

“they didn’t help me;

THEY SHAMED ME.”

A baseline study on the vulnerabilities of street-involved boys to sexual exploitation in Manila, Philippines

LOVE146

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To Sexual Exploitation in Manila, Philippines

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Introduction

The global reality of sexual exploitation and abuse knows no gender. Internationally, it is said that 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before reaching adulthood and in some nations the exploitation and abuse of boys far outweigh that of girls. While this remains a pressing issue, the sexual exploitation of men and boys is often little understood and commonly goes ignored. A key reason for this is that social and cultural norms often assume men and boys to be inherently strong and/or invulnerable to sexual exploitation. While these long-held assumptions on male invulnerability are strong and often foundational to much of the literature available on gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, a small but growing body of research in this area continues to show these assumptions to be false. Due to the general lack of awareness of the vulnerability of males to sexual abuse and exploitation, the efforts of organizations and individuals who desire to provide for the needs of male victims often go unsupported. Over the past four years, Dr. Glenn Miles and Jarrett Davis, with the support of Love146, have made addressing the exploitation of boys and young men a key objective in their work, and often do this by partnering with key organizations that are pioneering such work. The study that you hold in your hands is a part of that endeavor.

This is the second of a multi-part series of exploratory studies that look into the lives, experiences and vulnerabilities of street-involved (street living / street working) boys in SE Asia. This follows a similar series of studies by Miles and Davis that examine the experiences of young males working in various sectors of the entertainment industry in southeast Asia, including the vulnerabilities of males working in massage parlors, street-based sex work, and bar-based entertainment services. These projects have been a part of a small, collaborative movement among interested organizations, which have both recognized and acted upon the neglect of boys and men in discussions of sexual abuse and exploitation. The studies have utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, merging careful fieldwork and one-on-one structured interviews to provide a better understanding of the lives of young men and boys within uniquely vulnerable or exploitive contexts as an information resource for service providers and future researchers in this area.

While we believe the findings of this study to be useful, we realize that it is ultimately insufficient and serves only as brief glance at the 'tip of an iceberg' concerning the vulnerabilities of boys and men to violence and exploitation in Southeast Asia. It is our desire that this brief baseline of information will aid in the development of new projects and initiatives among our implementing partners, as well as serving as a foundation for new and more nuanced research looking at vulnerable and/or overlooked people groups in the SE Asia region.

The title of this report, "They Didn't Help Me; They Shamed Me", is a direct quote from an 11-year-old boy currently living alone on the streets of Manila. Like many of the boys interviewed in this report, he is a survivor of sexual violence experienced during his life on the streets. He is one of the few boys brave enough to seek help for the violence he had experienced. And yet, like many, instead of being offered help, he was only given shame for 'allowing' himself to be abused. His is just one of the many similar stories, serving as an impetus to recognize and respond to the vulnerabilities of boys and young men, which have for too long remained hidden in plain sight.

Executive Summary

This report presents outcomes and key discussion from research conducted among ‘street-involved’ (street-living and/or street-working) boys in Manila, Philippines. The research provides a baseline of information and an initial analysis of the key needs, vulnerabilities, and potential resiliencies of street-involved boys in Manila. Conducted in July and August 2015, the research aims to initiate a more nuanced and informed discussion on a male vulnerability in the Philippines for social service providers, policy makers, child-protection advocates, and social researchers.

The study partners with social workers from three local NGOs in Manila to conduct 51 in-depth, structured interviews with street-involved boys presently living and/or working on the streets of Manila during the time that the study was conducted. The ages of respondents in the study range from 10-19 years of age, with a mean age of 14. The interviews focus on a number of key areas of their lives including: demographics, social and family relationships, financial security, sexual history, instances of violence and sexual abuse, health, emotional wellbeing, and future plans. This broad range of data is used to assess present and potential vulnerabilities to various forms of violence with a particular focus on sexual exploitation and abuse.

The research uncovers significant and pressing vulnerabilities among street-involved boys toward sexual and physical violence and finds such forms of violence to be a common, and sometimes frequent, reality of life for street-involved boys in Manila. The majority of boys, 65% (33 boys), disclosed experiencing at least some form of sexual violence on the streets or within their communities. This includes, 49% (22 boys) who reported being shown pornography by adults in their communities or in the areas in which they live and work, 47% (24 boys) who cite sexual touching by adults, and 27% (13 boys) who cite instances in which adults have committed sexual acts with them that went beyond just touching. Physical violence, including some brutal accounts are commonly reported to come from police officers, parents, and peers within their communities.

This research attempts to define and add nuance to the often little-known needs and vulnerabilities of street-involved boys in Manila and provides recommendations for program development, future research, and continued vigilance against the sexual exploitation and abuse of vulnerable groups of children in the Philippines.

Literature Review

The Invisibility of Male Vulnerability to Sexual Violence

Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSEC) of Boys

Over the past 10 years, the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) has gained much-needed attention in the United States and around the globe. However, most of this discussion has centered on young women and adolescent girls. What little attention that has been afforded to boys often identifies them as exploiters, pimps and buyers of sex or as active and willing participants in sex work, not as victims or survivors of exploitation (ECPAT, 2010). As a result of this general lack of information and awareness about the reality of male vulnerability, social service providers are often ill-equipped to meet the needs of male victims of violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation. A recent report from the US Department of State notes, “around the world, the identification and provision of adequate social services for male victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking has remained a continuous challenge” (US Department of State).

A report released by ECPAT USA (2010) entitled, "...And Boys, Too" draws attention to this phenomenon, in which discussions of boys as victims or survivors of CSEC is frequently appended to a discussion about commercially sexually exploited girls in the form of a footnote which usually reads, as their title suggests, "...and boys, too". This report includes a desk review among 40 key service providers and youth agencies in the United States. Most significantly, this review reveals that the scope of the commercial sexual exploitation of boys (CSEB) is vastly underestimated and cites a strong consensus among service providers that a majority sexual exploitation cases committed against boys go unreported--a reality that poses a significant risk to the health and lives of young males (ECPAT, 2010: 3). While males are often characterized in terms of resiliency, the mental, physical, and emotional health outcomes of boys who have been victims of CSE can be dismal and can provide increased chances of further sexual assault. In addition to this, rates of alcohol and the usage of illicit drugs among boys who have been victims of CSE have been found to be exceedingly high (2010).

Asquith and Turner, in a 2008 report commissioned by the Oak foundation, describe a “screaming silence” about the needs of male victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking. They cited that “where boys are referred to, this is usually in reference to reasons other than sexual exploitation, such as child labor or begging...” However, among what research has been done on the issue, data continues to demonstrate that sexual exploitation and trafficking of males is a pervasive issue. In some countries, such as Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, instances of abuse and sexual exploitation committed against boys is cited to far outweigh that which is committed against girls--constituting up to 90% of sexual exploitation cases in Sri Lanka (ECPAT, 2008).

Discussions in the media commonly reinforce a gender exclusive understanding of vulnerability, highlighting only female victimization, while often obscuring the plight of male victims, including young boys (Jones, 2010). The most common narratives of sexual exploitation and trafficking often explicitly describe instances in which men enslave and sexually abuse “women and girls”, dichotomizing males and females as “predator” and “prey” (2010), often blurring the concepts of sexual exploitation and

misogyny. Such expressions of male dominance and invulnerability often hide the reality that males are also vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (2010). Samuel Jones, in an article in the Utah Law Review, suggests: “to some extent, men and boys have become the victims of this media driven, socially constructed, conception of maleness” (2010). The focus of the discussion on vulnerability, exploitation, and violence then becomes solely on women as the victims of male violence. Thus, when research is conducted on males who are exploited and/or involved in the sex trade industry, this assumption of female vulnerability and male resilience is often laid as a foundation and interprets data from this perspective.

In South Asia, a very similar reality is true. UNICEF IRC indicates boys enjoy significantly less legal protection from sexual abuse and exploitation and less access to service for victims than girls. In some cases, legislation protects only girls and women and excludes boys and men (UNICEF, 2010). In Sri Lanka, as much as 90% of the estimated 20,000-30,000 child prostitutes in the country are boys, some of whom can be pre-ordered to be waiting for foreign pedophiles upon their arrival in country (Frederick, 2010; UNICEF, 2010). Many of these young boys are filmed for child pornography, which can be circulated the world-over. In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) estimates that boys are depicted in over 50% of all the child pornography that it seizes (UNICEF, 2010).

Three ECPAT studies in South Asia show differences in the way boys are used in the sex industry:

1. A small study of the exploitation of boys in prostitution in Hyderabad (India) reported few pimps and largely female customers (Akula, 2006).
2. In Lahore and Peshawar (Pakistan), researchers described boys having sex with older men in long-term relationships that were not always based on money (Mohammed & Zafar, 2006).
3. The exploitation of boys in prostitution in Bangladesh was found to be a traditional practice, based in hotels, in homes and on the street. Pimps controlled the boys through fear and violence. (Ali & Sarkar, 2006)

Male Sex Workers / Prostituted Males in Research

Males In a review of 166 scholarly articles on the global sex industry, 84% exclusively discussed female sex workers and made no mention of males. When males were mentioned, they were ascribed or presumed to have, significantly more agency than females (Dennis, 2008: 13). Research often views males in the sex industry as liabilities for sexual health, rather than vulnerable human beings that can be damaged (Graham, 2007). In addressing female sex workers, issues of gender-based violence, emotions/family support and a variety of other social vulnerabilities are commonly addressed. On the other hand, when studies address male sex workers, they predominantly address issues of HIV/AIDS and sexual orientation (Dennis, 2008: 11).

Sexual Abuse of Boys

In many, if not most, societies, the sexual abuse of males has also been a difficult reality to acknowledge—much less understand. Much of this may lie within cultural constructions of masculinity, which is often understood as being innately strong, powerful, and resilient to victimization. Thus, the concept of vulnerability often stands in stark contrast to the very concept of masculinity itself (Kia-Keating, et al., 2005: 169). Even males are not often consciously aware of their own vulnerabilities due to this strong cultural narrative, except in the case of unusual circumstances--such as rape within prisons (Graham, 2007: 188).

