

**Sexual Commercial
Exploitation of Girls,
Boys and Adolescents
in Guatemala**

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS, BOYS AND ADOLESCENTS IN GUATEMALA

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	2
- Size of the study	2
- Geographical areas of research	3
- Community Insertion.....	3
- Interviews	3
- Collection, systematization and analysis of the information.....	4
- Review and analysis of Newspaper clippings and Bibliography	4
3. Concept Frame	4
- Child Pornography	6
- Traffic of girls, boys and youth.....	7
- Migration, illegal traffic of migrants is not trafficking of persons.....	7
4. Approach to the size of the problem	8
5. Perceptions of the problem	8
6. Perceptions of the exploitation of girls, boys and youth in the Town of Poptún, Petén	9
7. Insertion mechanisms in sexual exploitation	13
8. The environment	18
9. Profile of the boy/girl and youths under a situation of sexual Exploitation	19
- Work they perform	19
- Income.....	19
- Nationality and Migration problems	20
- Ethnics.....	21
- Age	22
- School level	22
- House	23
- Background of the Guatemalan victims of Sexual Commercial Exploitation.....	25

10.	The sexual exploitation network.....	27
11.	Profile of the customer.....	33
12.	Characterization of a sexual exploitation network.....	36
13.	Recommendations.....	39
14.	Bibliography.....	42

PRESENTATION

This time, IOM is presenting a delicate and controversial document, as the issue number 8 of the Working Notebooks collection. The subject of child prostitution has always been an awful and hated issue, not only for what child abuse is in itself, but also for what it means for any society to occur amongst its members. This study reveals the issue in Guatemala as a growing problem.

For the migration agenda, the issue has complex and sordid implications, since a good portion of this human disgrace takes place precisely deriving from situations of misery, through organized crime networks involved in the cross-border trafficking of minors, by prostituting them for their commercial exploitation. These are new forms of contemporary slavery, where deceit and coercion join necessity, to provide sexual services to a growing number of customers, who pay to satisfy their sexual appetites with children or youth.

On the other hand, precisely due to the clandestine and illegal nature of the issue and the abuse it entails, it is very difficult to obtain accurate data on the practice, procedures, frequency and scope, in order to stop and reduce these practices, and bring those responsible to justice.

Also, since the type of violations as well as the dangers and threats to which direct victims are submitted, and in some cases, their families, it is very difficult to obtain timely information in order to intervene without endangering the victims and, later, to treat the psychological damage.

While illegal trafficking of persons who risk their lives and possessions to seek better economic opportunities that they cannot find in their place of origin, is unacceptable and reprehensible; if the trafficking of women prostitutes is equally reprehensible, this traffic for the sexual exploitation of minors is one of the most serious and hateful criminal activities because those affected are boys, girls and youths, and due to the magnitude and seriousness of the violations of children's human rights implied. This study goes into this delicate problem in order to offer an approximate profile of how it is being expressed in Guatemala.

The study presented by the International Organization of Migration –IOM- Guatemala, in this Working Notebook No.8, is a collaboration effort with ECPAT and Covenant House (Casa Alianza) to whom IOM expresses its recognition for having allowed us to publish this valuable study.

Guatemala, January 2002

SEXUAL, COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS, BOYS AND ADOLESCENTS IN GUATEMALA

1. INTRODUCTION

The sexual, commercial exploitation of girls, boys and youths, is a social phenomenon that increases by the day in Guatemala, especially through prostitution and the trafficking of minors for sexual purposes. There is no quantitative analysis on these problems, because of its characteristics of secrecy and illegality; nevertheless, the information provided by health centers and government officials, enable to infer that we are facing a constantly increasing phenomenon.

Sexual, commercial exploitation is the most inhuman and cruel form of violence exercised against girls, boys and youths. It is one of the worse violations of the fundamental rights of children, since they are reduced to a condition of merchandise or sexual object; purchased, sold; kidnapped inside and outside the country's borders, like a smuggling object; locked up in brothels and forced to live in conditions similar to those of slavery and to have sex with their corrupters.

The National Plan against Sexual Exploitation maintains that it is "not only a social phenomenon crossed by two central axis such as gender (a problem involving more girls, adolescents and adult women) and their ethnical condition (there are evidences that Mayan and mixed girls and adolescents are involved in this problem). It is also a legal problem since it goes against, not only the national juridical regulations established in the country, but also international ones, ratified and thus adopted by Guatemala as of obligatory observance and internal enactment. Finally, it is a human rights problem, because sexual commercial exploitation of girls, boys and adolescents seriously damages the dignity and integrity of the person".¹

Generally, young girls and youths become involved in prostitution after suffering a living chain of lacking, abuse and violent and traumatic experiences, among which are: abandonment, negligence, sexual and labor abuse, incest, rape, rejection, physical and emotional abuse, discrimination, poverty, lack of opportunities, low schooling levels, teen-age pregnancies, abortion, etc.

Also, the consequences of sexual exploitation are very serious for girls, boys and youths, since it goes against their dignity and affects mainly the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, moral and social development of the young victims. Their implications affect the families and society as a whole.

¹ Plan Nacional contra la Explotación Sexual, Grupo Articulador, Guatemala, 2001

In 1999, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nation on the subject of selling children, child prostitution and utilization of children in pornography, Ofelia Calcetas Santos, visited our country in order to prepare a report on this issue. In her report, the Rapporteur states that “only in the capital city, more than 2,000 girls and boys are being exploited in more than 600 brothels”. Also, in the case of the capital, she mentions that “the age range of minors exercising prostitution are from 8 to 12 and 15 to 17, similar as those detected in other places of the interior of the country, visited by the Rapporteur.”² Equally, the study reveals “the existence of more than 200 night-life centers and more than 600 bars where prostitution is exercised, many of them illegal, where under-age persons are also sexually exploited. From the more than 2,000 adolescents being sexually exploited, reported by police investigators in 1996, 1,200 adolescents were Salvadoran, 500 Honduran and Nicaraguan, and more than 300 were Guatemalan”³.

Among the recommendations made by the Rapporteur, the following may be mentioned: the urgent need to pass the Children and Youth Code; the description of sexual crimes in the national legislation; the need for programs to care for street children, other than the traditional “raids”; urgent education campaigns and legislative initiatives against incest; the establishment of rehabilitation programs for girls who have been victims of sexual crimes, both incestuous or commercial; the need for entities of the Guatemalan Government to receive the mandate of following-up on the commitment made at the Stockholm Conference⁴, and the commitment to establish bilateral and regional agreements to eradicate the sexual commercial exploitation of girls, boys and adolescents, and the trafficking of minors for sexual commercial purposes.}

2. METHODOLOGY

Size of the Study

During this study, 50 interviews were conducted with girls and adolescents, in a situation of prostitution, with Guatemalan, Salvadoran and Honduran nationalities, which were the nationalities detected during the process of investigation.

Five interviews were conducted in depth with institutional actors and key informants. Three were made in Guatemala City; others were conducted in Petén, three in the town of Poptún together with a workshop and four in San Benito. Five interviews were conducted in Tecún Umán, San Marcos.

2 Diagnóstico de Situación: La Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños, Niñas y Jóvenes en Guatemala. Guatemala: ECPAT/Guatemala, 2001, p.19

3 Ibidem p.20

4 The Conference on Human Development

Geographical Areas Selected

The work was undertaken in the capital city of Guatemala, in the town of Tecún Umán, the municipal capital of Ayutla, San Marcos, located at the South Border between Guatemala and Mexico; in the municipality of San Benito, of the Department of El Petén, located inside the touristic circle of the Mayan cultural and ecological areas. Also in Poptún, Petén, the passing zone for migrants towards Mexico through the northern border; in Quetzaltenango, the municipal capital of the Department of the same name, and in the municipality of Coatepeque, located on the coastal line of the same department, both included in the area of influence generated by the Guatemala-Mexico border dynamics.

Community Insertion

The fieldwork began by establishing contacts in the selected communities, with residents of the place that could help us in our work, with local authorities and other key actors for the process of community insertion. After selecting the local support persons, they were given training as to their comprehension and interpretation, so that their job would really be to support the research process on important issues.

The Interviews

The criterion held for this phase of the work was that those interviewed had to be within the range of 14 to 20 years of age, if possible, or of intermediate age, if the first range were impossible. This is due to the fact that normally, this population tends to decrease or increase its age, depending on their particular interests, and to hide their identity and origin.

Visits were made to the red zones of each community and the possible places to enter were selected on the site, their basic characteristics and the number of minors that may be interviewed. The work of the local supporters was decisive, since they were persons who knew the potential respondents and who they trusted. Even so, some difficulties were met in carrying out the work because a good number of them did not want to be interviewed, despite the payment offered for their accessibility to the interview.

In this context, the support of the Ministry of Health and its authorities was also a determining factor in each community, through the department of Environmental Sanitation and the Health Inspectors. They had been previously contacted by our local supporters and facilitated the work to detect and interview the victims of sexual commercial exploitation in their places of work, and in the sites with the most action with respect to sexual commerce in each location.

In addition to the interviews, other community and institutional actors in each location were contacted and in-depth interviews were conducted with them in order to know the perception of the community regarding the variables of the investigation, their size and their impact on the daily community dynamics. This stage of the process was one of the richest, because the information provided criteria and opinions from the perspective of key personalities of the community, regarding the problem.

Collection, systematization and analysis of the information

As a basis, we had the instruments provided by the Regional Coordination of the research project⁵, and local instruments adequate for the characteristics of each one of the locations interviewed. This phase also incorporated the methodology of participatory workshops, as in the specific case of the workshop held in Poptún. We must add the drafting of charts on the basis of important variables for the analysis, globalization and consolidation of data by subject matter of the matrix instruments, which was done to elicit from them the richness of the information, and incorporate the findings throughout the process into the final analysis.

Review and Analysis of Clippings and Bibliography

This phase of the study served as support to build the theoretical frame of the investigation. In this sense, 56 clipping cards were made, as a product of the systematic review of newspaper articles contained in various written media in the country during the years 1998 to 2000, and which deal with the different variables of the study.

To that effect, we had the collaboration of CIPRODENI, who provided the newspaper materials from their documentation center. The media researched for the mentioned period were: Prensa Libre, Diario El Gráfico, El Periódico, Al Día, La Hora, Nuestro Diario, El Regional and Siglo XXI.

