below 45 for the remainder of the observations into the summer, and gradually increased to 55. Thus, if data were gathered a few days after a raid involving a "rescue" of underaged persons, the number of under-aged workers was lower, largely because they had been "rescued." About two weeks after rescues at Svay Pak, the number of under-aged workers was noticeably higher.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Across Cambodia, 5,317 sex workers were observed in direct and indirect sex work establishments. Of these, 2,328 or 43.8% were in Phnom Penh, and 2,989 in the remainder of the country. An additional 12,939 unobserved workers were estimated to exist throughout the country, for a total estimated number of sex workers in Cambodia of 18,256, with an observed percentage of 65.5% Khmer and 32.8% Vietnamese. A total of 1,074 persons, 20.2% of the 5,317 observed sex workers, were classified as trafficked, 876 by their indentured status and 198 as underaged. Almost all observed trafficked workers were Vietnamese or Khmer, with less than 1% of other ethnicities, and the total number of trafficked women and children throughout the country was estimated at 2,000. The majority of those trafficked, 80.4%, were observed to be Vietnamese since 61.9% of Vietnamese sex workers were or had been indentured. Trafficked persons were concentrated in population centers such as cities and towns, with the majority in cities. No indentured workers were found in villages, as defined in this study, or in rural areas. Those judged to be under 16 were found only in cities, particularly Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Koh Kong. All trafficked women and children observed in the present study were in brothels, some marked as "massage." Some children working in brothels lived with their families in the vicinity and came to the brothel on call.

Regardless of the number of trafficked persons, trafficking is a serious crime. Either overestimating or underestimating the size of the problem and the number of victims can interfere with the planning and implementation of an anti-trafficking strategy, by failing to allocate resources in an efficient manner when and where these resources are needed. In addition, failure to understand the local conditions, such as the nature of the contract status of the trafficked individuals, can lead to a potential increase rather than a decrease in the number of trafficked persons when implementing an anti-trafficking strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future Research

Several areas of future research are suggested by the findings of this study. Little research is available concerning the extent of source and transit trafficking in Cambodia, and trafficking for other than sexual purposes. While the results of Chantavanich, Paul, Wangsiripaisal, Suwannachot, Amaraphibal, and Beesey (2000) concerning the Thai/Burma border are of interest to persons concerned with the Thai border with Cambodia, no direct study of that border area has been completed. Derks (1997) discusses Cambodia as the source of trafficking of Cambodian women and children to Thailand, but did not study the extent of such trafficking directly. Steinfatt (2002) studied sex workers in Thailand over a twelve year period from 1988 to 1999, obtaining data from over 4000 sex workers and interviewing 2,445, and found only one sex worker of Cambodian origin in his Thai sample (2002, p. 117). Additional observation by the author in Bangkok suggests that Khmer children can be found near the entrances to many Thai foreign oriented sex work areas, but that neither Khmer children nor adults are normally found as sex workers in Thailand, with the possible exception of immediate border areas. That possibility should be evaluated through research.

Given the relative openness of Cambodian borders and border crossings, a study is in order of trafficking in persons from Cambodia to other countries, especially across the Thai border, and of Cambodia as a transit country for such trafficking. This should be done by searching for

Khmer sex workers in Thailand and other potential destination countries and interviewing the women and children concerning their condition. In addition, the extent of involvement of street children in sex work is not well documented and should be examined in future studies.

Intermittent raids were observed to be associated with a decline in the number of underaged workers, followed by a later increase to previous levels or above. It is possible that intermittent raids provide an unintended incentive for brothel owners to recruit additional underaged workers. This possibility should be evaluated through research.

Much of the research on trafficking in persons, as well as efforts to suppress such trafficking, has concentrated on sexual trafficking. Additional forms of trafficking, such as trafficking of Cambodian men for seafaring labor, should be evaluated for the extent of the traffic.

Thus, four trafficking areas are recommended for future research.

Recommended research area 1:

Are Khmer women and children being trafficked to Thailand to engage in sexual labor? If so, how many are involved, where do they originate, what is the relationship of the brothel or sex venue owner to the person delivering the trafficked persons, and, if possible to determine, who are the major traffickers? Is there evidence that they are being trafficked to countries other than Thailand?

Recommended research area 2:

What is the extent of involvement of Cambodian street children in sex work and other forms of child labor?

Recommended research area 3:

The effects of raids on brothel areas should be evaluated over time to determine their effects:

- on the rescued sex workers,
- on the numbers of underaged sex workers in the raided brothels at future times,
- and on whether any new underaged workers have entered sex work recently.

Recommended research area 4:

Additional forms of trafficking, particularly the trafficking of Cambodian men for seafaring labor, should be evaluated for the extent of the traffic.

Implementation of Trafficking Controls

Experience gained in studying the trafficking areas of Southeast Asia leads to a number of recommendations concerning major barriers to transition to and consolidation of an anti-trafficking strategy in Cambodia.

The measurement of age through management estimates, as employed in the present study, is relatively accurate for aggregate data, when the concern is with total numbers and averages of groups. These methods provide a reasonable estimate of the number of underaged persons, but are not sufficiently accurate for legal purposes, as when applied to the question of the age of a specific individual.