Over the past two decades, it has been common for a male's experience of sexual abuse during childhood to be described as less traumatic than it would be for a female. Such instances have not always even been identified as abusive, especially if the perpetrator involved is female (Hilton, et al., 2008: 5). Despite these cultural narratives, vulnerability studies on the effects of sexual abuse on males continue to echo the contrary. For instance, in a 2004 gender analysis on the effects of sexual abuse on 128 women and 69 men, male participants were found to have higher levels of an array of mental health symptoms compared to their female counterparts (Banyard, et al, 2004.) In a retrospective cohort study conducted among 17,337 adult HMO members in San Diego, found 16% of males and 25% of females to have reported childhood sexual abuse (Dube, et al., 2005). Within this study, the histories and outcomes of those who had experienced childhood sexual abuse (CSA) were compared with those who had not experienced CSA, and demonstrated that the effects on the risks of multiple behavioral, mental, and social outcomes between males and females were nearly identical (2005). For example, both males and females with a history of CSA were more than twice as likely to have a history of attempting suicide, compared with those without a history of CSA (2005). In an earlier study (1994), David Lisak conducts 26 autobiographical interviews with male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, of which 92.3% of cases involved multiple instances of abuse (Lisak, 1994). In his analysis, he identified 15 psychological themes, shared among his respondents, which include: anger, betrayal, fear, helplessness, isolation and alienation, legitimacy, loss, masculinity issues, negative childhood peer relations, negative schemas about people, negative schemas about the self, problems with sexuality, self-blame/guilt and shame/humiliation. Beyond these themes, the study also uncovered that nearly equal numbers of men cited abuse by male perpetrators as they did with female perpetrators (1994).

Street-Involved Children (Globally)

Official estimations of street-involved children are contested; however, commonly cited figures hold the global population of street-involved children to be around 100 million (Thomas de Benítez, 2011). Exact figures for street-involved groups are difficult to calculate as these populations are frequently on the move, often unregistered, and frequently exist outside of formal societal structures. Street-involved children are mainly found in urban settings, in living situations commonly imbricated in issues related to unsafe migration, human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, drug use, and violence (Coren E, Hossain R, Pardo Pardo J, Veras MMS et al, 2013).

Street-Involved Children

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had adopted the following definition for street-children: 'Any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, and so on, has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, directed, and supervised by responsible adults.' (Williams, 1993).

This definition is developed further by separating such groups into three categories (Plan International, 7):

- **Street-living children:** These are children sleeping in public places without their families.
- **Street-working children:** These are children who work on the streets during the day but return to their families at night.

- **Children of families on the street:** These are children living with their families on the street.

While these categorizations may be helpful, in reality, street-involved children are not a homogenous group and generalizing their experiences can be challenging. Additionally, it is also now recognized that such categories are largely “socially constructed” and even the label “street child” may be perceived as somewhat discriminatory and/or stigmatizing (OHCHR, 2011). In this respect, the term “street children” denies the diversity of children’s experiences, is somewhat victimizing and stigmatizing, and may remove the focus on other marginalized children (Panter-Brick, 2002). New emerging terms as ‘street-active’, ‘street-connected’ or ‘street-involved’ children are increasingly used, and refer to a broader definition of “children for whom the street is a reference point and has a central role in their lives” (Thomas de Benitez, 2007).

One of street children’s main assets is their ability to work and gain income. Most street children are working in the informal sector in a wide range of occupations. as begging, washing windshields, scavenging, rag picking, street-vending etc. At times, street-involved children may manage multiple and diverse jobs throughout a single day in response to shifting demands from morning until night (Thomas de Benítez, 2011). Employment is insecure, limiting the possibilities of planning or projecting oneself into the future. Income is, for the most part, earned on a daily basis and highly fluctuates.

Street-connected youth are also at high-risk to be exploited and trafficked. This includes trafficking for forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation and being forced to beg, work or engage in criminal activity. This reality is often facilitated by a lack of close family ties. Additionally, being of young age and isolation lead them to be an easy prey for all kinds of influence, manipulation, and abuse, whether by relatives, strangers from their villages of provenance or by street gang members. Sex is an important aspect of the experiences street-involved boys, that engage in ‘survival sex, commercial sex, comfort sex, casual sex and romantic relationships, with multiple partners (transvestites, prostitutes, girlfriends, street girls, ‘benefactors’ and gay men) from both within and outside the street world” (Beazley, 2003). Additionally, street children are commonly exposed to risks of violence from older street children, and such violence can become their norm (Nada & El Daw, 2010).

Urban poverty: broader than a lack of income

A high proportion of the urban poor live in temporary housing, “slums” or informal settlements, and residents often bear the harsh brunt of diverse dimensions of poverty. Income is commonly used as the central measure of poverty, mainly through the World Bank’s definition and poverty line of \$1 a day. Relying solely on this indicator is problematic as this measure is essentially based on what is needed for bare survival. Focusing on the “minimum food basket” needed to survive fails to take in account differences between countries, provinces, and towns within the same country, as well as attaining a certain quality of life. The measure also overlooks that a key characteristic of urban poverty is the high cost of non-food items and that access to most basic services in the cities of the Global South is generally monetized. For urban poor living in informal settlements, the provision of basic services and infrastructure is often weak or non-existent and financial resources can quickly be depleted by basic aspects of daily life such as housing, education, health services, social obligations, transportation, clean water, and sanitation (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2013).

Davis and Miles, in a 2014 study exploring the experiences of street-involved boys (8-18 years old) in Sihanoukville, Cambodia found 38% of street-involved instances of sexual touching from adults and 26% disclosed forms of abuse that went beyond just touching, often citing forced and coercive sex, and being offered food, money, or gifts in exchange for providing sexual services to adults (Davis & Miles, 2014). These rates were significantly higher than the international average of 17% and five times higher than a 2014 UNICEF study, which reports that only 5% of boys in Cambodia experienced sexual abuse between the ages of 13 and 18 years (UNICEF, 2014).

Substance Abuse

The abuse of industrial solvent as inhalants, such as toluene-based glue, is commonly seen among street-involved children throughout the world, due to their affordability and widespread availability (Witting et al, 1997). Inhalants abuse, along with alcohol and other illicit drugs, are commonly used by street-involved children as a means of escaping from their harsh reality and often as a means of relieving the sensation of hunger (Pagare et al.,2004; Pogoy & de Guia, 2008).

The City of Manila and Its Street-Involved Children

The city of Manila has become notorious for street-involved children. Despite this reality, research into their needs and vulnerabilities is sparse, and commonly cited statistical information on prevalence and vulnerability is often outdated. A commonly cited source on the prevalence of street-involved children in the Philippines is a 2002 book from the Social Development Research Center at De La Salle University, in Manila. At the time, the study estimated the population of street-involved children in the Philippines to be 3% of the total population of children aged 0-17 years of age in the Philippines (Lamberte, 2002). Of these, about 20% were considered to be “highly visible” on the streets. Considering only the 20% of “highly visible” street children, the study figured Metro-Manila to have the highest population: 11,346 children. Breaking this down by area, the city of Manila had the highest figured population of highly visible street-working children: 3,266. The disaggregation of data was as follows (2002):

- Manila City - 3,266
- Quezon City - 2,867
- Kalookan City - 1,530
- Pasay City - 1,420
- The rest of Metro-Manila - 2,263

While a significant majority (70%) of street-involved children in Lamberte’s study were found to be male, literature available in the Philippines commonly ignores male vulnerability and underscores only the vulnerabilities of females, calling for increased social support for women and girls. At times, the assumptions of male resilience and female vulnerability are not given basis in evidence. Teresita Silva, in a 2003 country report, cites that even though a minority of total street children (30%) are girls, their ‘gender and situation’ make them more vulnerable than boys who are ‘better able to protect themselves’ (Silva, 2003). While these are substantial assumptions, the author gives no further data or references to support her claims for male resilience apart from mere anecdotal speculation.

In recent years, the city of Manila has received an increasing amount of criticism for its undertaking of ‘rescue operations’ targeted at street-involved children. Initially, these operations were created in response to the high prevalence of street-involved children. However, recent submissions to the UN

High Council on Human Rights by the Asian Legal Resource Center have cited significant and systemic issues of torture and violence against children under these programs (Asian Legal Resource Center, 2014). A central part of this submission is regarding the Reception and Action Centre (RAC) in Manila, which is a “custodial and rehabilitation center”, where children in conflict with the law, street children and orphans are detained (2014). These ‘rescue’ operations are often indiscriminate, failing to make distinction between children in conflict with the law and children in need of special care or protection and fail to consider the individual needs and circumstances of the children involved. Further, children are cited to experience severe violations to their basic human rights during detainment, including issues of overcrowding, lack of caretakers, and abuse by both caretakers and other children (Bahay Tuluyan, 2009).

Neglect and Vulnerabilities to CSEC

Street-involved children are uniquely vulnerable to various kinds of violence and exploitation--particularly CSEC. Within the Philippines, two broad classifications for street children have been adopted: children ‘on’ the street and children ‘of’ the street (Lalor, 1999; Silva, 1996). The prior refers to children who live at home but spend significant amounts of time on the streets engaged in income-generating activities, while the latter refers to children who solely survive on the streets with little or no contact with their families (Merrill, et al, 143: 2010).

Street-involved boys in Manila are reported to be significantly less likely to have had any contact with their immediate families compared with street-involved girls (80% compared to 63%) potentially creating a unique vulnerability to exploitation and violence. Sobritchea (1998) cites that, among male victims of sexual abuse in the Philippines, 75.2% of these cases are believed to be caused by parental neglect, compared with 43.8% among female victims (1998: 277). Similarly, the most common forms of abuse for males is reported to be neglect and abandonment (39.4%) followed by abuse from youth offenders (28.1%) and physical abuse (15.3%) (Silva, 2002). Merrill, et al (2010) finds that Filipino street-involved children who do not live at home were 83% (1.83 times) more likely to be involved in street prostitution, 74% (1.74 times) more likely to exhibit substance abuse, 52% (1.52 times) more likely to feel isolated, and nearly twice as likely to have had suicidal ideations within the past year, compared with children who lived at home (Merril, et al, 2010).