With respect to the bibliographic work, an analysis was made of 13 works among studies, magazine articles and pamphlets, making technical cards; also, three in-depth interviews were conducted, with institutions that are most representative nationally, working directly with the target population of the study.⁶

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAME

The Sexual Commercial Exploitation of Children and Youth (ESCNJ) has four components, which are child prostitution and pornography; children trafficking and sexual tourism. These basic concepts have served as an interpretation frame for most studies on ESCNJ and that, in view of the trafficking of persons and tourism, give the phenomenon a label of an international problem.

ESCNJ is sexual abuse of boys, girls and youths, involving financial advantages for one or several of the parties involved in the sexual activity. It may be of two kinds: a) it involves the transfer of money from an adult to a child in exchange for sex; and b) it involves the provision in kind or services, that an adult exchanges for sex with a child, for instance: housing, food, protection, etc.⁷

⁵ Report of the mentioned project.

⁶ Which institutions?

⁷ BICE, Uruguay, 1966

ESCNJ implies the sexual victimization of a minor by another, linked to a commercial transaction that may be expressed in terms of money or in kind; it may also be considered as a contemporary form of slavery, and an income generating activity that is forced and damaging. The substantive component of sexual exploitation is in the dominating nature of the social and individual relationship of power established between the exploited person and his/her aggressor⁸.

From this perspective, it is considered that its main forms of expression are prostitution and pornography, taking place through two particular channels such as sexual tourism and trafficking of persons. The above has several implications and places us in front of major problems that require incorporating new concepts, that broaden and enable understanding the integral complexity of the phenomenon.

Child prostitution is understood as a form of violence, exploitation and victimization of a minor, by which making his or her body and sexuality become an object, assuming it is a merchandise to be traded, whether organized or not, by prostituting clients, nationals or foreign residents. This phenomenon includes the possible participation of third parties, that is pimps or matrons⁹. Equally, it may be understood as the action of promising or offering the services of a child to perform sexual acts for money or other things with that person or others¹⁰. Another definition says that it is the utilization or offering of girls, boys or adolescents to perform sexual acts in exchange for money or other type of economic compensation¹¹.

As a form of violence, exploitation and victimization of minors, child prostitution implies making an object of the body and sexuality of those persons, a relationship of power and domination influenced by the gender condition (discrimination against women) and racism, when it refers to indigenous young girls, that is, persons that are vulnerable. Child prostitution is not considered a job or labor activity, because it is the person itself who becomes alienated and not his/her labor force or his/her intellect. As mentioned earlier, prostitution makes the woman become an object and turns her into an instrument being exploited¹²

In general, prostitution refers to performing sexual acts with exclusively profitable ends. In legal terms, the word 'prostitute' refers only to those persons who participate in economic-sexual transactions, particularly in exchange for an agreed amount. Prostitution takes place in both sexes, and the services may be heterosexual or homosexual, although throughout history, this activity has been mainly carried out by women (with male clients), which reflects the traditional social and economic dependence of women and the trend to exploit female sexuality.

⁸ BICE, Uruguay, 1996

⁹ Plan Nacional ESCN, Costa Rica, 1999:9

¹⁰ UNICEF, Mexico, 2000

¹¹ UNICEF, Costa Rica, 1998:56

¹² Niñez Trabajadora en la Frontera del Peligro, PAMI/AID, Guatemala, 1998.

Although often it has been considered to be “the oldest profession in the world”, the concept of women as a piece of property (in force in almost all cultures until the end of the XIX century, and even today in many of them) meant that in most cases, the benefits of the “profession” passed to the men who controlled these women, characterized traditionally as pimps and clients.

On the other hand, sexual abuse is understood as any contact of a sexual nature between (a) a minor and an adult person, even when it takes place with the apparent consent of the (a) minor. There is not much difference with a rape, and both constitute the most common forms to promote child prostitution.

According to data, there is an increasing trend to involve male children and youth in sexual exploitation. The boys and youths that are prone to be involved in sexual exploitation are those in a situation of vulnerability and in risk situations. Although there are child prostitution markets throughout the world, the clients tend to be the wealthiest countries and the providers are the poorest countries.¹³

Child Pornography

This phenomenon is understood as the visual or audio representation of a minor, made with the purpose of providing sexual pleasure to the user, and has profitable or economic ends for the provider or intermediary. As an activity it entails the production, distribution, possession and use of such material¹⁴

Another source defines it as the material representation (via internet, movies, impressions, photographs, audio or video recording and digital computerized representations) of girls/boys and youths performing real or simulated sexual acts for the sexual gratification of the users, including the production, distribution and use of such materials.¹⁵

By visual pornography we understand the visual representation of a girl/boy engaged in an explicit sexual act, real or simulated, or in the obscene exhibition of the genitals for the sexual pleasure of a user, including production, distribution or use of such material¹⁶. On the other hand, audio pornography is the use of any audio device with the voice of a child, real or simulated, for the sexual pleasure of a user, which includes the production, distribution or use of such material¹⁷.

¹³ Child Sexual Exploitation, Microsoft Encyclopedia, ENCARTA, 1999.

¹⁴ Action Plan ESCN, Costa Rica, 1998: 1 of 2

¹⁵ UNICEF, Mexico 2000

¹⁶ Calcetas, 1999:34

¹⁷ Calcetas, 1999:34

In specialized literature, sexual tourism is understood as the sexual commercial exploitation of minors, by foreigners who visit the country as tourists. This phenomenon includes promoting the country as an accessible point for the bold exercise of this activity, by nationals and foreigners¹⁸. The concept of sexual tourist is understood as the person or persons who go beyond their national borders with the intention of involving in sexual activities with persons from their own country or from other countries, including children¹⁹.

Trafficking of girls, boys and youths

This deed refers to the recruitment and transfer for illegal purposes, from one country to another (international trafficking), and from one region to another within the same country (national trafficking), with or without the consent of the child or adolescent, or his/her family, to be used as sexual merchandise in his/her final destination, either for prostitution or pornography²⁰.

It is considered to be a practice equal to slavery, which entails transferring a boy or a girl from one country to another, or within the same country, from one area or location to another, with commercial purposes of a sexual nature. The use of force is frequent, although not always a characteristic of the traffic²¹.

Migration and Illegal Trafficking of Migrants are not Trafficking of Persons

There are basic differences between migration, illegal trafficking of migrants and the trafficking of persons. Migration is the displacement of one person from one country to another. It may be the result of legal or illegal means, and it may be both, voluntary (with the consent of the migrant person) and forced (without his/her consent), but it is usually voluntary. Forced displacement and the trafficking of persons are examples of forced migration²².

The illegal trafficking of migrants is the transfer of a person (with his/her consent) to another country, by illegal means.

The trafficking of persons involves these key elements:

1. It is the movement of one or several persons
2. Under deceit or coercion
3. To a situation of forced labor, forced prostitution, servitude or slavery practices.

¹⁸ Action Plan ESNC, Costa Rica, 1998: 2 of 2

¹⁹ UNICEF, Mexico, 2000

²⁰ Action Plan ESNC, Costa Rica, 1998: 2 of 2

²¹ UNICEF, Mexico, 2000 and UNICEF, Costa Rica, 1998:56

²² Alianza global contra la Trata de Mujeres, Colombia, 2001.

4. AN APPROACH TO THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

According to official data, in 1987 there were more than 8,000 prostitute women, older than 18, registered in the Program for the Control of Sexual Transmission Diseases. "In child prostitution, most of the girls come from marginal urban environments from metropolitan areas; they have low education levels; 20% do not know how to read or write and 54% did not finish elementary school; family violence is a common characteristic; 85% of the girls report to have been beaten, burned and others. In 20% of the cases there was sexual abuse and violence; in the group under 15, 83.3% has suffered sexually transmitted diseases, and 40% of the age group between 15 and 18; 42%, almost half of those interviewed, are mothers."²³

According to information of the National Police, in 1994 there were 330 missing children, 10% of which are under 10 years old.²⁴ According to information of Casa Alianza, 5 thousand are the children (boys and girls) living in the street, with the risk of being sexually assaulted or become prostitutes, among other dangers of life in the streets. Human Rights Watch, in their report *The Forgotten Children of Guatemala*, asserts that in Guatemala there are between 1,500 to 5,000 minors who live in the streets. According to Infomundi, millions of boys and girls in the streets work, traffic, steal and become prostitutes due to their needs and to being segregated from their societies, and are between five and seventeen years old.²⁵

5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The sexual commercial exploitation of girls, boys and youths is a social phenomenon with multiple causes, and the conjunction of all or some of the causes at a given moment may result in the girl or boy finding him or herself in a situation of risk to become recruited by networks of prostituting persons. Thus, the causes go from structural and political factors, to social, cultural, family and individual factors.

In fact, in order to tackle this phenomenon, one must take into account "aspects such as the impact of poverty and the restrictions of opportunities to enter the labor market; child labor and situation in the streets; inadequacy of the formal education system to the needs for rapid social insertion of the most deprived sectors, destruction or dysfunction of the family unit; the community scenario and the violation of human rights. In addition to the patriarchal roles and power relations, the image of women in society and in the media; the consumption patterns; the scarcity of efficiency in the justice administrators; the low credibility of the legal mechanisms; migration movements; the media and the absence of community sensitivity. On the other hand, the proliferation of sex businesses and the lack of controls; the risks of diseases such as HIV/AIDS; the presence of minors in bars and brothels; the continuous moral degradation; the loss of values and the fact that women continue to be underestimated and are not seen as persons but rather as profit-making objects, all of which have led to women being utilized"²⁶.

²³ Los Rostros de la Prostitución Infantil, Fundación Esperanza de los Niños, U.E., Program for assistance of the Street Children. Guatemala, August 1998.

²⁴ Prensa Libre, 16/02/99

²⁵ Prensa Libre, 19/01/98

²⁶ Al Día Newspaper, 23/03/98

Also, a contributor to the sexual exploitation of boys/girls and youths is the crisis of values of society, double standards regarding the fact that adult males can maintain sexual relations with adolescent women, the ideological approach of the phenomenon, since it is believed that the prostitute (who does not have a passive sexuality) is necessary to preserve the wife, the daughter, the fiancée, that is the “good women”, thus creating a group of bad women.

According to this approach, prostitution can be defined as an institution in which a series of agents participate, having as an objective, the sexual and economic exploitation of persons. “It is not expressed only in the case of the adult woman –says Child Hope-, but also, perhaps more dramatically, in the case of minors. Thus, prostitution is an institution and not an individual option”²⁷.

All of the expressions of violence against women, where rape and prostitution are included, have their origin in the patriarchal ideology that prevails in our societies. This ideology lies on the idea of the superiority of man and the inferiority of the woman, which is “supplemented by the casting of stereotypes, which arbitrarily attribute values to persons, according to their sex”²⁸.

