

A Global Initiative to Explore the Sexual Exploitation of Boys



The initiative will:

- Consolidate and strengthen the evidence base of the sexual exploitation of boys globally and;
- Identify appropriate prevention, protection and recovery frameworks to inform legislation, policy and programmes.



WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Under-researched
- Unrecognized as victims
- Limited boy-focused programming
- Research that did exist:
 - boys were more affected than was generally recognized

"Despite some signs of growing awareness, the impact on boys continues to be seriously underresearched, unrecognized in relevant legislation and policy and, thereby, potentially undetected and unaddressed"







GENDER, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (DEC 2019)

- 20.1% of children in online child sexual abuse images in the UK database were boys
- 30.5% of children in Interpol's database were boys
 - When images included boys, the abuse was more severe
- Street connected boys at very high risk of sexual exploitation
- In some travel and tourism settings boy victims outnumber girls



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Research article

Gender, rights and responsibilities: The need for a global analysis of the sexual exploitation of boys

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ABSTRACT

ARTICLEINFO

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child confirmed child and youth right globally. Their right to participation is a critical driver for the 2030 Sustainable Devel Goals (SDGs). Youth prioritize the need to end violence against them, damping adults with safeguarding, and identify gender inequality as an underlying cause of child sexual exploitation (CSE). SDG 5 includes targets for ending sexual exploitation of girls; however, it is critical to review whether we are supporting both boys and girls adequately. Based on recent research, it is clear that male visitins of CSE are prevalent, yet they have been relatively excluded in policy, research, and interventions. The aim is not to minimize the importance of understanding and eliminating CSE of girls, but to acknowledge that vulnerable sub-groups of boys exist in com munity (street-connected boys, refugees, sexual minorities) and service systems (justice, child welfare, humanitarian aid). Genderbased challenges persist in protection, disclosure, help-seeking, professional recognition, programming and prevention. In this discussion article, we outline responsibilities in human rights law to understand and address boys' CSE and overview key literature on its impact on boys. It is argued that gender-, trauma-, and violence-informe approaches are expanded to address the contribution of harmful gender norms, and to target evention in the adolescent years for sexually transmitted infections, mental health, and sub stance abuse and violence problems. This discussion advances a pressing need for a global analysis of CSE among boys.

1. Introduction

UNCRC

Major progress has been seen in achieving children's rights since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) was developed, and has been almost universally ratified. The UNCRC represents an international treaty, and momentum, for the best interests of the child. The United Nations' Secretary-General Guterres notes that 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC: further, he personalizes the promise to maltreated children: "I have been haunted by my many encounters with children scarred by unspeakable acts of violence, enduring traumatic experiences of neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation, and often stigmatized by their own communities" (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretar General on Violence Against Children, 2019, p. 7).

A childhood free from violence, especially sexual violence, is in the best interests of infants, children and adolescents. Sexual violence victimization of children and adolescent minors is not only sexual and physical exploitation, but also exploitation of their

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MEASURING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF BOYS (APR 2020)

- Difficult to measure for all genders
 - Under-reporting
- Can be exacerbated in particular ways for boys
 - Social and cultural attitudes
 - Terminology
 - Gender norms
 - Legislation





The Global Boys' Initiative

Research phase: July 2020 – June 2021

THE THAILAND REPORT (NOV 2020)



65 Frontline workers

- ecpat
- What affects boys' ability to seek and access support?
- What influences service providers ability to provide support?

20 young people with diverse SOGIE who are exchanging sex

- What social and cultural influences?
- What themes or patterns in experiences lead to sexual violence and exploitation?
- What factors prevent young people with diverse SOGIE from seeking and gaining support?

Legal Analysis

 Does Thai law allow for the full protection of boys from sexual exploitation and abuse?



GLOBAL 'LESSONS LEARNED' PROJECT





- McMaster University contracted to conduct a systematic literature review:
 - Formal peer-reviewed literature
 - Grey literature
 - sourced via the ECPAT network
- Academic paper summarising the reviewed literature



ENDING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

4 countries: Hungary, South Korea, Morocco and Belgium.

Purpose:

- Using participatory approaches with boy survivors to ensure that children's views are integrated and reflected
- Recommendations from boy survivors for dignified and quality services for survivors of sexual exploitation
- Use recommendations as advocacy messages to achieve increased access and improved services for boy survivors







LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

- Legislative analysis conducted with ECPAT members in 12 countries
- ECPAT will build capacity of members and lead them in reviewing their national laws in relation to sexual exploitation of boys



FRONTLINE PROVIDER SURVEY



- Partnership with Terre des Homme Netherlands
- Online survey of at least
 50 Frontline welfare
 workers in each of 15
 countries



SOME RESEARCH PHASE OUTPUTS

Final national level reports for all activities

 Global level findings that inform and improve access and quality of services (with activities planned for next phase)

Website that consolidates research findings and other resources