In addition to these vulnerabilities, data also indicates educational attainment among males from difficult circumstances to be significantly lower than females. Among 1,518 children, males were twice as likely to have had no formal education (28.2%) compared with females (11.6%). Similarly, all of the 5 children who has completed some college studies were female (Sobritchea, 1998). Additionally, when sexual abuse of boys is reported, data indicates that average age of male victims is a more than two years younger than the average age of female victims (1998).

ECPAT (2008) along identifies a few common conditions that make children vulnerable to CSEC. The study notes a high number of victim cases coming from single-parent households where the mother is the primary caretaker and is commonly unemployed. In addition, a dysfunctional family life, as well as sexual abuse and neglect are understood as common conditions making children more vulnerable to CSEC in the Philippines (Zaft & Tidball, 2010). A 2008 situational analysis on the effects of tourism on children in Boracay illustrates the differences in the ways male and female victims of CSEC are treated.

One mother featured in this study cites, “It is alright for me and my gay son to be involved in selling sex but not my girls” (ECPAT Philippines, 2008).

Sexual Abuse / CSEC in Southeast Asia

In Asian societies, issues of male sexual abuse have also been given little attention. Boys are assumed to be capable of protecting themselves and the existence of male sexual abuse and even male-to-male sexuality is often ignored or denied. This traditional narrative seems to preclude that males are not at risk of abuse or exploitation (Frederick, 2010). Thus, societies are less vigilant, cases of abuse are less likely to be reported, and boys may be placed at greater risk of abuse and/or exploitation. These prevalent conceptions of male invulnerability further complicate the issue of male exploitation and abuse because they reinforce the idea that males are “stronger” and thus more psychologically resilient, able to readily protect themselves, and more easily recover from trauma than adolescent girls (2010).

CSEC in Broader Asia / SE Asia

Asia, along with Central and South America, is cited to the highest rates of child sexual exploitation in the world (UNICEF, 2001; Ward, 2004). In Cambodia, the commercial sexual exploitation of children is understood to occur within one of two categories. The first of these is establishment-based sexual exploitation, which often occurs in brothels, beer gardens, KTV, and massage establishments (APLE, 2006). Secondly, there is street-based or opportunistic sexual exploitation, which is usually facilitated personally by a sex offender or an intermediary, who often approaches children directly on the streets, or in other public areas for the purpose of starting a relationship with the child which will ultimately lead to sexual abuse (2006).

In a 2006 study by Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) interviews were conducted in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville, Cambodia with 26 child victims of street-based sexual exploitation as well as survey among civil-society personnel who were experienced in working with such groups of vulnerable children. The majority of the children interviewed in the sampling (19 of the 26) were male, reflecting existing APLE data that 80% of child victims of street-based sexual exploitation are male. The study found similar themes among victims of street-based CSE as was found in the 2008 study by Alastair Hilton, et al on child sexual abuse in Cambodia. These common themes included: stressors in the family environment, low-level family incomes, no education or low level education, a street working or street living lifestyle, and peers engaging in similar high-risk behavior (2006). The research uncovered a number of sophisticated grooming techniques employed by pedophiles to gain access to children on the streets. It was commonly found that the majority of children were unaware that the relationship with their abuser was ultimately leading to a sexual encounter (2006). The research found that a majority of sexually exploited children (two-thirds) had sex to earn money. Additionally, drug abuse was found to be common among victims, with 70% reporting to have already been using drugs before the time that they were first sexually exploited. Another notable finding was that respondents were found to show little regard for personal health issues (condom usage) despite some knowledge of the risks of sexually transmitted diseases (2006).

Over the past three years, Love146 has conducted a series of baseline studies, which have explored the often hidden vulnerabilities of boys and young men to violence and sexual exploitation throughout the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. In Cambodia, two studies, in particular, have focused on such vulnerabilities of male masseurs in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Overall, violence and sexual abuse

were found to be a common theme for young males working in either type of establishment. Respondents from mixed gender massage establishments were found to report significantly lower occurrences of sexual intercourse with clients; however, were far more likely to have been forced to have sex against their wishes (Miles & Davis, 2012). This study, conducted in Phnom Penh (2011), uncovered a significant lack of employable skills and job training which seems to be a contributing factor to the vulnerability of young males to sexual exploitation (Miles & Blanch, 2011). Later studies in this series, conducted in Metro-Manila, Philippines and Chiang Mai, Thailand, establish a significant connection between low wages and a significant reliance upon tips, which create a context in which the provision of sexual services is often obligatory in order to receive a fair wage (Davis & Miles, 2012; Davis, Glotfelty, & Miles, 2013).

Sexual Abuse in the Philippines

Within the Philippines, the sexual abuse of boys is a reality that is similarly left unspoken. As in other parts of Southeast Asia, boys are often presumed to be innately “tough” and able to protect themselves. If a young male “allows” himself to be prey to others, it is common that he will be blamed for not living up to his masculine expectations (Watkins & Bentovim, 1992; Grubman-Black, 1990). Additionally, within the conservative context of the Philippines, sex and sexuality (particularly same-sex sexuality) is seldom discussed and little understood. Grubman-Black notes, “The very thought or image of a man ‘having sex’ with a boy produces such extreme reactions that many people find it easier and less painful to ignore or deny it.” Within this context, it is common for boys to perceive their abuse as a sign of their homosexuality. This feeling is especially heightened if the boy failed to resist his attacker or if he experienced sexual arousal from the experience (Watkins & Bentovim, 1992). Because of this stigma and the resulting fears of discrimination, boys are cited to be less likely to report instances of sexual abuse.

UNICEF estimates that 1,000,000 children are brought into prostitution each year; of these, 100,000 of these are believed to be from the Philippines (CATW; UNICEF, 2000). Poverty is cited to be a main factor contributing to CSEC in the Philippines (Ward, 2004) among numerous other systemic factors such as rapid urbanization and the inequitable distribution of wealth (Silva, 2002). In the Philippines, more than 40% of the population lives below the poverty line (Silva, 2002); and during the 1990’s, the numbers of street-involved children in the Philippines are said to have increased from nearly 250,000 to 1.5 million. This expansion of street-involved children, along with the larger, overall expansion of communities of urban poor is an indication of the rapid urbanization experienced in the Philippines over the past few decades (2002).

While sexual abuse is reported to be the most common form of abuse experienced by girls in the Philippines (Sobritchea, 1998), overall reporting of sexual abuse committed against males in the Philippines is very low. Looking at the 2011 statistics from the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development, of the department’s 1,401 cases of sexual abuse, only 29 of these cases (2%) were cases of abuse against males, while 1,372 (98%) were females. Holmes, et al (1997) cites that overall, the sexual abuse of males is not only under-reported, but also commonly under-identified by social workers and clinicians, as males are more likely to be assumed innately resilient, while having their vulnerabilities to abuse largely ignored. Some of this reality may be due to overarching myths surrounding males’ experiences of sexual abuse (Holmes, et al, 1997) -- namely, that relatively few males experience sexual abuse, and that such experiences of abuse has little effect on males. Although, myths

such as these have been readily debunked (see: Lisak, 1994; Dube, et al, 2002; Holmes, et al, 1997), male vulnerability is still seldom defined in research and social programming. Similarly, data demonstrates that cases of sexual abuse are far less likely to be reported to law enforcement in the Philippines when the victim is a male (15.1%), compared with when the victim was female (34.1%). Yet, when sexual abuse of boys is reported, the data indicates that average age of male victims are a more than two years younger than the average age of female victims (Sobritchea, 1998).

Accessibility of Pornography to Children

The accessibility of pornography to young children has also been an increasing concern with regard to the street-based sexual exploitation of children (APLE, 2005). Research is beginning to demonstrate the connection between this ready availability of pornography and child sexual exploitation (CSE). Access to pornographic materials at young ages has been connected to numerous, serious developmental factors including: a premature sexualizing of children's lives and the teaching of "sexual scripts", which normalize violence and abuse as a part of the sexual experience (Graham, 2005). Perpetrators of CSE often use adult pornography to groom their victims for sexual exploitation. Similarly, the purchasers of children often act out what they have viewed in pornographic films with child prostitutes and pimps will also use such films to instruct children on how to behave during sex with their clients (Peters, 2009; Fordham, 2005). Yet, as the availability and accessibility of adult hardcore pornography has continued to expand on the Internet and elsewhere, both government and private entities have commonly turned a blind eye to this phenomenon and its impact on their societies (Peters, 2009).

In addition to this, research in this area has shown a direct connection between the consumption of pornography by young people and sexual violence and rape—including rape within marriage and gang rape (Graham, 2005; APLE, 2005). A 2003 study conducted by Child Welfare Group in four major areas in Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Kampong Som, Siem Reap, and Kampong Cham) found that 61.7% of boys vs. 38.5% of girls indicating they have viewed some type of pornographic material (Child Welfare Group, 2003: 2). This study found that, among those children who were viewing pornography, 36% depicted group sex, 35% depicted violence, 19% depicted bestiality, and another 15% was child pornography (2003: 3). The most common place where minors reported viewing pornography was in public coffee shops and private homes and the prevalence of minors viewing porn was found to be almost twice as common in Phnom Penh, compared with provincial areas. A survey among 230 video street vendors in Phnom Penh found that nearly 70% of vendors surveyed sold pornography—49% of which was openly on display in their shop or stand (2003).