6. PERCEPTIONS OF THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF GIRLS, BOYS AND YOUTHS IN THE TOWN OF POPTUN, PETEN.

A participating workshop was held in this town, at which the following perceptions were collected, with institutional actors from the following: Health, Education, MINUGUA, the Army, Nursing School, District School Supervision, Human Rights organizations and the Office of the Public Ministry.

The social problems presently faced in Poptun, regarding child prostitution are impossible to quantify in terms of statistics, because this is the first time that the opportunity arises to study the phenomenon. The existence of clandestine prostitution at various levels is a problem that cannot be denied, nor hidden.

The issue of child prostitution is one of the most serious in the municipality, and the problem is seen from six different aspects: controlled and clandestine prostitution, sexual trafficking and intermediaries, sexual tourism and the causes of prostitution.

- 1) It can be mentioned that bars are at plain sight, and that sex workers are controlled weekly by the Section of Sexual Prophylaxis at the Health Center and that bars are subject to the Public Health Regulations. In this sense, it is perceived that the prostitution centers are under control as are the women who exercise sexual commerce in them.

²⁷ Child Hope, Los Rostros de la Prostitución, Guatemala agosto, 1998

²⁸ Ibidem.

- 2) The persons that are doing business with sex, without working at bars or other night-life centers, exercise it through fake businesses, thus their activity is considered to be clandestine; this is possibly the worse, because there is no control over it and it involves many young girls in the community. Over the past five years, the phenomenon of child prostitution in Poptun has grown, confirmed by the existence of 10 to 12 bars with the presence of girls who exercise prostitution since 13 year of age. In this case, there is also a sexual demand for men, although it is not yet a very extended phenomenon.

The dimensions of prostitution are severe. This is directly linked to the existing statistics at the Health Center regarding the appearance of the HIV/AIDS, where there are 22 confirmed cases confirmed in Poptun alone.

In this sense, the situation of the mentioned geographical area, and possibly throughout the whole department, is increasingly serious, because of the non-existence of laws that forbid sexual relations for the infected population. By enacting the specific Decree for AIDS, it is expected to have a legal instrument that will enable a better control on this situation.

As a margin note, it is also important to add that the problem has become dangerously extended to the Kekchí population, which is quite numerous in the mentioned district. This population is probably the most vulnerable, because preventive and training programs on the phenomenon have not been designed in their own language, apart from the cultural barriers that have always hindered permeating such population.

The participants in the Poptun workshop expressed their own perceptions regarding the issue, as follows: “My experience in Santa Elena Petén is different and this is directly related to the male gender, since several young men offer their services for money to women, not like in the case of Poptun that services are given to men; no, in the case of Santa Elena, it is the gigolos who give their services to women who come looking for them and pay for them”.

“I don’t think this is a new phenomenon –said a respondent-, I rather think that the problem has existed for a long time, the only thing is that now is becoming more important because of the HIV/AIDS problem. What is evident, is that there is a growing incorporation of younger girls, that is there is an increase of that population in the phenomenon of child and youth prostitution, and that is of high concern.”

- 3) Regarding the sexual trafficking of minors, there are several businesses, better known as bars, where it has been accepted to take young girls from other places, even from other countries, because they represent a larger source of income for their owners, through the sale of sexual services to the male population asking for them. This variable is directly linked to the constant migration of persons who, seeking better living conditions, arrive at the Mexican border through El Naranjo. The traffic may be deemed as voluntary and involuntary.

Voluntary traffic means mainly foreign persons who enter the Peten territory seeking passage to Mexican or Belizean territory, as the beginning of their journey to the United States and, unable to continue their trip for lack of money, they stay exercising sexual trade as a means of survival and to obtain the resources to continue their trip towards the North.

Involuntary traffic is directly linked to the crime of kidnapping and deceit, of which many underage girls are the victims, being brought into the country and forced to exercise sex for money. These cases are known although their dimensions and consequences are unknown.

- 4) Regarding intermediaries, they are persons in charge of bringing women from abroad, mainly from El Salvador and Honduras, and from the interior of the country. These persons are directly related to the bars and brothels throughout Peten. This role is also played by trailer, truck and bus drivers, who for a certain amount of money, leave them at the brothels, bringing them many times, from the border areas.

One of the persons who participated in the workshop mentioned that “in Melchor de Mencos, to Salvadoran girls, sisters, were brought against their will, that is by force, deceived, were kept locked up in a house that was a brothel, in Belize, practically kidnapped”. And then added that “one of them managed to escape and came to Guatemala, giving the warning news to some nuns of the Catholic Church, so that they may free her sister. She explained that they were taken out of El Salvador under the offer of a formal job and not for prostitution. As in this case, there are many girls who work in the brothels of Melchor, sometimes they are taken to Belize and others are retained in Guatemala, at the borderline bars and brothels.”

- 5) Regarding sexual tourism, it may be said that due to the geographical location of Peten, as a passing bridge for a large number of migrants who are going to the United States by El Naranjo and el Ceibo, without ruling out passing through the border with Belize, many of them stay when they cannot continue with the journey due to lack of economic resources.

Also, the various tourist attractions of the department are important elements for huge numbers of visitors from different nationalities and cultures. Many of them park there, whether to exercise clandestine prostitution, or to make sexual use of the foreign or national girls in the bars. The offer of male sexual favors is also another attraction for tourists, since, in addition to visiting the tourist sites, they look for other pleasures, including sex.

Another form adopted by this phenomenon is in the Spanish schools located in San Andres and the location of El Remate, near Tikal, where both students and instructors, exchange sexual favors; most of them are tourists who stay for one or two months in the Peten territory. Another one of the participants in the workshop held in Poptun referred to this in general terms. “One thing that took my attention –

he said-, and I believe could increase in the department of Peten is sexual tourism, because just as there are people who go to Puerto Barrios to lie down with a dark girl, here is the phenomenon of the Spanish schools, where it is usually foreigners who lie down with Guatemalan men, as a sexual attraction”.

- 6) With respect to the causes of clandestine and child-youth prostitution, three different aspects were pointed out in the workshop held in the town of Poptun.
 - a) The ignorance caused by the lack of information and communication regarding sex education, both of children and of students of the various school levels; there is neither information on child and clandestine prostitution, nor its causes.
 - b) Family violence, including sexual abuse and harassment, which are actions that harm any one of the members of the family group. These causes are factors for expulsion of children to the streets and thus, one of the main motivations for child prostitution.
 - c) Family disintegration, caused by the death or abandonment of either one of the parents, but also divorce and the forming of new families, after abandonment by the former, where the main victims are the children. Many times they are unable to overcome the shock of separation of the parents, and thus become potential candidates for prostitution, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, aspects that are directly linked and/or related to the exercise of clandestine sexual commerce in its different forms, mainly of the child and youth sectors who do it as a strategy for family or collective survival.

The recommendations made were the following:

- Coordinate institutionally, inform and make all the population aware of the issues and magnitude in the population, in the Spanish and Kekchi languages, since in Poptun there is a good number of persons who only speak that language and due to a lack of information are vulnerable to become victims of the problem.
- Teaching sex education in schools and at all levels is also a must. It would be convenient to include in the curriculum of the schools, this subject as a means to prevent the future expansion of the problem and its consequences in children and youths.
- The mass media, both written and television, would have to be regulated, because it is important for authorities to assume their role. Also control should be exercised on foreign persons who move around freely in Poptun and whose intentions are unknown. This would also help to prevent the trafficking of girls and boys with sexual purposes.

- In the health aspect, the Decree on HIV/AIDS a prohibition so that persons who are infected do not exercise the sex trade. HIV/AIDS and its statistics among this population has increased alarmingly. Thus, controls ought to be established on the problem.
- A suggestion is made for centers to shelter persons, mainly boys and girls who are victims of family disintegration, since they are deemed to be the most vulnerable to fall into prostitution.
- It is necessary to coordinate efforts, with no institutional credits, to seek shared solutions that may help stop the phenomenon of child prostitution and the variables derived from it.

7. INSERTION MECHANISMS IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The mechanisms to become involved in the network of the ESCNJ are varied, according to what was told by the respondents in the fieldwork carried out for this study. Among the mechanism are mainly friendly relations, the use of deceit, the need and search for survival, family pressure and disintegration. Following are some examples:

- It all started with a friend who brought them into the country and told them of the places where they could exercise sexual commerce. A respondent in Tecun Uman, San Marcos said, “a friend brought me, she told me what the work was like, that she had already worked on this and that good earnings are made”. A Salvadoran respondent said, “a friend brought me, she deceived me”.

This happened to Karla, 18 years old, a native of Escuintla who went to work in Poptun, Peten. She told how “a friend had told her that here in Peten there were very good places to work on this and that it was a beautiful place, more than anything, knowing Peten. I came alone, she told me how to get from Escuintla to the capital city, then I took the bus to here, and started in this business of prostitution. Formerly I lived with my parents and they don’t know the kind of work I do, because I only call them to say hello”. Another respondent from Chiquimula, said that “a friend of the owner made contact with me in Chiquimula, I was working at a restaurant. She told me that the work was good, she offered to pay for my expenses and that here in Poptún they were going to give me everything I needed”.

Another case, Paty, 16, from Escuintla and working in Coatepeque confirmed this situation. “I have two younger brothers and I support them, in addition I give them schooling. My father died, my mother is alive but she is older and can no longer work. She doesn’t know that I work on this, because I tell her that I work in a store in Guatemala. Imagine, I have a daughter and the father was killed; one has to work, there is always work but the pay is no good if you find one, everything is very expensive, living is no longer possible. I will not be here forever, it will just be for some time. My goal is to make an amount of money to support my family. Afterwards I will open a shop. I want to open a kiosk in Escuintla.”

This is one of the recurring links to become involved in the sexual exploitation networks, whether through the offering of an attractive job, that may provide the necessary economic resources to meet their needs, and many times, those of their relatives, or having clear offers of becoming inserted in the labor world of sexual commerce.

In some cases, they were brought with deceit. For instance, when they were asked, where were you contacted?-, the respondents made reference to this mechanism and its implications. A Salvadoran girl interviewed at the Paso Texas Bar in Tecun Uman said, "I was contacted in Acajutla, but my friend told me I would be coming to oversee some children in a house and that I was going to be paid eight hundred quetzales. Since my mother is single and I have a 21-year old very sick brother, I decided to come to help them. The woman who brought me is called Rosa de Escobar, with another woman called Isabel. I was having dinner at a restaurant and when I came out, the two women intercepted me and offered heaven and earth to me. They convinced me.

