

Recommendations from the report
“The Ties that Bind: Migration and Trafficking of Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia

1. For a sustainable and meaningful response, findings from the report should be presented to Cambodia’s National Task Force to Combat Trafficking so that they can inform counter-trafficking strategy and policy and advocacy in the core areas of prevention, protection, prosecution and monitoring.
2. A girl or woman’s relationship with the household tells us a lot about her social vulnerability. The evidence suggests that familial dysfunction is the key factor propelling young women and girls into situations of exploitation. Prevention needs to target social vulnerability and provide holistic and meaningful support so that families and communities can stay together and/or migrate safely.
3. The data strongly supports interventions that tackle the worst forms of child labour, including those that lower the numbers of child domestic workers or increase their access to education, as a means to reduce the voluntary and forced migration and trafficking into commercial sexual exploitation later on in life.
4. The report also demonstrates that child protection mechanisms need to be developed in the Cambodian context to tackle issues to do with child sexual abuse and physical abuse within the family, especially with children who are vulnerable to being marginalized within it (such as when step parents are present, or when guardianship has been handed over to extended family members)¹.
5. Awareness issues need to concentrate on areas that reduce the social stigma and shame that the report has shown facilitates trafficking. This includes tackling attitudes and cultural norms that leads to impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, including acts of sexual violence.
6. As it is demand that fuels trafficking, demand side interventions addressing (especially) the sexual habits of men should be considered. These range from awareness raising campaigns with (young) men to criminalizing commercial sex both its buyers and the (direct / indirect) establishments where it takes place.
7. Counter-trafficking interventions also need to focus on communities and groups who are especially vulnerable to trafficking, including ethnic Vietnamese groups in urban areas of Phnom Penh and beyond. Young girls and women within these groups are especially liable to being trafficked into

¹Contracts, used for example in child domestic work arrangements, are clearly associated with force and sacrifice of the child for the family’s general welfare. Use of contracts represents an informal loophole that needs to be closed.

the virginity trade. Longer-term strategies need to address the social marginalisation of these groups within the Cambodian context.

8. In terms of re-integration, it is clear that many former and current victims of trafficking are not being reached by re-integration activities. Further action research needs to seek to understand what potential models could be developed to support women and girls to leave commercial sexual exploitation and reliably meet their needs².
9. There is a need to pass the trafficking law and disseminate the tricks of traffickers, especially relating to strategies of deception, coercion, debt bondage and manipulation. The culture of compensation, especially in relation to rape, needs to be addressed so that the law is used as an instrument of sanction and can truly act as a deterrent.
10. The authorities need to take on board the fact the sexual exploitation occurs in both direct and indirect establishments and increase their monitoring activities. Counter trafficking activities should be organized around senior provincial and municipal working groups that meet and report regularly to the National Task Force. Through the provinces and municipalities, the National Task Force should also ensure a zero-tolerance of trafficking, especially in towns and cities where *entertainment areas* are present.

² As victims are frequently from the most dysfunctional families, an evaluation of reintegration procedures should take place to assess if current strategies are really meeting their needs