Masculinity and Sexual Identity in the Philippines

While same-sex orientation and homosexual practice are not new concepts in the Philippines or Asia, concepts of sexuality and discussions of sexual identity are fairly recent and come largely out of western thought and scholarship (Tarr, 1996). Thus, as in many Asian societies, concepts of sexuality remain obscure (Hernandez & Imperial, 2006) and may differ greatly from common western and international definitions. While there is no term for "sexuality" in any of the Philippine languages, local languages often describe one's sexual orientation in terms of masculinity and femininity. Within this concept, being heterosexual is often understood in terms of one's gender characteristics such as their overall masculine appearance, reproductive capacity, physical strength, and even manner of dressing (2006). Thus, to be a real man in the Philippine context is also to be a "heterosexual man". Thus, it may come as no

surprise that, the most commonly used word for “heterosexual” in the Filipino (Tagalog) language is *tunay na lalake* which literally translates “real man”. The concepts are one in the same.

Hernandez and Imperial state that the concept of masculinity or being a man within the Philippines rests heavily upon one's physical characteristics and one's ability to demonstrate characteristics that are opposite that of women. A man must “not be feminine, not be a homosexual, not be effeminate, not have sexual or overly intimate relations with other men, or not be impotent with women” (2006: 31). Beyond being *tunay na lalake* or a real man, there is also a strong societal pressure to become *ganap na lalake* or an “actualized man”. This is one who has the ability to fulfill the responsibilities expected of him by society, make a family of his own, and provide for them. Failure to do this often brings reproach and disparagement from his peers (Social Development Research Center, 2000).

On the other hand, the common Filipino term for “homosexual” is *bakla*, which is a somewhat ambiguous term encompassing homosexuality, hermaphroditism, cross-dressing, and effeminacy (Manalansan, xi). This essentially categorizes individuals as members of a third gender, one that is neither fully male nor fully female. J. Neil C. Garcia describes this pervasive image in his book, *Philippine Gay Culture*:

“It's plain to see that all gays are pathetically fascinated with becoming real women, and with having real men as lovers and life time partners. Of course, they'll never be women, and they'll never find men who love them for who they are--which is to say, without some kind of monetary exchange.” (Garcia, 1996)

While this may be the pervasive cultural image of gay men or *bakla*, it is important to point out that being *bakla* is *not* synonymous with transgenderism and the *bakla* label may be applied to any gay and/or effeminate man. While people who are *bakla* are culturally understood to be a biological man with the *lo'ob* (inner-self) of a woman, they may not always dress, act, or even think of themselves as women. However, within the common cultural understanding of same-sex sexualities in the Philippines, a *bakla* is understood to partner with a “real man” (read: *straight man*) for romantic relationships and sex, often (but not always) providing the man with some form of compensation, either in cash or in kind (Tan, 2001). These relationships are thought to be one-way. The *bakla* is expected to love, pay, and often support the man without reciprocation. If the “real man” loves the *bakla* in return, he is believed to jeopardize his masculinity, and risks becoming *bakla* himself. Thus it is important for the man to remain distanced and for the relationship to remain purely transactional. Tan notes that the usage of alcohol is often common among men who are paid to have sex with *bakla* as a means of distancing himself from the relationship and legitimizing the encounter as purely transactional (2001).

Masculinity in the Philippines is more than just having a male identity (being *tunay na lalake*), but also about fulfilling the roles of a man in society (being *ganap na lalake*) which means being tough, macho, not showing emotion, having libido, and creating a family of one's own. Because of this, it is acceptable for a “real man” to have a relationship with a *bakla*, without jeopardizing his identity as a “real” or straight man-- given that he is still able to fulfill some of his socially-expected *male* roles within his relationship with the *bakla*. Thus, even though the pairing consists of two biological men, they are *culturally* understood to be man and woman.

This is often a socially precarious situation for “real men” in terms of identity. Culturally, it is vital that men remain *tunay na lalake* (identifying as, and carrying on the roles of real men) in the midst of these relationships. If a man fails to do so, it is believed that he risks becoming *bakla* himself, and will no longer be desirable as a man (2001).

Methodology

Ethical Considerations

All interviews in this study were conducted in the Filipino (Tagalog) language by social workers from three organizations operating in the Manila area: *Bahay Tuluyan*, *Kanlungan Sa ErMa*, and *Onesimo Bulilit Foundation*. Each of these organizations specializes in working with street-involved children and already has built rapport within each of their respective communities in which they provide their services.

Prior to beginning interviews, the teams of social workers were trained in the methodology of the study, as well as given ethical training for research with vulnerable people groups using the 2009 “UNIAP Ethical Guidelines for Human-Trafficking Research.” Social workers sought to establish rapport with boys prior to the survey and provided each respondent with information concerning: the research and its purpose; assurance of anonymity and confidentiality; information regarding the personal and sensitive nature of the interview, questions to be asked; and the boy’s right to choose not to answer any question, stop the survey, and/or withdraw from the study at any time. In order to make provision for younger boys, surveys were designed to be age-contingent. After careful consideration of the needs and context of younger street-involved boys, survey questions were structured in such a way so that certain sections could be skipped for street-involved boys under the age of 12. However, if a child under the age of 12 disclosed sexual intercourse or sexual abuse, and was comfortable talking about the subject, interviewers were instructed to continue through the full set of questions as they would with a child over the age of 12, at their (and the child’s) discretion.

Prior to each interview, social workers sought to build rapport with each boy and often spent several minutes playing or having simple conversation with respondents prior to discussing the research and its aims. After the study’s purpose and objectives were explained, along with the nature and extent of the questions to be asked, the boys could choose if they desired to complete the survey or not. Each boy was instructed that they were able to skip any question that they were not comfortable answering or end the interview at any time. In addition, respondents were reminded that their honest answers were greatly appreciated, and if at any time they felt uncomfortable – the interviewers would prefer to have no answer at all, rather than an answer that was inaccurate.

Sampling

This study employs both purposive and “snowballing” data sampling methodologies. The lead researcher worked with key social workers from *Bahay Tuluyan*, *Kanlungan Sa ErMa*, and *Onesimo Bulilit Foundation* to identify and map locations in each of the organization’s respective areas of service, where street-involved boys were known to congregate, live, and work. Respondents for the study were typically met either on the street within the service areas of each respective organization or within drop-in centers operated by each of the three implementing organizations. Due to concerns for the safety and privacy of the respondents, all participants encountered on the street were invited to a drop-in or child development center, after agreeing to participate in an interview. Additionally, after completing an interview boys were asked if they were aware of other boys who might also be willing to participate in

the study, this method of gaining respondents (known as chain-referral or 'snowballing') allowed the research team to follow social networks of young boys working throughout the Manila area.

Throughout the months of July and August of 2014, social workers from these three organizations held structured interviews with 51 street-involved (street-living and/or street-working) boys from the Manila area. Of these 51 boys, 21 interviews (41%) were conducted by social workers and/or teachers from Onesimo Bullit Foundation, 16 interviews (31%) were conducted by social workers from Kanlungan Sa ErMa Foundation, and 14 interviews (27%) were conducted by social workers from Bahay Tuluyan. While the street-involved boys in this study work in a variety of areas throughout the Manila area and often at a wide variety of times throughout the day and night, all interviews were conducted during the daytime, within drop-in or child development centers.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study was quite large and was comprised of 86 questions (excluding numerous subquestions). Questions were a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions covering a variety of topics surrounding the life and context of street-involved boys including: demographics, social relationships, personal and family finances, social and emotional feelings, stigma and discrimination, sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC), sexual health, violence, income generation, and future planning. The questions used for this study were adapted from previous research instruments used to gather a holistic baseline of information from street-involved children in Sihanoukville, Cambodia as well as similar instruments used to explore the vulnerabilities of young male entertainment workers in Cambodia, The Philippines, and Thailand. In adapting the questionnaire for Filipino boys in Manila, the lead researcher worked with child rights specialists to ensure that questions were appropriate to be asked to young boys and consulted with social practitioners in Manila to ensure that questions were also appropriate for the Philippine cultural context. Additionally, the final draft of the questionnaire was scrutinized by focus groups of social workers from each of the three implementing organizations in Manila. These reviewers critiqued the questionnaire and suggested additional questions based upon their specific knowledge of the street-involved boys in the Manila area.

Limitations

In this survey, we choose to believe the information given by our respondents to be accurate accounts of their experiences on the streets. However, it is understood that some street-involved children may be accustomed to giving inaccurate information as a means of survival. To counter some of these potential inaccuracies, a few considerations have been made. During training, interviewers were trained to take careful note of the body language of respondents in order to be aware of instances in which children may have felt uncomfortable in answering questions accurately. Throughout the data collection process, interviewers were encouraged to provide annotations on each survey indicating any variables, in which they perceived respondent's statements to be unreliable. Secondly, survey questions in the research instrument were constructed with internal redundancies to check for consistency throughout the whole of each interview. During the data cleaning and initial analysis, any variables that were held in significant question were removed from the data sampling. This resulted in a lower 'n'-value on some questions, but greater accuracy in the final dataset.

The research team felt it was important for interviews to be conducted by local social workers or child protection workers that were already known and trusted within the child's community. While this may be useful for establishing rapport and creating a safe space for respondents to speak about their experiences, this may also have posed a challenge to data accuracy. It is possible that some children could have felt uncomfortable in disclosing some information, due to fears that it may have changed the way the social worker perceived the child. While this is possible, in many cases it was found that prior knowledge of social workers aided in the comfort level of the boys and aided the disclosure of information.

In some cases, it is possible for sexual violence to become "normalized" as a part of a boy's life. This is often a coping strategy in children who have experienced considerable amounts of violence on a regular basis. Normalization such as this could have caused some boys to have understood some forms of sexual abuse as a normal part of their life and thus be less likely to label such instances as "abuse" or something that needs to be reported. While great care was taken in considering each child's understanding of sexual violence, it is possible (and even likely) that some experiences of sexual violence remained undisclosed due to such normalization.

Results

Demographics

Age:

The ages of respondents in this study ranged nine years, the youngest being 10 and the oldest being 19 years of age. The majority of respondents fell between the ages of 12 and 15 years old with an average age of 14.

Education:

The majority of children interviewed report that they are not currently attending any form of schooling, with only 42% (20 people) citing enrollment in school. Among those citing that they are not currently in school 50% of this group (20 people) cite being out of school for more than one year, and 25% (10 people) cite attending school earlier this year. To a lesser extent, 18% of respondents cite enrollment in school one year ago, and only one respondent cited that they had never attended school.