Another respondent mentioned how she was deceived and brought together with other minors, when "we were selling at the market, and a woman and a man told us that we were not making enough money there and worked very hard. They offered us a good job and a good salary; so three young girls came, it was Rosario, Estela and I. They told us that we were going to a family house. I was very happy. I was very naive. When we got there they locked us up in a house. It was a night-club in Escuintla, called Bartolo"

In many cases, they mentioned that they came alone and that getting involved in the sexual commerce is their own decision. Normally they stated that they came alone, for example, a respondent in Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango, originally from Jalapa said, "I came on my own. Nobody brought me. I had gotten married but soon after, he found another woman and since I have no parents, only my grandfather, I got desperate and became involved in this. Nobody made me". In another case, "I came alone to this place, nobody brought me, it was my will; by asking other people, I got involved in this business. Nobody made me."

Other respondents expressed that someone brought them into the country to work in the sexual commerce, without specifying who the person was who brought them in most cases. For instance, a respondent in Poptun, who has gone through various situations in her involvement with sexual exploitation pointed out that "I was deceived, they told me I was going to work in a cafeteria and they made me work at a bar in Esquipulas; after 6 months I escaped that place and went to Quetzaltenango. After that, the owner of a bar here in Poptun told me to come with her.

In an in-depth interview, another respondent said "I have been working on this for 19 years. I started when I was 17, because when my mother died, my stepfather tried to rape me and I fled home, when I was offered to be taken to Belize. The one who offered this was a woman, about 30 years old, she found me in Mazatenango and invited me to have a beer. We had about six, I was feeling dizzy, they she went out to talk to a man. At that moment I went to the bathroom and when I came out, the woman

was no longer there. When I wanted to leave, the man did not let me, 'you cannot go' he said, 'I own you'. 'No!', I said. 'Yes, you belong to me. I paid 35 thousand pesos for you', 'Let me go to the bathroom!' I said. When I was in the bathroom he put his hand under the door and he put a lock on my toe. I asked him what it was and he said 'that lock will locate you wherever you are. You cannot escape'.

The story of the respondent continued. "He grabbed me very strongly and put me in a truck where it said 'flammable' but like in the middle of the tank there was a board. There were other seven women there. One was 13 years old, others were 14 or 15 and the oldest was 18. The truck was to carry gasoline but inside it was empty and that is why the police did not see us." "They took us to a place that was a cafeteria, they let us in through a back door and they gave us some short pants, they told us 'go to that table, you are going to eat'. Afterwards they told us that we were in a bar. 'Get in that room and do whatever the men who are there tell you. Later, a boat is coming for you, we are going to Belize'. Finally, the respondent and another woman escaped.

There are also cases in which their participation in sexual commerce is due to an obligation or pressure exerted by a close relative. This was told by a 17-year old respondent, who said that "my step-mother made me do it. She is the owner of the La Sirenita bar in Coatepeque. Since I was nine, after my mother's death, she made me. Since I did not want to, she kicked me out of the house, I was roaming the streets and I lived in the street. I found work in a house but my stepmother went to insult my employers. She did not want me working in a house, but in her bar. She is always after me, that is why the people of the Public Ministry brought me here with the Oblata Sisters."

Economic need is an important cause to become inserted in the network of sexual exploitation, since looking for income to improve their economic situation or simply to meet their basic needs and those of their children lead them to become involved in this activity. "Well, I had a husband and had children with him, but he found another woman and I had to take care of myself and take care of what he left me; then, it has been two years that I do this. Also, there was nobody to help me. I was alone and without parents. On my own, I sought a place to earn a living."

This seems to be the constant leading to assert that one of the main reasons for insertion in the sexual commerce responds to the factor of poverty, or economic need that the victims of sexual exploitation have to face, although according to the results of the fieldwork the phenomenon ought to be approached from an integral perspective, in which while this element has an important weight, it explains in itself the problem.

Family disintegration, particularly when women are abandoned by their mates and if there has been a sentimental break, this can also be a constant factor that pushes them to participate in the sexual commerce. In this context, there are situations of mistreatment. Marisol, 16 mentioned that "after I broke up with my husband, I felt very disappointed, then I went to the street, that is where I learned to drink a lot of liquor. I had sexual relations with men just so they would give me liquor."

Claudia, 17, confirmed the above. “Asking and alone I arrived here –she said-, I got separated from my husband and then I wanted to make a living in an easy way and I thought about this; of course other friends had told me that if you want to get ahead, you must make money fast”. Tita, also 17, made the decision to exercise prostitution under similar pressure. “You have a complex that ties you down –she said-, and then you resolve to get ahead, above all, to solve immediately your economic bad luck, imagine, I have a child, I lived with the father for a short time, but then someone got in the way and we separated”.

Passing through the country to reach the United States in search of job opportunities, may become a cause to get involved or fall into the web of prostitution, because when they fail, for various reasons, they stay working in the sphere of sexual exploitation in order to obtain money that enables them to meet their basic needs. This was mentioned by a Salvadoran woman interviewed in Tecun Uman, San Marcos. “I was brought here, I was going to the United States”. Another one added “I came here with the intention of going to the United States”.

Supplementary Perceptions

To the elements expressed by the victims of sexual exploitation interviewed, some perceptions by the authorities of those places, confirming the existence of the problem, its consequences and the main operating mechanisms of the sexual commerce and the expanding webs of the phenomenon.

In general terms, for the municipal mayor of Tecun Uman, “the whole issue of prostitution is serious, child prostitution is worse, it is a problem that the border towns have to live with, especially ours, since for some time now, it has dangerously increased and somehow it has damaged the image of the community”. From his perspective, many of the women have arrived voluntarily in order to travel to the United States; but “others have arrived under deceit by persons that are dedicated to human trafficking, although I believe that most of them are foreigners who prostitute themselves here, when they fail in their objective; others have already exercised it in their countries or other Guatemalan communities.”

For the mayor of that town, the impact of the floating population is “enormous” since there are persons with different nationalities that put a certain social pressure, especially on labor sources, because the places where they could work are very scarce, then, “the pressure is very strong”.

This situation has deteriorated in raising the indexes of delinquency and with it, the indexes of prostitution, the violations suffered by the minors; the lack of labor sources pushes them to commit crimes in all known forms, including prostitution, which also bring about other types of problems such as assaults, robberies and murders.

From the perception of the priest Ademar Barilli, Director of the Migrant House in Tecun Uman, there are many risks and dangers to which the migrants are exposed, “due to the social disorder in this town, the floating population and persons who are dedicated to the trafficking of minors, drug trafficking and the trafficking of undocumented persons”.

This situation lends itself for many problems in this town and, among them, is the aspect of sex, the hiring of persons for this purpose. The migrants are a vulnerable population because they are persons who are looking for better living conditions on account of natural disasters or the critical economic condition of their countries, especially the Central Americans, “as is the case of many minors who come to prostitute themselves and get here under deceit”, said the priest. “They take away their documents and are forced to work at the bars, or they are denounced to the police. Many of the persons who have denounced them, bail them out of jail and thus they keep them and force them to work in bars and brothels, or in places that don’t look like it.”

The situation of vulnerability, being far from their countries or due to economic need, facilitates the conditions for the sexual exploitation networks to utilize the minors, involving them in the sexual commerce and giving them work under labor and living conditions that denigrate them as human beings.

For the coordinator of the Shelter House for Women of the order of the Oblata Sisters, the problem of prostitution “is a serious one, some minors are detected but they work at the establishments with false documents, where they add the years necessary to be 18 and have no problem with the Law; the owners know about the law and their risk. Nevertheless, they have them there at their bars and cantinas.”

In the context of sexual tourism, as part of sexual exploitation, the sister maintains that “sexual tourism is something that is increasingly occurring every day, for instance, when they bring in a virgin girl, the owners already know who to call, especially foreigners who can pay large amounts of money to have a girl with these characteristics, and since for many men, being the first ones is of the essence, then the owners take advantage of them, and the victim cannot defend herself”.

The sexual exploitation webs establish the necessary contacts and mechanisms to document the minors, and they appear as Guatemalans and of adult age. Both the participation in the web and of the clients, contributes to the reproduction of the problem, since as long as there is a demand, the mechanisms to produce the offer, stay alive, and in the sphere of the sexual commerce, social and legal standards are not honored, since they condemn or sanction such practices and it goes beyond values and borders.

On his part, the Director of the Health Center in Tecun Uman feels that the problem of prostitution is a complicated one and relates it to the phenomenon of the migration movements towards other countries. He maintains that it is “mostly the urban center of the municipality where it gets more complicated, because it has to do with the strategic location of the place and the permanent flow of migrants towards the North, whether

Mexico or the United States. For the same reason, the number of persons that get stuck in the municipality is a large one and among them, there is a good number, mainly of women who, to survive in this region have to practice prostitution". Then, he said that "they are of Salvadoran and Honduran origin, there are also Nicaraguans, Guatemalans and Mexicans in a lower number and from 1999 to date, we have seen indigenous girls, mainly from the highlands, something we did not see before, or it was very seldom that we saw the phenomenon of indigenous women dedicated to the business of sexual workers."

8. THE SURROUNDINGS

The workplaces for the women interviewed, involved in sexual commerce are varied, depending on the geographical area, although they bear many similarities, because brothels are normally set-up in places where they can get customers for the purchase-sale of sexual services.

In many cases, they are located close to other businesses of the same type, or those that contribute to get clients, such as bars and beer pubs. Sometimes they are on streets with heavy traffic of persons, especially near bus terminals, where potential clients may be found, not only locals, but also from towns or villages close to the cities, or other urban and rural centers of the country.

The constructions in many cases are simple, with fair quality materials and where sexually exploited women usually dwell, collectively or individually in very small rooms. The sanitation conditions are not regularly appropriate, since their rooms are usually also used to take care of the clients. Near the brothels, there are usually drunk persons and in many cases, the places are not safe, both clients and sex workers run the risk of being assaulted, abused or mistreated.

In very few cases, the businesses have adequate physical conditions. For example, where there is security inside the building, in a way that the rooms have a single door with iron bars and a lock, which also serves the purpose of maintaining the sex workers inside, especially if they are minors.

In Poptun, an interview mentions that "there are many places here, although some of them are not legal, for instance, in the cantinas, women cannot exercise sex, but they do it secretly, especially young girls from the community, that one cannot even imagine, some of them are very young, mainly salesgirls, also some students. I cannot say there are many, but there are several". In addition, it points out that "in cafeterias they make contacts too. The girls get there and they are being awaited, Poptun is a place where there is a military post, and the military and specialists are the ones who desire them most. There are women who make a living just finding young girls". Finally, he adds that "there are also a lot of indigenous minors who are doing this, they are desired by the soldiers. There is no control. For instance in the Gualanteca, that used to be a cafeteria, formerly they kept it open and had a lot of young indigenous girls and the police never saw this. They probably received their part".