Implementation Recommendation 1.

When knowledge of the specific age of an individual is required, asking the target individual for her animal year at birth is suggested. This question should be asked in the context of a friendly conversation, not from a questionnaire nor as part of a general inquisition.

How can the debt contract be addressed?

- Dealing with the debt contract is the key to stopping trafficking.
- Failing to deal with it ensures failure of the attempt.
- Building popular support is necessary for the elimination of trafficking.

Implementation Recommendation 2.

Establish a Communication Program intended to reach both victims and potentially trafficked persons. Coordinate this program with authorities in Cambodia and Vietnam. Use both interpersonal and mass media channels. Use an Education/Entertainment strategy to create a radio soap opera broadcast in Vietnamese and in Khmer in Cambodia on A.M. radio, and in Vietnamese in Vietnam. The program should be broadcast at regular hours during daytime listening hours, at least five days a week for one hour. It should be carried on a network of radio stations positioned so that anyone, including truck drivers and rural residents, can listen throughout Cambodia and Southern Vietnam at a minimum. The program should be used to educate the public on policy changes and the concept that trafficking will not be tolerated. Populate the program with common people who have typical human problems and conflicts and who explore different means of solving these problems. One of these means will be sex work, and one of the forms of sex work will include being tricked by a trafficker. Another will be a family decision to send a daughter to work in a brothel. These characters will face consequences from their decisions that should be realistic, and the program should depict alternate choices made by other characters in similar situations that have better consequences. The program should attack the view that debt contracts for sex trafficking need to be honored. Recommendations concerning what people should and could do if faced with trafficking decisions should be included in the plots, and a distinction between trafficking and migration should be maintained. A distinction should be drawn between moral and immoral debts, phrased within the norms of the Khmer and Vietnamese cultures, which praises repayment of debts, but vilifies the need to repay a trafficking debt. One element of this attack should be the intent of authorities to prosecute forcefully anyone who tries to collect a debt connected to sexual trafficking. This would require the prior agreement of authorities to do this.

Interpersonal communication channels should be used as well in the form of change agents recruited from the local population. The individuals should be similar in most respects to families at risk of becoming involved in trafficking. Their role should be to form talk and support groups in Khmer and Vietnamese communities in Cambodia, and Vietnamese communities in Vietnam, to discuss the plots of the radio shows and encourage family members to talk about the plots, characters, and consequences, and to offer social support where needed. They should seek support from opinion leaders in the local communities, and encourage the opinion leaders to play the role of change agent.

A principal reason for the success of traffickers is the need of families for a stake with which to start a small business. An economic alternative to trafficking should be available to families.

Implementation Recommendation 3.

Create a small program of microloans available to families at risk in both Vietnam and Cambodia. Set the initial funding level at $30,000 for total loan capital. The microloans must be treated as loans, with specific payback times, low interest rates, and low principal amounts, no more than US$250.00 per family. The loan must be used to start a small business, with a payback schedule geared to the economic reality of the family, but within a few years. Availability of a second loan should be contingent on payback of the first. Use the initial small scale program to learn what works and what does not, and slowly expand the sections of the program that work.

Implementation Recommendation 4.

Use a person or persons trained in research and familiar with brothel operations, with brothel workers, and with brothel owners to aid in planning all brothel interventions, including both research and rescue operations, someone who can help to distinguish between trafficking and migration. Recommendations from such persons will differ according to the situation within the brothel, its location, past experience with and within the brothel, and many other factors. Thus, a simple list of do's and don'ts applicable in all or most situations is difficult to create. Listen to the advice and follow it to the extent possible. If the advice is not to be followed, specific reasons for this decision should be listed prior to the intervention, and the effects of the failure to follow these recommendations should be evaluated each time they are ignored, so that lessons will be learned rather than mistakes repeated. Specific areas of advice should include:

- How and when to approach a specific brothel or brothel area for maximum positive effect and minimum negative consequences.

- How to conduct interviews with specific brothel workers and specific brothel owners, including when to interview, the interview situation, the interviewer, the interviewer's demeanor and gender, and the use of message strategies such as warnings, recommendations, threats and promises.

Trafficked women and children are in a precarious situation. Implementation programs that rescue trafficked women and children only to have the rescued individuals escape from the rescue and return to the brothel can not be regarded as successful. The safety and care of rescued women and children is the reason for the rescue. Trafficking victims motivated to rush back to the brothel at their first opportunity cannot be cared for and removed from at-risk status. Persons returning to the brothel under such circumstances may be open to severe sanctions and heavy controls by the brothel owner.

Implementation Recommendation 5.

Assure that the new location is in fact not hazardous physically or emotionally, and is a place where trafficking victims would want to stay. Ask recently trafficked women for their opinions on how changes could be made to safe houses to make them more user-friendly. Allow rescued individuals as much freedom of choice in their destiny as possible. Do not assume that the safe house or NGO in charge of rehabilitation is all seeing and all knowing, nor that it is well run, or even well motivated, and needs no visitations. Conduct unannounced visitations of each safe house. Provide advocates for the rescued women and children independent of the NGO/safe house, someone such as a former sex worker who can speak for the person and who the person will trust. Work to keep stays to a minimum.

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