Migration:

A strong majority of respondents (65% or 31 people) indicate that they are native to the Metro-Manila area, while only 35% (or 17 people) indicate migrating— primarily from rural or provincial areas.

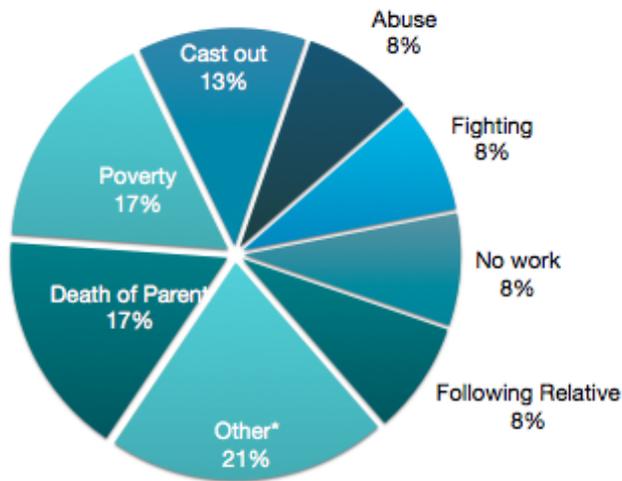
Entrance into Street Involvement:

Respondents were asked how they came to live or work on the streets. Responses to this question are diverse and cover a variety of hardships including tumultuous family relationships, death of loved ones, and various economic hardships. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents indicate having to live on the street due to the death of a parent, another four boys simply cite living or working on the streets due to poverty. Three boys (13%) cite being cast out of their homes but declined to give further explanation regarding their exit from their homes. Additionally, four boys (17%) cite entering into street-involvement due to various experiences of violence within their homes and communities. Among these, two respondents cite “abuse” and another two cite “fighting”. Other responses include: “no work”, cited by two boys, “following relatives”, cited by two, “evil creatures”, cited by one, “injury”, cited by one, “traveling with the fair”, cited by one, “running away”, cited by one, and “separation of parents”, cited by one.

Shelter and Living Arrangements:

Only a minority of street-involved boys (41%) cite living in some form of constructed shelter. The remaining majority (59%) cite sleeping either directly on the streets or in various forms of temporary coverings made of cardboard or plastic scraps. Those citing to live in constructed shelters describe a wide variety of both formal and informal structures including: wood (20%), cement (9%) and stone (9%), as well as one boy citing to live inside of a burnt-out building and another boy citing to live on the roof of a squatter building. Among respondents living outside of constructed shelters, the majority (18 or 39%) cite that they live directly on the streets and indicate no other form of shelter or covering, while two boys (4%) cite living under a bridge. Some respondents indicate sleeping on the street, but cite using tents or other forms of temporary coverings for protection at night. Among these are 5 respondents

(11%) living in tents and one respondent living in a shelter made of cardboard. Additionally, one boy indicates living with his family in the back of a jeepney.



SHELTER TYPE	Freq.	%
Street (no shelter)	20	43%
On the street	18	39%
Under a bridge	2	4%
Constructed shelter	19	41%
Wood	9	20%
Cement	4	9%
Stone	4	9%
Burnt-out building	1	2%
Roof of squatter building	1	2%
Tent or temporary covering	6	13%
Tent on the street	5	11%
Cardboard shelter	1	2%
'Other'	1	2%
In a jeepney	1	2%
N= 46		

Respondents were asked with whom they were presently living. The majority of respondents (30 people or 59%) indicate living with family members. Nine people (18%) indicate living with distant relatives or non-immediate family members and eight people (16%) indicate living with friends. To a lesser extent, two people (4%) indicate living with other non-relatives (these are two boys who had been informally 'adopted' by members of their community). Lastly, one boy cites living alone, and another cites living with his partner.

The 21 respondents (41%) not presently living with family members were asked why this is so. Among the 12 boys who responded to this question the majority cite tumultuous, unstable, or neglectful family relationships. Three respondents (25%) indicate not living with their family due to abuse that they have experienced. Among these three, one cites being adopted and his new adoptive parents have abused him. Another cites that he has been beat up by his father due to his sexual orientation, thus he dissociated from his family. Another boy cites leaving home along with his siblings due to fighting with his mother and father (*"Nag-kahiwa-hiwalay kaming mag-kapatid dahil nag-away ang nanay at tatay ko"*). Additionally, three boys (25%) indicate not living with their family due to neglect. And to a lesser extent, one boy mentions not living with his family because they have no home and another indicates having separated parents. Lastly, four boys give undefined responses, which were non-answers. It is possible that such non-answers could be a way of avoiding direct response to the question asked.

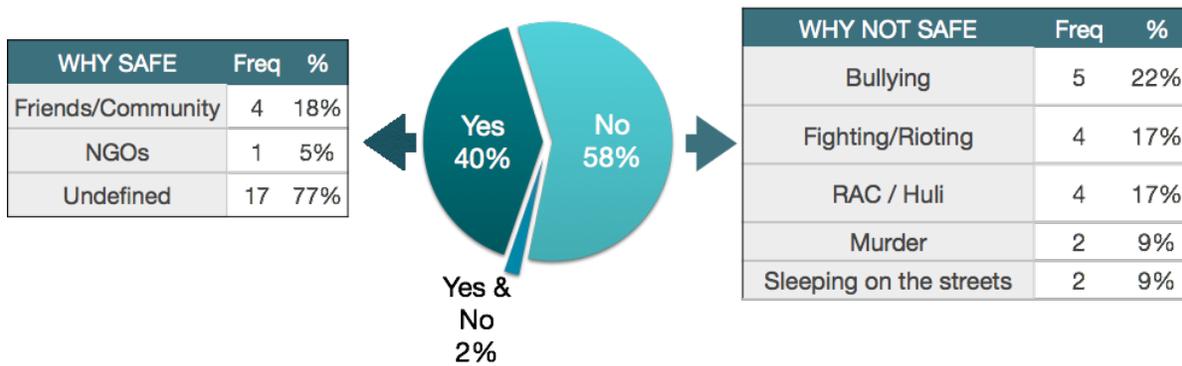
Regarding respondent's current living situation, the majority of boys (78%) indicate that they like living with the people in their current living arrangement, giving reasons such as "we are family", "I'm happy with them", "they love me" or "they care for me". Conversely, 11 boys (22%) state that they do not like living with the people in their current living arrangement. These boys give a diverse range of reasons, including: neglect, abandonment, drug use at home, and not receiving any food. The families of street-involved boys were found to be considerably large in number. The boys in this study report having an

average of 6 siblings, with three boys citing to have as many as 11 siblings. A significant number of street-involved boys (19 or 41%) cite that their siblings are also doing similar work on the streets.

Feeling ‘Safe’ in their Communities:

The majority of respondents (58%) cite that they do not feel safe within their communities, and give a variety of reasons for this perceived lack of safety. A significant portion of the reasons given for not feeling safe have to do with the witness or experience of various kinds of violence in their communities. In particular, five boys indicate that they do not feel safe due to bullying that they have experienced and four cite that they do not feel safe because of fighting or rioting which happens in their area. Furthermore, two boys (9%) cite not feeling safe due to knowing people in their area who have been murdered. Another two boys (9%) cite not feeling safe in their communities because they have to sleep on the streets. Four boys (17%) cite not feeling safe in their communities due to fears of being taken by street-child “rescue” operations conducted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the Philippine Government.

Do you feel safe in your community?

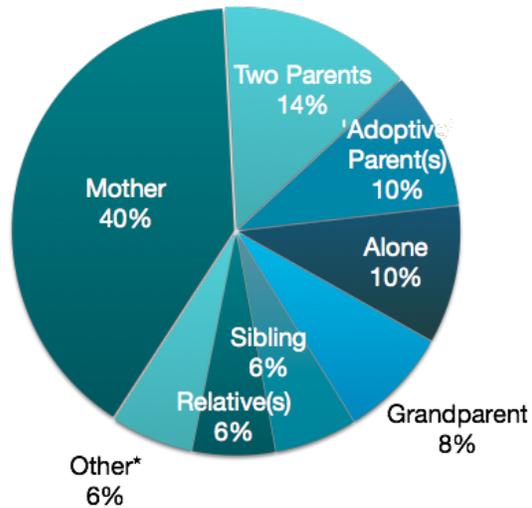


Relationships

In order to gain a better picture of personal relationships within the home-life of street-involved boys, respondents were asked who they felt closest to and least close to among the people with whom they were currently living. The largest portion of respondents (16 people or 40%) cite that they are closest to their mother, while six people (15%) cite that they are closest to another female non-relative within their community, and four (10%) to a male non-relative. To a lesser extent, three (8%) cite being closest to their father, three (8%) cite been closest to a sibling or siblings, and two boys mention being close to a step-parent. Reasons for being closest to this particular person focused largely on providing nurture and support for the child. Eighteen boys (39%) noted being closest to this person because this person takes care of them. Other responses surrounding nurture and support include, "they are nice to me" (5 boys or 11%) and "they love me" (4 boys or 9%). Beyond nurture and support, the remaining answers centered around providing shelter (two people or 4%) and protection (two people or 4%). Lastly, three boys (7%) cite being closest to particular people simply because these people are not violent.

Regarding the people to whom respondents were least close, siblings were most commonly reported 10 people or 24%. This seems to largely due to quarreling and fighting. One in five boys cite that they are least close to their father; this seems to be largely due to violent forms of corporal punishment and

Who takes care of you?