9. PROFILE OF THE BOYS/GIRLS AND YOUTHS IN A SITUATION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Through the instruments used for the fieldwork and the gathering of information directly from the victims of sexual exploitation, various data were obtained that enable to characterize the population from different scenarios.

Work they perform

Among the main jobs mentioned by those interviewed are: waiting tables with the customers that go to the place looking for their services; take care of them after the negotiation agreed for sex in exchange for money, according to the prices fixed by the establishment; they have to serve at the tables, the drinks requested by the clients.

Wait on tables and customers, get busy, dance, do housework, have drinks and keep a tab, were the jobs that the respondents said they had to do in the context of their job and the sexual exploitation to which they are submitted.

Income

In general terms, the income obtained vary according to the place of work and the quality of the clientele or their paying capacity. Their income is defined according to the times they get busy, mentioned prices for each service from Q40, Q50, Q60 and Q100, of which they have previously established an amount as a cashier payment for each sexual service, that corresponds to the profits of the owners of the place.

Some of the respondents who live at the work place said that the money they give to the cashier is for their food, because they live permanently in the place, without making reference to the quality of the food received in comparison with the effort demanded by this kind of work, such as sleeplessness, physical tiredness having to get busy several times during a work shift, which regularly takes a good part of the day and night, having to drink with the clients, etc.

The money earned is used for their personal expenses, clothes and the support of their children or their family. Very few of the respondents mentioned to obtain additional income for situations such as have their pictures taken or nude videos, including drug consumption. Those interviewed deny the fact that they had nude pictures or videos taken during the sexual act, except for a ladino 18 year-old woman, interviewed in Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango and of Salvadoran origin, who stated that this has happened to her "twice, without knowing who had done it".

What is important to point out is that out of economic need, they have other performed other "abnormal" acts in their work for extra money. In Poptun, Peten, one person interviewed accepted this fact: "Yes, several times, but under the effect of drugs, the foreigners provide the drug. They ask for many obscene things, oral sex, anal sex, orgies, things that one only does when drugged. They pay well in dollars, but it is not forced, only if one wants, if one doesn't want, they don't make you, they want to have fun in their way and if one wants money, good money, it can be earned that way.

Cinthia, another respondent confirmed this version differently. “Without my consent, yes. It happened at the Black Cat –she said-, of Esquipulas. There the rooms had some sort of fan in the ceiling, but it was really a video camera. One charged Q50 per client and the owners sold him the tape for Q700. We didn’t know about it until one day a client told one of the girls that he had her on film.” “The client took us into his room and showed us the tape –she added-, it was terrible, because you could see everything we did, we always did terrible things under the effects of drugs, that’s the only way we did it without knowing we were being filmed. Also the owners rented the videos, can you imagine how much money they made, if one got busy up to 12 or 15 times a day”. “That place was reached going through a barber shop that served as a shield and by the back door you reached the bar. Some 12-year old girls who sold quesadillas (bread made with rice flower, cheese, butter and cream), they sold in the morning and at night they went to the bar. These girls were also filmed. The videos were more expensive and were sold away from the place. I believe the foreigners”.

In some cases, the taking of pictures and/or videos of naked women or during the sexual act, is linked to the use of drugs. Drug consumption also takes place separately from the above deed, although in most interviews the women said they don’t use drugs. Those who normally take drugs, use marijuana, cocaine, powdered crack and stones, solvents, glue, nitrate, heroine or they don’t specify what type of drugs they use; they only confirm that some time they have used them. “Once in a while –said a respondent- but that doesn’t mean I am an addict. I use drugs only when a friend comes and he gives me”. Cinthia stated that she “uses cocaine, marijuana, powder or stoned crack, that is why when one is crazy with the drug, one does anything”.

Anyway, drug consumption cannot be generalized, although it happens in some cases, neither are there elements to link the use of drugs to situations such as drug trafficking, in the sense that sexual commerce may serve as a bridge for distribution and sale of drugs, as has been said in some cases.

Nationality and migratory problems

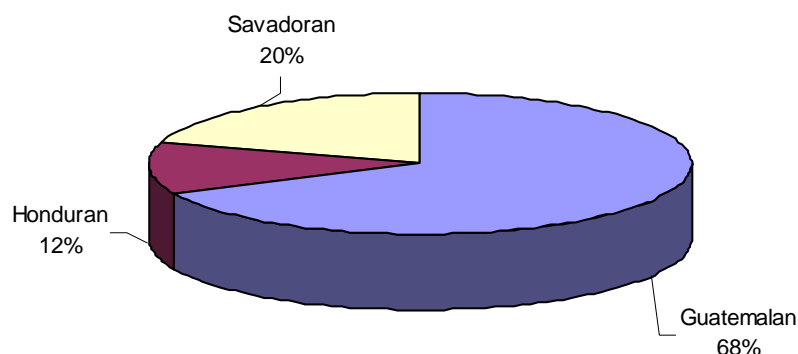
The nationality of those interviewed is also varied, although apparently most of them are Guatemalan. Many foreigners stay exercising prostitution after being deceived or when they have failed in their efforts to get to the United States, using Guatemala as a passing bridge and through various routes.

As a way to face migration problems, they have paid with money and sexual favors for the papers that grant them the Guatemalan status and thus, they identify themselves as such, despite their expression and physical characteristics that reveal them as foreigners. This happens with women from different Central American countries, for instance, Hondurans, Salvadorans and Nicaragua, which somehow increases the number of Guatemalan women involved in the webs of sexual exploitation.

Following is the testimony of a ladino woman that exercises prostitution in Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango, who had to pay Q.900 in order to get papers as a Guatemalan and who said that “I have never hidden my real name, and I bought papers because I do not want to be bothered, but I could never stay here definitely because y family is in Honduras, and I visit them at least every 8 months”.

Regarding the origin of those interviewed, although it is known that they are of different nationalities, according to other studies, among those selected for this study, only three nationalities came up: Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Hondurans. The respondents themselves mentioned that there are women exercising sexual commerce who come from different nations, not only the ones mentioned in the following graphic, but more varied, such as Nicaraguans; nevertheless, none of them identified herself as such.

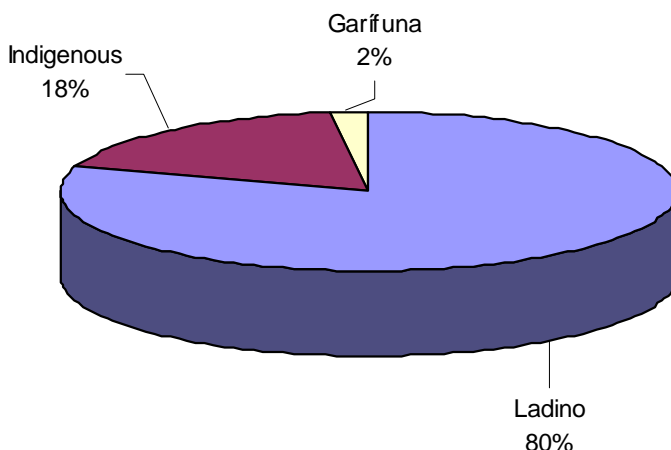
Graphic No.1 GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACCORDING TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



Ethnic Background

In the case of the ethnic variable, it is verified that most of the respondents belong in the ladino group, 80%. A smaller number are indigenous and only one is ‘garifuna’.

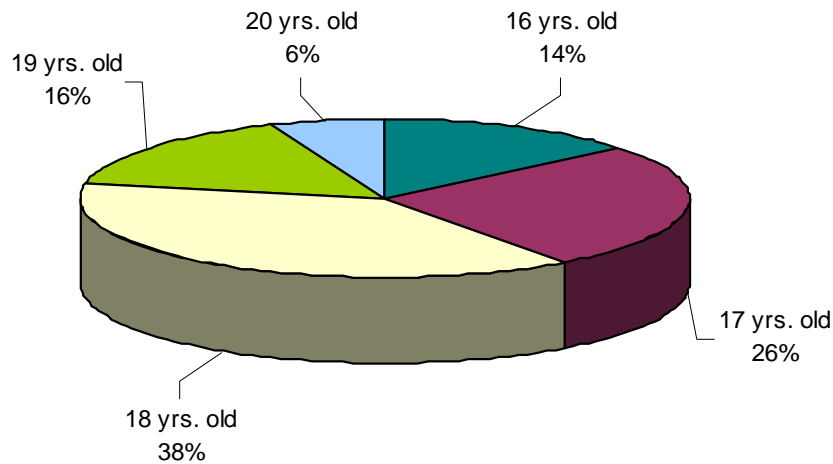
Graphic No. 2. GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACCORDING TO ETHNIC BACKGROUND



Age

Regarding age, most of them are women between 17 and 18, mostly the latter, being most of them young, that furthermore, have been involved in prostitution at a very early age. In the following graphic, the age of those interviewed can be seen.

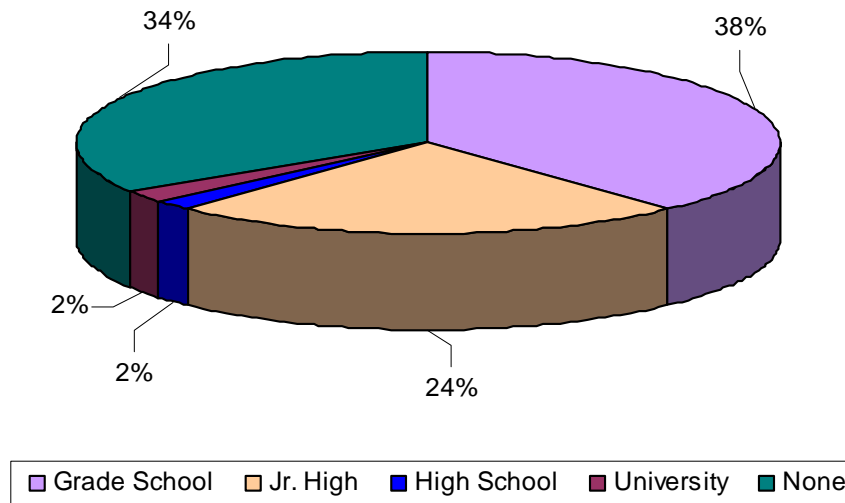
Graphic No. 3. GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY AGE



Schooling Level

In relation to the school level reached by the respondents, it can be said that most of them did attend school (66%) but the highest levels of education reached are between grade school and high school.

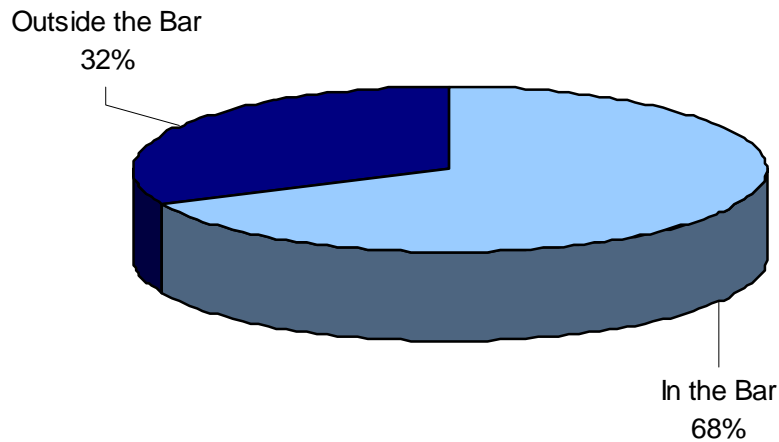
Graphic No. 4. GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY SCHOOLING LEVEL



Housing

Due to the characteristics of the sexual exploitation, it would seem normal that most women involved in the exercise of sexual commerce would live in their places of work, however, despite the percentage being high of those who live in their work place, the percentage of those who live outside is also considerable.

Graphic No. 5. GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE



GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY, ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL	%	MUNICIPALITY OF STUDY				
			GUATEMALA	AYUTLA ²⁹	QUETZALTEN ANGO Y COATEPE QUE ³⁰	POPTUN ³¹	SAN BENITO
AGE	50	100	10	10	10	10	10
16 years old	7	14	3	0	3	0	1
17 years old	13	26	3	1	6	1	2
18 years old	19	38	2	6	1	6	4
19 years old	8	16	1	3	0	2	2
20 years old	3	6	1	0	0	1	1
ETHNIC GROUP	50	100	10	10	10	10	10
Ladino	40	80	6	10	8	10	6
Indigenous	9	18	4	-	2	-	3
Garifuna	1	2	0	-	-	-	1
NATIONALITY	50	100	10	10	10	10	10
Guatemalan	34	68	6	5	8	7	8
Salvadoran	10	20	2	4	1	2	1
Honduran	6	12	2	1	1	1	1
SCHOOLING	50	100	10	10	10	10	10
Attended school	33	66	5	9	6	7	6
Did not attend school	17	34	5	1	4	3	4
SCHOOL LEVEL	50	100	10	10	10	10	10
Grammar school	19	38	2	8	4	4	1
Junior High	12	24	2	1	2	2	5
High School	1	2	-	-	-	1	-
University	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
None	17	34	5	1	4	3	4
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	50	0	10	10	10	10	10
At the bar	34		4	8	8	10	4
Outside the bar	16		6	2	2	-	6

²⁹ Municipality of the Department of San Marcos.

³⁰ In the case of Quetzaltenango, interviews were held at the capital of the Department and in the Municipality of Coatepeque.

³¹ Poptún and San Benito are municipalities of the Department of Petén.

Origin of the Guatemalan Victims of ESCNJ

The following chart provides a general picture of the origin of the Guatemalan women interviewed (34 cases), that exercise sexual commerce in the geographic areas studied.

Chart No.2
GIRLS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY MUNICIPALITY UNDER STUDY,
AS PER DEPARTMENT AND MUNICIPALITY OF ORIGIN

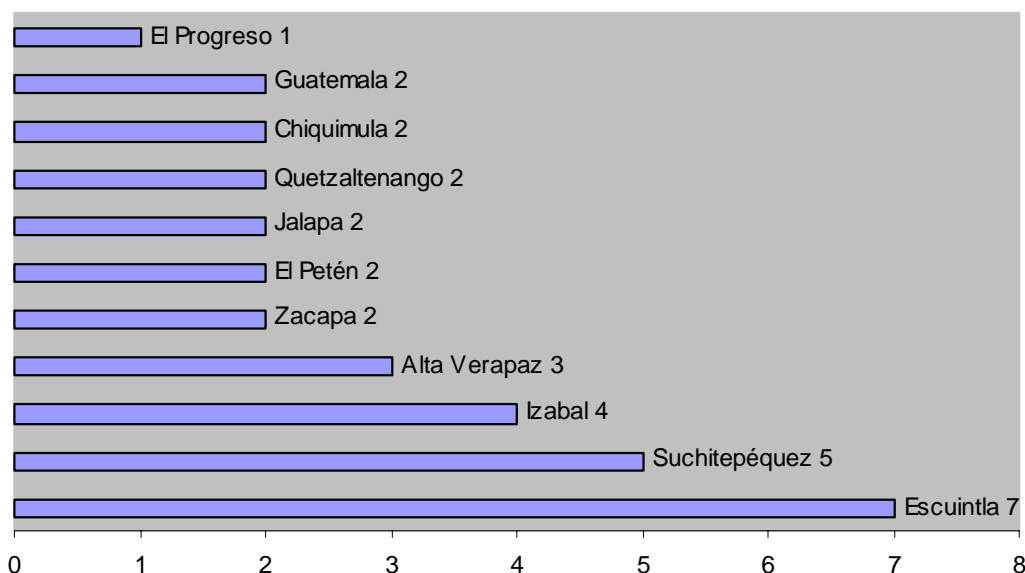
DEPARTMENT AND MUNICIPALITY	TOTAL	MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF THE STUDY				
		GUATEMALA	AYUTLA	SAN BENITO	COATEPEQUE AND QUETZALTENANGO	POPTUN
TOTAL	33	6	5	8	7	7
GUATEMALA	4	2	2	0	0	0
Guatemala	3	2	1	-	-	-
Amatitlán	1	-	1	-	-	-
EL PROGRESO	1	0	0	0	0	1
San Agustín Acasaguastlán (El Rancho)	1	-	-	-	-	1
ESCUINTLA	7	1	2	1	2	1
Escuintla	3	1	-	-	1	1
Santa Lucía Cotumalguapa	2	-	1	-	1	-
Tiquisate	1	-	1	-	-	-
Palín	1	-	-	1	-	-
QUETZALTENANGO	2	1	0	0	1	0
Quetzaltenango	1	1	-	-	-	-
Coatepeque	1	-	-	-	1	-
SUCHITEPEQUEZ	4	1	1	0	2	0
Mazatenango	2	-	1	-	1	-
Río Bravo	1	1	-	-	-	-
Chicacao	1	-	-	-	1	-
QUICHE	1	1	0	0	0	0
Uspantán	1	1	-	-	-	-

(Continuation Chart No.2)

DEPARTMENT and MUNICIPALITY	TOTAL	MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF THE STUDY				
		GUATE MALA	AYUTLA	SAN BENITO	COATEPE QUE AND QUETZAL TENANG O	POP TUN
ALTA VERAPAZ	3	0	0	3	0	0
Panzós	2	-	-	2	-	-
Fray Bartolomé de las Casas	1	-	-	1	-	-
PETEN	2	0	0	0	0	2
Dolores	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sayaxche	1	-	-	-	-	1
IZABAL	3	0	0	2	1	0
Puerto Barrios	2	-	-	1	1	-
Morales	1	-	-	1	-	-
ZACAPA	2	0	0	0	0	2
Zacapa	1	-	-	-	-	1
Teculután	1	-	-	-	-	1
CHIQUIMULA	2	0	0	1	0	1
Chiquimula	2	-	-	1	-	1
JALAPA	1	0	0	0	1	0
San Pedro Pínula	1	-	-	-	1	-
JUTIAPA	1	0	0	1	0	0
Moyuta	1	-	-	1	-	-

This means that the victims of the ESCNJ in Guatemala come from 13 of the different departments in the country, more than 50% of the departments in the country, taking as a basis, the number of women interviewed and the geographical coverage of the study. It is deemed important to expand this sample and the coverage, in order to measure in real terms, the presence of the phenomenon of sexual exploitation throughout the country.

Graphic No. 6. ORIGIN OF THE GUATEMALAN MTS INTERVIEWED BY DEPARTMENT OF THE COUNTRY, OUT OF THE TOTAL RESPONDENTS



10. THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION NETWORK

Those who sexually exploit children come from all cities and countries, they are merchants, workers, businessmen and bureaucrats who do not know or do not care about the impact of their actions. They are mostly local residents, however, it should be mentioned that in regard to sexual tourism, the ECPAT database showed, by mid-1996, the existence of 240 sexual exploiters who had been arrested, deported, convicted or punished for some sort of sexual crime with girls and boys in Asia. Most of them were North American and they were followed by Germans, British and Australian³² nationals.

Another group of exploiters are the intermediaries and agents, such as the owners of bars, hotels, brothels and all those who profit from the sexual commerce with girls and boys, that is taxi drivers and tour operators, among others. The sexual exploiters also have the support of large social sectors who tolerate and justify the sexual market of girls, boys and adolescents, by blaming the victims and being indifferent to their needs; denying and minimizing the negative consequences of sexual exploitation and, finally, by protecting those who commit such crimes.³³

³² World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 1996:6

³³ UNICEF, Costa Rica, 1998:47

There are large networks of criminals, they are nationals, transnational or international, entrepreneurs or individuals who have created a business out of this. In that context, there are webs of pedophiles, prostitution webs that determine the mechanisms, places and prices of sexual commerce, webs of delinquents and customers under the cover of the political and social system. It is important to make the prostituting actors visible, considering prostitution as an institution in which matrons, clients, pimps, traffickers, owners of boarding houses/hotels, etc. These webs utilize, for instance, boys, girls and youths, mainly poor population, stealing their images to be used in pornography. Such utilization of the mentioned population is carried out through ways such as deals, deceit, pressures, kidnappings, sales, which forces them to work in conditions that are similar to slavery, forcing them into sexual exploitation.

For the recruitment and transfer with illegal purposes, those who manage these networks also use resources such as coercion, threats to their families, denial of water and food, physical lock-up, violence, etc.

For the specific case of this investigation, the presence of networks was expressed in various manners by the victims of sexual exploitation who were interviewed, as well as by the authorities that gave their opinion regarding their existence. These views are presented below, in their own words, and the summary of the data contained in the interviews.

The networks operate from their own logic, that is, commercial utilization through the recruitment of women, among them minors, to exercise the commercial sex. They utilize contact with those seeking to move to other places. The United States, for example, to look for better economic conditions, whether because they are already involved in prostitution, or because their situation makes them vulnerable to become victims of the networks of sexual exploitation.