Frequency	Count	Percentage
Every day	34	77%
A few times in a week	6	14%
A few times in a month	1	2%
Something else**	3	7%

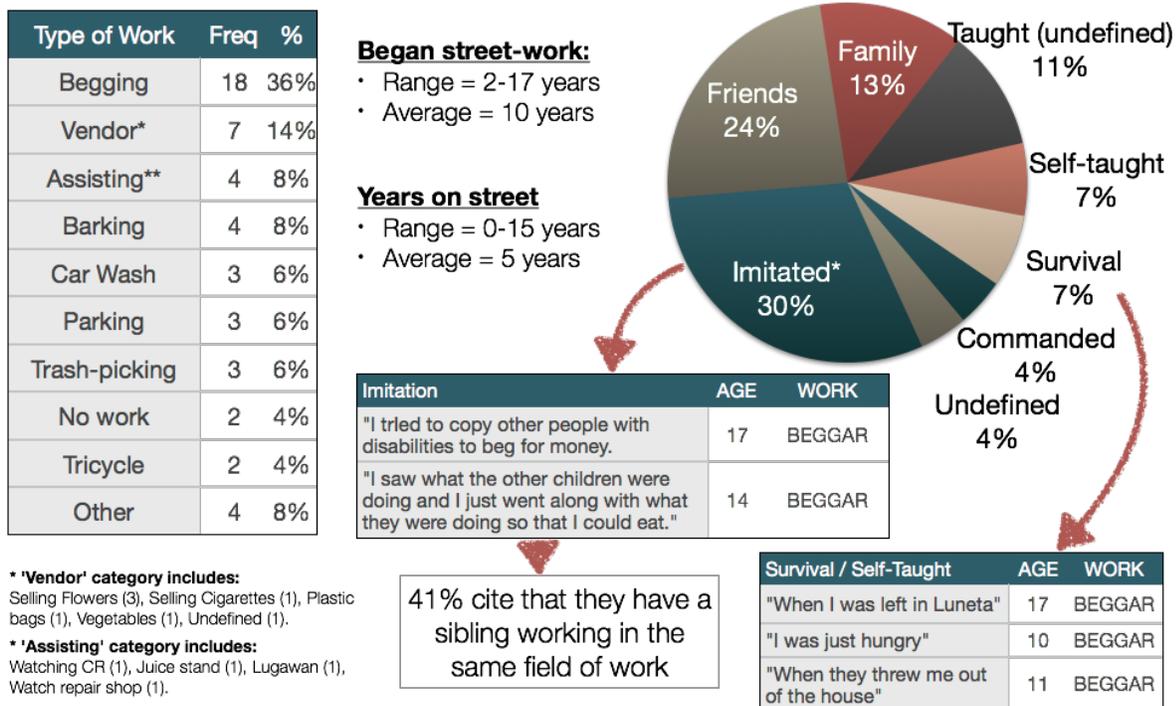
alcoholism. One respondent cites that he is not close to his father because he is a “bad guy”, citing that his father always hits him in the head. Six boys (15%) cite being released close to a female non-relative. Reasons given for this are similar to reasons given for not being close to fathers including various kinds of abuse and alcoholism. One respondent cites it's close to this person becomes "when she's drunk, she shouts and hurts her children." To a lesser extent, respondents mention a grandparent (two boys or 5%), a mother (two boys or 5%) and both parents (one boy or 2%). Overall, reasons given for not being close with the people there living with predominantly centered on abuse, mentioned by 12 boys (36%) and fighting, mentioned by six boys (18%). In some cases, abuse was noted to come from multiple sources within the home. In one case, a respondent cites that he is beat up by his father when he does things that his father does not like. Following this, he cites that he is also not very close with his sister's husband because “he goes along with my father and beats me up as well.”

Looking beyond current living arrangements, respondents were asked to identify the person who primarily takes care of them (which may or may not be among the people with whom they are currently living). For the largest portion of respondents (20 people or 40%), their main caretaker was cited to be their mother and seven people (14%) cite being taken care of by both of their parents. Beyond this, five people (10%) cite being taken care of by adoptive parents (for most, if not all, of these were noted to be informal or unofficial adoptions). Four people (8%) cite being taken care of by a grandparent, three (6%) cite being taken care of by a sibling, and three (6%) cite being taken care of by a non-immediate family member. To a lesser extent, one boy mentions being taken care of by his father and one mentions that a friend takes care of him.

It is understood that boy's primary caretakers may not necessarily be among the people with whom they are currently living. Given this, respondents were asked how often they see the person who primarily takes care of them. The majority of respondents (34 people or 77%) cite that they see their primary caretaker every day. Six boys (14%) cite seeing this person a few times in a week while one boy cites seeing this person only a few times within a month.

Street Work

Street-involved boys in Manila were found to engage in a diverse number of income-generating activities. Begging constituted the largest portion of these activities, which was reported by 18 boys or 36% of the sampling. Beyond this, seven boys or 14% of the sampling reported selling various items for income; this includes the selling of flowers, cigarettes, plastic bags, and vegetables. Other income-generating activities include assisting street-side vendors or other street-involved people (4 or 8%), calling for jeepney passengers (4 or 8%), washing cars (3 or 6%), guiding cars into street-side parking places (3 or 6%), and trash picking (3 or 6%), among other activities¹. Respondents were asked the number of hours that they typically worked in a day. A significant number of responses to this question seem to fall in either one of two categories: boys who worked three hours or less (14 or 36%), or boys who worked 10 hours or more (14 or 36%). Beyond this, seven boys (15%) cited working between four and six hours a day, and four boys (10%) cited working between seven and nine hours in a day. Among boys responding to this question, an average workday was about seven hours.



Respondents were asked how they came into street work. This was an open-ended question and respondents were encouraged to answer in anyway they desired. Responses to this question seem to indicate a significant amount of autonomy of street-involved children combined with family negligence. The largest portion of respondents (14 or 30%) cite that they came into their particular kind of work by observing the actions of other street children in their area and imitating them. One child, age 17, cites "I tried to copy other people with disabilities to beg for money." Another child, 14 years old, cites "I saw with the other children and I just went along so that I could eat." Beyond imitation, three children (7%) describe their trajectory into street work in terms of merely surviving. This includes one child, age 10,

¹ This includes: driving a pedicab (two or 4%), doing anything available (one or 2%), loading cargo (one or 2%), cleaning (one or 2%), and stealing (one or 2%) and not having any work (two or 4%).

cites "I was just hungry". Another boy, age 11, cites resorting to begging when he was thrown out of this house. Lastly, one 17-year-old boy cites resorting to begging when he was younger after being abandoned in Luneta Park.

In addition to this, 11 children (24%) cite being introduced to the work by friends, six boys (13%) cite being introduced to the work by a family member and five boys (11%) cite being taught by another person within their community. In comparison with a similar study done in Cambodia (Davis & Miles, 2014), street boys in Manila demonstrated significantly lower rates of being introduced to street work by family members – the largest portion of street-involved boys in Manila coming into street work independently actually due to family negligence or merely as a means of survival. While this does seem to be the case, when respondents were asked if their families were aware of their work on the streets, 40 respondents (83%) indicated that their families were. Among the eight boys (17%) who indicated that their families were not aware of their work majority indicate either negligence or abandonment. One boy, age 17, cites "because they don't know anything that happens to me." Another, age 16, cites "because I have no contact with them."

Considering the ages of which respondents came into industry work, many began at very young ages, the youngest beginning street work at the age of two and the oldest beginning at the age of 17. The mean age at which respondents cite they had begun street work was 10 years of age. From this information, the amount of time that respondents have been living or working on the streets was calculated. The lengths of time that respondents had spent on the streets varied greatly, the shortest amount of time being just a few weeks, and the longest amount of time being 15 years. The mean time spent on the streets was found to be slightly more than five years.

Earnings

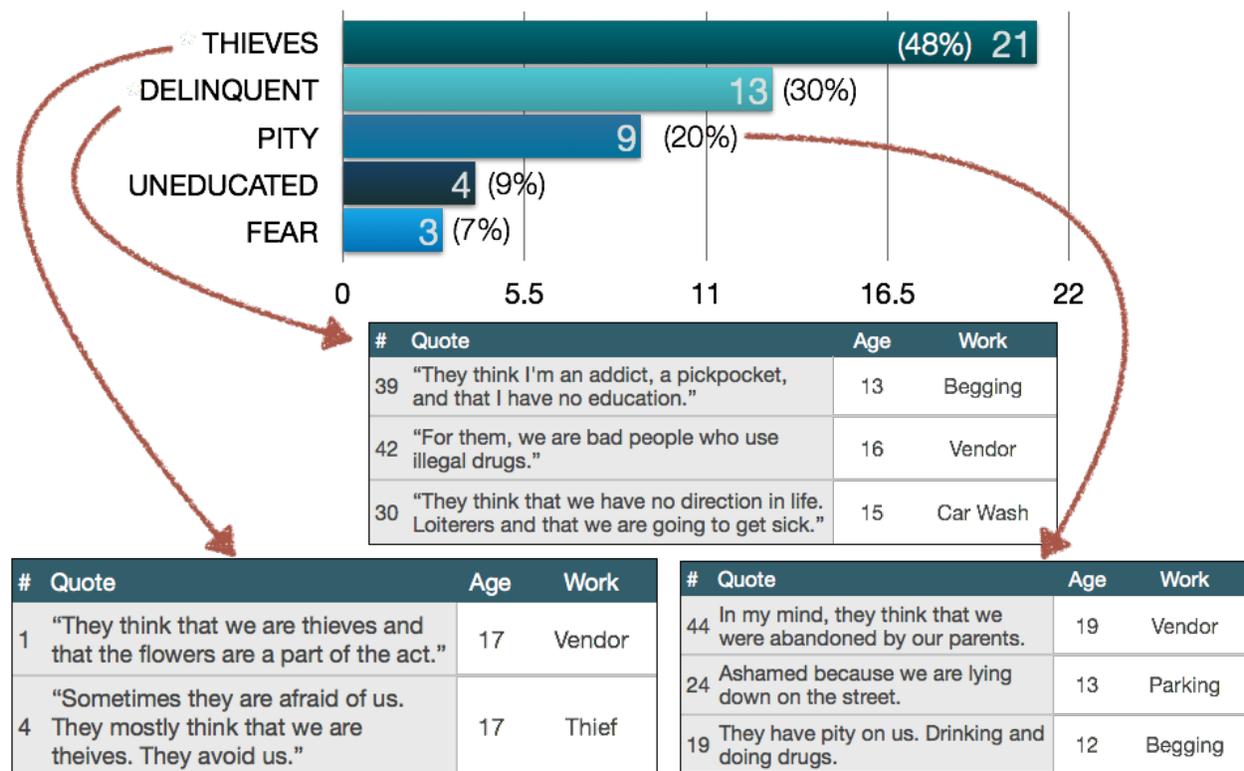
Earnings over the past week reported by respondents ranged great, the lowest earner having had no earnings and the highest earner reporting income of 7000PHP (about \$150USD) within the past week. The average income reported by all respondents was 550 pesos, this number is slightly higher due to a small number of respondents (six people or 13%) who report earnings of over 1100PHP in the past week. The majority of respondents (26 or 56%) report earnings of less than 300 pesos over the past week and 14 people (30%) report earnings of less than 100 pesos over the past week.

An equal number of people reported that they kept their money themselves or gave their money to someone else (21 people or 47% in each category) and three people (7%) indicated that they kept some of their money and gave the rest away to someone else. Looking at the 21 respondents who indicated giving their money to someone else, the majority (14 or 67%) indicate giving their money to their mother, three (14%) indicate giving their money to a caretaker, and an additional four people indicate giving their money to another person including their father (1) a friend (1) a grandparent (1) or a sibling (1).

Additionally, respondents were asked if they knew of any debts that their families were required to pay back. Majority of respondents (27 or 66%) indicated that the family did not have any debts that they knew of, while eight people (20%) indicated that their families did have debts that need to be paid back. Six people (15%) were unsure of their family debts.

Stigma and Discrimination

Interviews also explored how street-involved boys felt that they were perceived by people who see them on the streets. This was an open-ended question which boys could respond however they desired. An overwhelming majority of boys 32 boys (73%) describe a variety of antagonistic feelings that they perceive people to have about them. Nine boys (20%) describe that they perceive people, in general, to have feelings of pity for them. Among this group, one 13-year-old boy cites that people feel shame when they see street-involved boys: “(people seeing us) are ashamed of us because we are lying on the streets”. Lastly, and to a lesser extent, two boys (5%) describe that they perceive people to have positive feelings for them, while one boy (2%) describes people as having a mixture of positive and negative feelings about him.

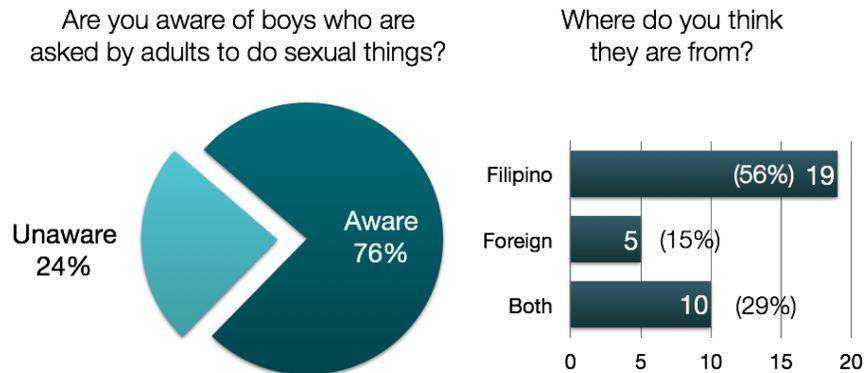


A deeper look at the perceived antagonistic feelings of people toward street-involved boys reveals, 21 boys (48%) who believe people see them as thieves. One 17-year-old boy who sells flowers cites: “they think that we are thieves and that the flowers are all a part of the act.” Another 17-year-old boy cites fear and avoidance from people on the streets: “sometimes they’re afraid of us. Mostly they think that we are thieves. They avoid us.” In addition to this, 13 boys (30%) believe people see them as delinquents, often citing drug use and lack of education. One 13-year-old boy working as a beggar cites “they think that I’m an addict, a pick-pocket, and have no education.” Another boy, a 16-year-old street vendor, cites: “for them, we are bad people who use illegal drugs”.

Sexual Abuse

Awareness

Conversations regarding sex, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation are difficult to have – especially when respondents are young. Given this, interviewers in this study were trained to be particularly delicate in discussing matters such as these, reminding respondents of the confidentiality and importance of the conversation of which they were a part. As a part of this, interviewers began discussions on sexual abuse by discussing the child's awareness of other boys who have been asked by adults on the streets to do sexual things. An overwhelming majority of boys, 76% (38 boys), cite that they are aware of boys who have been asked by adults to do sexual things. The majority of boys, 56% (19 boys), cite these adults to be local Filipinos while 30% (10 boys) cited these adults to be a mixture of both Filipinos and foreigners. To a lesser extent, 15% (five boys), believe these adults to solely be foreigners. Respondents disclosed a variety of locations in and around the areas that they worked where they have known of adults to ask children for sexual things. Most popularly, these areas include the areas along Manila bay, a particular plaza in the Tondo area, and areas along a large thoroughfare bordering the Malate area where children are commonly known to work. One child did not give a specific location, but merely cited “everywhere”. In addition to their awareness of others who are sexually abused, boys were asked to estimate about how many street-involved boys, out of 10, they believed would be asked by adults to do something sexual. Respondents believe that on average, 5 to 6 street-involved boys (mean - 5.48) would be approached by an adult to do something sexual, with one boy citing that 11 boys, out of 10, would be asked for such things.



Experiences

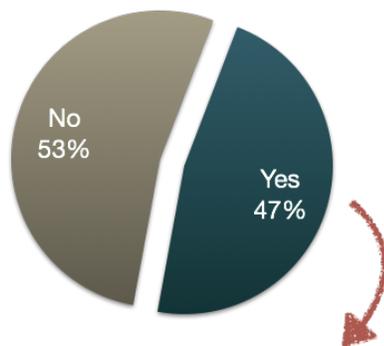
Following this, respondents were asked to reflect on their own experiences of sexual violence while living and working on the streets. Conversations such as these are difficult to have and cover sensitive and deeply private areas of respondents' lives. Thus, it is understood that the findings reflected here represent only respondents' disclosure of information on their experiences sexual and may differ from the actual rates of sexual abuse experienced by respondents.

Conversations on personal experiences of sexual violence began by asking boys if there have been any adults who have asked them to do things that they did not want to do. This was intentionally a broad question and did not specifically define anything sexual so as to allow respondents to "warm-up" to talking about more sensitive and personal issues. The majority of those responding to this question,

65% (11 boys), define a variety of sexual acts that adults have asked them to do. Beyond this, 18% (three boys) cite adults forcing them to steal and 12% (two people) cite adults forcing them to take drugs.

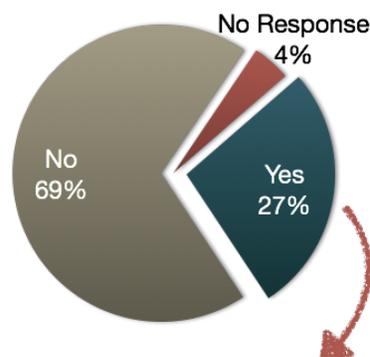
Respondents were then asked specifically about instances in which an adult has touched them (or asked to be touched by them) in the genital area. Nearly half of respondents, 47% (24 boys), cite instances in which such kinds of touching have occurred. The majority of this group, 72% (13 boys) indicate that this happened between one and five times. To a lesser extent, 17% (three boys) cite that this has happened to them more than 10 times and 11% (two boys) cite that this happens “all the time” or “regularly”. The average age at which respondents cite first being sexually touched by an adult is 11 years of age, the youngest citing to them for sexually touched at the age of three, and the oldest at the age of 17.

Has an adult ever touched you in the genital area?



FREQUENCY	Freq	%
1-5 times	13	72%
More than 10times	3	17%
All the time / Regularly	2	11%

Have they done more than just touch you?



WHAT	Freq	%
Oral Sex	4	31%
Kissing	2	15%
Intercourse	1	8%
Physical Abuse	1	8%
No Response	5	38%
N=	13	

Respondents were then asked if these experiences of abuse had ever gone further than just sexual touching. Seventeen percent (17%), or 13 boys cite that their abuse had gone beyond just sexual touching. Boys within this group defined a variety of abusive acts including: oral sex (four boys), kissing (two boys), intercourse (one boy), physical abuse (one boy), and five respondents who chose not to define what had happened in addition to the sexual touching.

Beyond experience, direct sexual abuse from an adult, respondents were asked to describe instances in which they may have been asked by an adult to have sex with another child. Of the 41 boys responding to this question, 10% cite instances in which this has happened. One respondent, age 14, cites an experience in which a particular older youth had instructed he had another female friend of his to have sex together. This particular boy, throughout his interview, discussed a variety of instances involving this particular older youth. Many of these instances included the older youth showing the younger boy pornographic materials, stealing the boys earnings on the streets, and physical abuse, among others.

Most research focusing on the vulnerabilities of young children, focuses only on adults as the perpetrators of sexual violence, while research such as this may be useful, further research is needed to understand particular dynamics involved in cases such as these when children abuse other children sexually, physically, and otherwise.