Anyway, this is a complex issue on which many people are reluctant to provide information. On the existence of organized networks dedicated to sexual traffic, a physician of the Health Center said that he believed “that they do exist, however, the records that we keep in the Health Center are very rigorous, because the women who undergo their prophylactic control are duly documented, they present their identity card, and in the case of foreigners, they present their permission to stay in the country or their passport. Despite our regulations forbidding to register foreign women for commercial sex, we have approached the problem from another point of view, the epidemiological, for example. I do believe that there are persons or groups dedicated to the trafficking of persons with the purpose of prostituting them, but it is difficult to detect who they are and how they operate, because that is out of the control of the health services.”

Also, in places where it is known that the networks operate, the authorities claim not to know of their existence, which can be interpreted in two different ways, one that in fact, there are no networks, and the other, that people refuse to talk about this issue. This may have happened with the Mayor of Tecun Uman, who said, “since I am a mayor, and with the number of years living here, to date, I have no knowledge of such type of organizations dedicated to trafficking minors for sexual purposes”.

Being Tecun Uman a border area, it becomes a vulnerable spot for the trafficking of persons, furthermore, this city has an affluence of thousands of foreigners, either tourists, or passers-through to the United States, and who stay to work temporarily. In that sense, the opinion of the Director of the House of the Migrant, in being asked about the possibility of networks or webs of traffickers who bring in young girls from other countries to exercise prostitution in this municipality, was: “we have had many denouncements on this issue, about persons being contacted in Central America and brought directly to Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango. There is a house there, where they are selected, they keep them locked up, as in prison, with house arrest and they don't let them out of that place.”

Further on, he pointed out that they knew “that there is a large network of ‘coyotes’ or ‘polleros’ who are paid a very high amount for bringing them in. We were told that in Coatepeque, for the opening of a brother house, they had a raffle among those attending and the prize was a young girl; testimonies such as this one are heard every day from people who go through here”. He added that many times the woman who wants to pass up north must sleep with the “pollero” or the guide, of the person who is taking them. “We may call this a prostitution for need, since many women tell us that they don't tell because of shame, but these cases do happen. Others are raped and they have to live with that.”

The coordinator of the House of Women of the Order of the Oblata Sisters, was also very clear in relation to the existence of these networks, and just like the former version, contradicts the municipal Mayor. It is important to mention that in these two interviews, reference was made to the participation of authorities, without saying names, in the issuance of fake documents to avoid migration problems for the minors, which has to do with organized networks that pay for these services. “The networks exist –said the coordinator-, and the girls can verify that openly, because they have been the victims and have suffered such abuse, they have been deceived, and third parties are involved. One is in charge of recruiting them, another one of bringing them to the place and another one of selling them.

Tamara, one of those interviewed, told that passing through the border into Guatemala takes time and has its ways to avoid having problems with immigration. “The most wanted place to do that –she said-, is the border of Pedro de Alvarado, because Monday and Friday are market days and those days everybody gets through without permit, but even in customs, there is corruption, because for money, the employees let through young girls who are hidden in the trailer and truck drivers quarters. They pass them and sell them in closed houses or night-clubs, where they are made to go naked and do strip-tease. The place that I know best, where they are getting girls through, even drugged, is through Pedro de Alvarado”.

The networks include the trailer drivers who, because of their work, cross through the Central American borders all the time, but they are a lot broader. In it are the owners of bars, in addition to the persons who contact directly the victims of the trafficking, the immigration and local authorities, retired prostitutes, transporters, customs workers, policemen, etc.

The victims of the sexual exploitation network are the ones who have direct information of the mechanisms for the operation of networks, because they have been their prey, but the data they provide are still incomplete. One of the respondents said that she knew who is directly the owner of the bar where she works and who is dedicated to the trafficking of minors, “the owner of the bar –she said-, travels throughout Central America looking for girls, only 14 year-olds, she brings them by any way she can, deceived or forced, I remember a girl called Thelma, she was a virgin; they offered her to a man with money, she was a slave, she did the house cleaning and got busy”.

The routes to get into Guatemala, that this woman knows, are those of Las Chinamas, Jutiapa; Padre Miguel, la Hachadura; San Cristóbal, also in Jutiapa; Ipala, Chiquimula; el Derrumbe, that is at the border with El Salvador; Anguiatú, as a border pass with Honduras and El Salvador. In addition to the border areas used for the trafficking of women with sexual purposes, she mentioned some of the mechanisms and necessary contacts. “The way to get through –she said- is by disguising them as men; they make them wear pants, a hat and a mustache and they go through like newspaper vendors, candy vendors and they say they are going to take a bath in the river. The other way is that the customs workers know the owners of the bars, one only tells them that she is going to such bar and they let them through. At night they go to the bar, they drink and take the women for free. Sometimes, at the border, they give the girl money to get to the bar they indicate.”

In other words, just as there are persons who go through the region to contact women, there is also evidence that they have created operational systems that enable those contacted to travel alone and get to the prostitution centers for which they have been hired. This form of operation of the business of sexual commerce leads us to think that there is a pre-established agreement where the women accept to become part of the network, as opposed to those who are brought in by force or deceived.

Directly linked to the mechanisms of operation of the sexual exploitation networks are the border posts through which they mobilize the victims of sexual commerce. Those interviewed mentioned various places by which they went through, with varying times according to the places where they had to stay overnight for one or two days, thus showing that there is more than one route and many operation mechanisms for the networks, as well as the existence of actors involved to facilitate the trafficking business, especially if it has to do with minors from other nationalities, since trafficking is international. It also takes place in the national sphere, by mobilizing them from one region to another.

In this sense, following is a grouping of the main border posts that those interviewed mentioned and which enables to have a vision of the mobilization points towards Guatemalan territory.

Chart No.3
Border Posts used by the Victims of Sexual Exploitation
To Enter the Municipalities under the Study

MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY	BORDER POST INVESTIGATED
Guatemala	San Cristóbal Agua Caliente Valle Nuevo
Coatepeque and Quetzaltenango	San Cristóbal Anguiatú
Poptún	Pedro de Alvarado Anguiatú Agua Caliente
San Benito	San Cristóbal Anguiatú
Ayutla	Las Chinamas San Cristóbal Anguiatú

The following relationship shows us the main border posts through which the MSW have entered the country, by department and/or municipality where they have become established to exercise sexual commerce.

- ◆ Las Chinamas or Valle Nuevo Jutiapa, border with El Salvador.
- ◆ San Cristóbal, Jutiapa, border with El Salvador.
- ◆ Anguiatú, also known as Padre Miguel, route to Esquipulas, Chiquimula, border with El Salvador.
- ◆ Ciudad Pedro de Alvarado, Jutiapa, border with El Salvador
- ◆ Agua Caliente, border with Honduras, Esquipulas, Chiquimula.

The borders of Anguiatú and Agua Caliente in the department of Chiquimula are part of what is known as the “Trifinio”, that is the convergence of the borders of the Republics of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

Chart No. 4
COMMON PLACES TO STAY OVERNIGHT AND/OR IN TRANSIT TO REACH THE
MUNICIPALITIES OBJECT OF THE STUDY

MUNICIPALITY AND DEPARTMENT OBJECT OF STUDY	PLACE TO STAY OVERNIGHT AND/OR TRANSIT
Guatemala, Guatemala	Tegucigalpa
	El Salvador (Santa Ana)
	Quetzaltenango
	Jalpatagua (Valle Nuevo)
	Ayutla (Tecún Umán)
	Esquipulas
	Chiquimula
	Jutiapa
Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango, Quetzaltenango	Coatepeque
	Guatemala (Capital)
	Atescatempa (San Cristóbal)
	Jutiapa
	Esquipulas
	Chiquimula
San Benito, Petén	Zacapa
	Guatemala (Capital)
	Atescatempa (San Cristóbal)
	Jutiapa
	Esquipulas
	Zacapa
Ayutla, San Marcos	Chiquimula
	Guatemala (Ciudad Capital)
	Atescatempa (San Cristóbal)
	Jutiapa
	Esquipulas
Poptún, Petén	Chiquimula
	Moyuta (Ciudad Pedro de Alvarado)
	Concepción Las Minas (Anguiatú)
	Zacapa
	Agua Caliente
	Esquipulas

11. PROFILE OF THE CLIENT

The clients, or users of sexual commerce, and participating in the dissemination of the problem of sexual exploitation, may be classified from different variables, shown in the following charts by age ranges, as expressed by those interviewed.

Chart No. 5
AGE GROUPS OF PERSONS WHO UTILIZE THE SERVICES OF BOYS AND GIRLS
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, BY MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF THE
STUDY

MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY	AGE GROUPS
Guatemala	15 a 50 years
	35 a 40 years
	30 a 37 years
Ayutla	18 a 25 years
	16 a 40 years
	20 a 45 years
	20 a 50 years
Coatepeque and Quetzaltenango	15 a 25 years
	25 a 35 years
	40 and older
San Benito	18 a 25 years
	15 a 50 years
	15 a 55 years
	15 a 60 years
	17 a 50 years
	25 a 60 years
Poptún	15 a 30 years
	17 y 18 years
	20 a 30 years
	20 a 40 years

As can be seen, the ages of the clients are varied, they go from 15 year-old, up to adults and older than 60. The phenomenon crosses all ages of the population.

On the other hand, sexual commerce involves the Guatemalan population of different geographical areas, but it also includes many foreigners that go through the country, specifically the geographical areas of the study, which may be inferred from the statement by those interviewed that they have had sexual relations with persons from other countries, that in cases such as San Benito and Ayutla are over 50%.

Chart No. 6
FOREIGN PERSONS WHO HAVE UTILIZED THE SERVICES OF GIRLS VICTIMS OF
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, BY MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF THE STUDY

MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY	HAVE UTILIZED THEIR SERVICES		
	TOTAL	YES	NO
TOTAL	50	28	22
Guatemala	10	5	5
Coatepeque and Quetzaltenango	10	5	5
Poptún	10	5	5
San Benito	10	6	4
Ayutla	10	7	3

The above chart shows the global number of MSW who have had sex with foreigners in the various geographical areas investigated, starting from the number of 50 MSW interviewed during the process.

The sex workers who prefer not to have sex with foreigners, stated that they fear diseases such as the HIV/AIDS, a perception that apparently does not occur in the case of sex with nationals. This is even worse, if it is kept in mind that, although it was not a part of the instrument of investigation, most of those interviewed does not refer to the use of protection for their sexual contacts; in very few cases, they stated to use a condom with their clients, although sometimes they find themselves in a situation in which they are offered money in exchange for sex without protection.

The following relation shows us the nationality of the foreigners that utilize sexual favors of MSW, according to the investigated geographical areas.

Chart No. 7
NACIONALITY OF FOREIGNERS WHO HAVE UTILIZED THE SERVICES OF GIRLS
VICTIM OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, BY MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY

MUNICIPALITY OBJECT OF STUDY	NACIONALITY
Guatemala	Mexican
	Salvadoran
	Honduran
	Italian
Poptún	Cuban
	Méxican
	Belizean
	Salvadoran
	Honduran
	Colombian
	Nicaraguan
Costa Rican	
Quetzaltenango	Mexican
	Salvadoran
	Honduran
	North American
	Dutch
	Greek
	Finlandian
San Benito	Cuban
	Mexican
	Belizean
	Salvadoran
	Honduran
	Colombian
	Nicaraguan
	North American
Ayutla	Mexicano
	Salvadorans
	Honduran
	Colombian
	Nicaraguan
	North American
	Peruvian
Chinese	

As can be seen, the nationalities of foreigners who use the services of the MSW are varied in the different geographical areas. In the case of persons of Guatemalan nationality, who utilize the services of the MSW, they are from the same locations or from other regions of the country that are passing through these towns, such as trailer and truck drivers, merchants or residents of villages near the studied urban centers. The clients come from different social strata, according to the statements of those interviewed, from poor people, middle class up to wealthier persons.

12. CHARACTERIZATION OF A NETWORK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The characterization of the networks may be carried out more thoroughly after the interviews to victims of sexual exploitation, although the information is still dispersed, thus, a chart was made that enables to have a more integral view of the operation routes in the various geographical areas of the study. One of the best examples found in the interviews is perhaps one interview in Poptun, El Petén, that gives more information on the network that made her become involved in sexual traffic to Guatemala, as a victim of the network.

This is a Salvadoran woman, 18 years old, who under deceit became a worker in commercial sex. "They told me I was going to be working in a cafeteria –she said- and they made me work in a bar in Esquipulas. After 6 months I ran away and left for Quetzaltenango, afterwards, the owner of a bar here in Poptun told me to come with her". She says she was brought by two women, who were also accompanied by other women who were coming to work in the sexual trade business. It was those women who made the arrangements with immigration for their passage and had no problem because they went directly inside the immigration office, and the negotiations took place there. She mentioned that in total there were 8 women that the ladies were bringing in, and that after passing the border, separated, informing them that they were going to different places.

When they arrived in Guatemala, she was told that she owed them Q.1500 and that she had to pay, otherwise she would be accused of not having documents and theft, so when she heard of such accusations, she was scared and did everything they told her. While in the Capital City she was locked up in a house where there were other women, and was obligated to take in clients for two weeks. Afterwards she was transferred to another prostitution center.

The respondent did not mention the names of sexual traffickers, nor was it possible for her to locate the place in the Capital city where they obligated her to become a prostitute, because she is a foreigner and does not know the city. What is evident is that the women who brought her were intermediaries, with contacts in several bars. They were bringing more women and had others concentrated in the capital, for a later distribution in several geographical locations in the country, where the brothels operate.

This of course, does not disclose the main actors of the sexual exploitation networks, since they operate covertly, hiring intermediaries who profit from their involvement in the trafficking of women, among them minors, to exercise the sexual trade.

Regarding child pornography, what can you tell us? Was one of the questions made to those interviewed. "If we talk about involvement of local children, I have no information, but I know of children and youths who suffer from the effects of it; we know that protests have taken place for the distribution in the country of magazines and periodicals that are also sold in our city. Seeing first and then acting, the pornographic activity in bars is promoted".

What do you think of fake documents held by many undocumented persons? Was another question. According to some of the respondents, this is nothing new. It is known that there are networks, from the northern to the southern border. The authorities have the tools to make the documents, thus there are people with better machines, more resources to make false documents, they are ahead in technological advancement and are capable of doing all kinds of documents. "There is a huge network of falsifiers, they give false papers, false visas, I insist that this is nothing new, and as perfect as the job of the government may be, there are always persons who have more money to make false documents".

Trafficking with undocumented persons is an easy job, that yields a lot of money; each migrant pays between 4 and 5 thousand dollars to get up north, and it is spoken of what money they make up north and send money to the country; but, who keeps the money they have paid? The "polleros" and the "coyotes", traffickers of women, drug traffickers, in their hands is all of this money".

Is there a specific project of the Migrants House to counteract the phenomena of prostitution and sexual trafficking of minors? To this question, those who run this institution said that "concretely, work is done only with persons that go through this house, either going or coming back. Prevention work is also done against those phenomena, such as informative talks about the situation of life in these regions and not only giving them food and shelter. They are told of the real situation that they may go through or that they may have already experienced. They come defeated, they have been robbed, raped, and we talk about that. In addition, the work we do in the municipalities of Catarina, Ayutla, Pajapita and Ocosingo, those who are attending education establishments are being formed, at municipality agencies, groups of women, communities where there is concern to deal with the issue of prostitution".

Are your actions coordinated at any time with the work of the authorities? –they were asked- and they responded that "unfortunately, the police are changing all the time and we have an agreement for the training of policemen. Many of them know nothing about the immigration laws and that is why they violate the rights of the migrants. The rights of the Central American women are violated, as in the case of children who cannot travel without the permission of the parents; other times, for money, they let them go through, other times they do have the permission, but they take away the papers, they tear them down and demand large amounts of money to let them go through, or they are given 15 days to stay here".

Is there any type of communication with the Mexican authorities? “What we do is file the denouncements with the media –he answered- we have contact with Human Rights offices in the D.F. and with other institutions on the other side. But it is very difficult for us, as a Guatemalan institution to go into Mexico, but we have had some support, such as in the case of the BETA group, because 85% of the violations take place in Mexican territory and 15% in Guatemalan territory. It is very difficult if there are no agreements between the two countries”.

How big is the staff of the institution? The officer of the House of the Migrant said that “we are ten in total: two legal advisors, two social workers, three teachers, one secretary and one bookkeeper and myself who runs the work. We work in the area of human mobility, in the whole diocese, throughout the department of San Marcos and somehow we also contribute to prevent problems, especially those of prostitution. Our work reaches more or less 3,000 children who are given talks on human rights, some 60 teachers in the border area, who are getting their Diploma on Human Rights. During the years that our work has existed we have assisted no less than 30,000 migrants, some 9,000 per year. We work in 26 countries and maintain 5 migrant houses in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Tapachula, Tecun Uman and Guatemala. We have never lacked of a bed, shelter or food to share”. “The financial help for the work comes from the Lutheran Church of Denmark and part from the Catholic Church and the Mission of the Salabrinians, the government and the private sector of Guatemala have shut their doors on us.”

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ It is necessary to create and/or strengthen specialized instances for the attention of victims, such as the creation of a specialized office in the Public Ministry, one unit for trafficking of women and restructuring the Human Rights office in the National Civil Police.
- ◆ Exercise an effective control at the borders by the National Civilian Police to try to counteract, in the extent possible, the trafficking of persons.
- ◆ Modernize the borders with adequate technology, so that customs agents can identify illegal migration.
- ◆ Establish the corresponding mechanisms and make them efficient so that the customs agents and other authorities of the border posts may detain and denounce the “coyotes” and /or women traffickers.
- ◆ Coordination among the customs agents and the National Police to act together in order to combat the trafficking of women and illegal migration.
- ◆ Put controls in place to prevent possible acts of corruption among the “coyotes”, the sexual exploiters and the border authorities.
- ◆ Implement programs to support victims of the “coyotes” and prostitutes in border areas.
- ◆ Carry out an informative campaign to provide awareness and orientation in border areas so that the citizens may denounce to the corresponding authorities, the networks of traffickers and sexual exploiters.
- ◆ Draft an integral operation from the National Civil Police in the context of the operating plan of the Ministry of Interior, in order to present a common front in the combat against the trafficking of girls/boys and against the networks of sexual exploiters.
- ◆ It is imperative to strengthen the section of minors at the National Civil Police, since at present their work is aimed mainly to juvenile delinquency and not to the sexual exploitation of girls and youths.
- ◆ It is necessary to make relevant legal reforms in the Criminal Code for Minors, incorporate and adequate the national legislation to international covenants adhered to by the Guatemalan State and which have been ratified by Congress.
- ◆ A strong campaign is recommended to inform through all possible mass media, that the person who performs a sexual act with a minor (boy or girl) is committing a crime of corruption of minors, punished by the Law.

- ◆ The above in order for adults, clients or users of child sexual exploitation be duly informed and understand that they are responsible of induction by offering money to the minors for the performance of sexual acts.
- ◆ This campaign would also serve to provide awareness and encourage the population to denounce these crimes.
- ◆ It is imperative that the Judicial System integrated by the Public Ministry, the National Police, the Judicial Body and other institutions become coordinated and put up a common front to combat the sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents.
- ◆ The establishment of a Special Office at the Public Ministry, or in the already existing offices, and give them the authority and increase their staff to combat exclusively, according to the law, to the criminal prosecution of sexual exploitation.
- ◆ The justice system should fight the networks of prostitution, especially the sexual exploiters and boys/girls traffickers and adolescents with the purpose of prostituting them.
- ◆ The National Police should cooperate with investigations in the field, with scientific and technical lab work, to carry out operatives, searches, inspections in all places or establishments where there is sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.
- ◆ Police operatives should be systematic, regular and constant in order to combat the exploiters and prostitutes.
- ◆ Each institution responsible to provide justice and apply the law must assume its legal and moral responsibility to systematically and coordinately combat the networks of sexual exploiters and organized crime, which is operating in the national and international levels.
- ◆ Restructure the Human Rights office at the National Police in order to be capable of responding and follow-up on these cases, in addition to being responsible for the investigative process, both for the prevention and detection and proceed with operatives to combat the crime.
- ◆ Strengthen the office of assistance to the Victims of the Public Ministry, whose objective is to provide support, assistance and physical as well as psychological/psychiatric treatment to the person affected by the crime.
- ◆ Modify the Criminal Code regarding the increase of penalties for the crime of prostitution and trafficking of women.
- ◆ The number of operatives should be increased by the National Police and the Public Ministry.

- ◆ That the Public Ministry, through the media, carry out advertising campaigns, encouraging the citizens to denounce sexual exploitation of minors.
- ◆ The National Police ought to make advertising campaigns to encourage the population to use the 110 line which is where the denouncements are received without the persons needing to identify themselves.
- ◆ The Public Ministry should create more human and adequate quarters to treat the boys and girls who have been sexually exploited.

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