Pornography

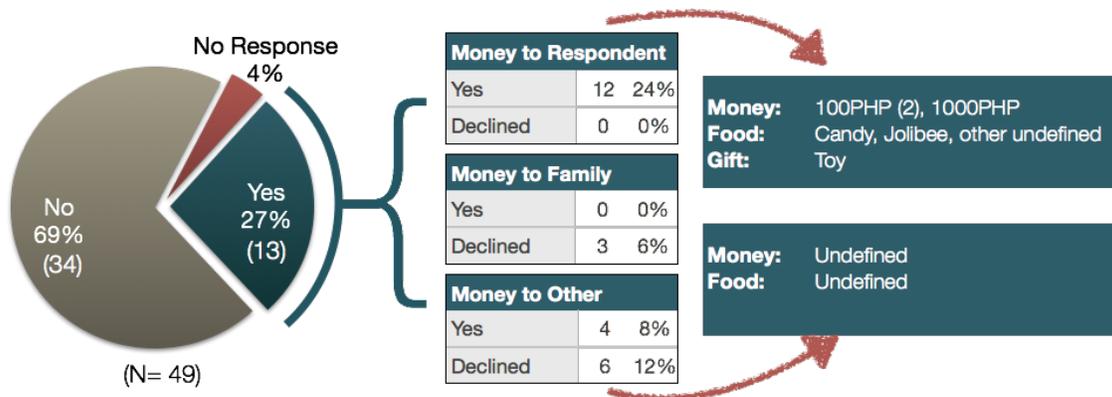
Pornography can be used as a means of sexualizing or grooming children for further sexual abuse. Understanding this, interviewers asked respondents about instances in which adults on the streets were in their communities had shown them pornographic pictures or videos. Of the 45 boys responding to this question, nearly half of boys (49% or 22 boys) cited instances in which adults had shown them such kinds of pictures or videos. Among this group, the majority cites being shown pornographic pictures or videos by either an adult friend (35% or 7 boys) or by a stranger (35% or 7 boys). To a lesser extent, 20% (4 boys) cite being shown pornography by an adult in their community, 5% (one boy) cites being shown pornography by an adult at a computer shop and another cites being shown pornography by an adult that he knows on Facebook.



In addition to the vulnerabilities of children being shown pornography, interviews also explored instances in which children have been asked by an adult to be filmed or photographed for such pornographic materials. Of the 44 boys responding to this question, 7% (three boys) cite instances in which they had been photographed or videoed for pornographic materials. One boy, age 18, describes an experience very recent to the time of his interview, in which the boy was sleeping on the streets and was awoken by an adult who had inserted his hands into the boys shorts and had been videoing the incident. In another case, a boy, age 17, describes a man within his community who had asked to take nude photographs of the boy and his brother.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSEC)

Respondents were asked a series of questions that explored instances in which they, their families, or anyone else had received money, food, or a gift in exchange for the boy providing sex or sexual services to an adult. While we understand that experiences such as these qualify as commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), interviewers refrained from using such terminology or other potentially stigma-laden terms which may have caused respondents to have felt uncomfortable and potentially discouraged them from answering the questions honestly.



"(He gave me) a big Toblerone. I went to the [name redacted] Hotel with him. He had me take off all my clothes, and he took off his as well. We showered together. He put my penis into his mouth."

— **R3, 16 years old, Flower Vendor**

More than one-fourth of respondents, 27% or 13 boys, describe instances in which they had been sexually abused in exchange for money, food, or gifts. Among all respondents, 24% (or 12 boys) cite instances in which they have received money directly for sexual services provided to an adult. Among this group, respondents indicate receiving a variety of non-monetary items in exchange for sex or sexual services. Some respondents indicated having received money in exchange with the services, others and to keep receiving Food or snacks, and lastly one respondent indicates receiving a toy in exchange for such services. One respondent, age 16, recounts the following, which happened to him a year prior:

"[He gave me] a big Toblerone. I went to the Rainbow Hotel with him. He had me take off all my clothes, and he took off his as well. We showered together and he put my penis into his mouth."

In addition to receiving money themselves, 8% (four boys) cite instances in which someone else has received money, food, or a gift in exchange sexual services provided to an adult and 12% (six boys) declined to respond to this question. Lastly, all respondents were asked about instances in which their family had received compensation in exchange for the boy providing sex or sexual services to an adult. While no one responded that they had, 6% (three boys) declined to respond to this question.

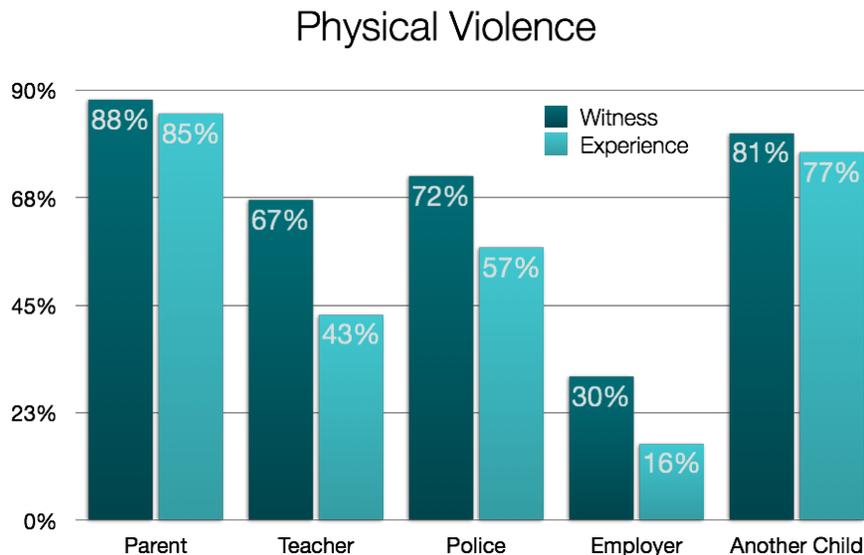
Among the nine people details as to where they had met this person, seven of these nine (78%) indicate meeting this person while on the street. One boy, 14 years old, cites: "I didn't know this person. He

came up to me while I was sleeping.” In addition to being met on the streets, one indicates being approached for sex in a park, and another cites being approached for sex along the Baywalk in Manila.

The common ages for boys to experience sexual exploitation on the streets was found to be quite young. The average age at which respondents indicate having first been sexually exploited on the streets was between 13 and 14 years of age. The youngest of these cites that he was nine and the oldest cites that he was 17 years old at the time he was first exploited.

Physical Violence

A series of questions were asked in order to explore the kinds of violence experienced by street-involved boys in their communities and during their work on the streets. In order to make these questions seem less abrasive, respondents were first asked about times in which they have witnessed other street-involved boys receiving violence. They were asked about violence against reworking children coming from five key figures: parents, teachers, police, employers, and other children. Following this, children were then asked about their personal experience of physical violence from the same five key figures.



Violence from Parents:

The witness of the physical abuse of other children by a parent is most common, cited by 88% or 43 respondents (88%). Similarly, 85% or 41 boys cite that they have personally experienced physical abuse from a parent. Among the respondents who shows share additional information about these, Cases of physical is from parents seem to involve either violence resulting from the use of alcohol or extreme forms of corporal punishment – some of which seem to have been influenced by the abuse of alcohol. One boy, age 12, cites attempting to intervene with his mother’s drinking: "Mom fought with me because she had been drinking. I asked her to stop and [told her that] she had a problem. She grabbed me by the neck and choked me.” Another boy, age 16, cites abuse from his father which involved being hung upside-down from a tree near their home and being punched (suntok).

Violence from Teachers:

Slightly more than two-thirds of respondents, 67% (or 15 boys), cite witnessing the physical abuse of a child by a teacher. To a lesser extent, 43% (or 20 boys) cite having personally experienced physical abuse from a teacher. Among these experiences are two children, one 15 and one 17, who cite a teacher(s) forcing them to eat paper as punishment. Another two children, one 15 and one 17, cite teachers throwing chalkboard erasers at them, one of which also describes a physical beating with a stick.

Violence from Police:

Nearly three-fourths of respondents, 72% (or 33 boys) cite having witnessed the physical abuse of another child by a police officer. A comparatively high majority of boys, 57% (or 25 boys) also cite having personally experienced physical abuse/violence from police officers—many indicating extreme and violent forms of abuse, which commonly include being kicked in the face and stomach and being electrocuted (tasing). Several responsive cite receiving violence from police for sleeping on the streets. One boy, age 18, cites fears of being killed (salvaged): “I woke up late on the street so they kicked me in the face. I was confused. It also happened to me before that I was kicked in the side. I thought I was going to be salvaged.” Other children indicate extreme levels of abuse after being taken into police custody. One boy, age 15, cites “[The police] beat me in the head and arm with their batons. They also beat me in the legs with a 1-inch thick piece of wood. Inside the prison, they kick me using their hard shoes.” Another cites, “[The police] beat me up here at the Paco police office. Suddenly, they grabbed me and electrocuted me because I had done something wrong.” Two children specifically cite violence in relation to government child ‘rescue’ operations conducted under the authority of the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). One child, age 11, cites police officers using force and dragging him during such ‘rescue’ operations.

Violence from Employers:

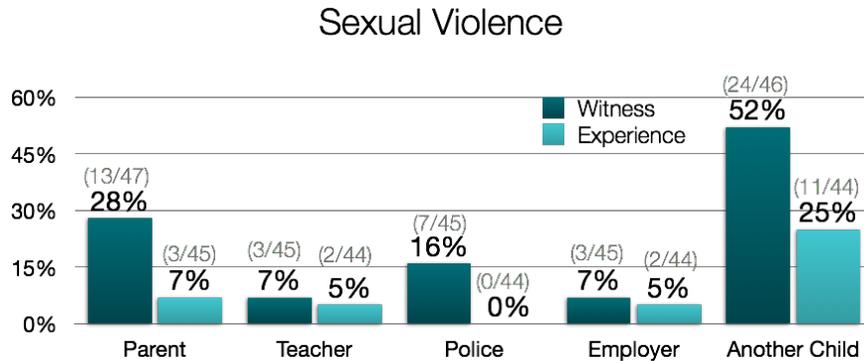
Nearly one-third of respondents, 30% (or 13 boys) cite witnessing an employer using physical violence against another child. To a lesser extent, 13% (or 7 boys) cite personal experiences of physical violence coming from employers.

Violence from Other Children:

Physical violence coming from other children was also found to be common among street-involved boys. A strong majority of respondents 81% (or 31 boys) cite witnessing another child using physical violence against another child. To a similar extent, 77% (or 36 boys) cite personally being the victim of physical violence from another child. In one case, a 12-year-old boy cites having a .38 caliber pistol pointed at him by another youth.

Sexual Violence

Similar to what was asked about the witness and experience of physical violence, respondents were asked to describe instances in which they had witnessed and experienced violence that was sexual in nature. Prior to this, interviewers asked respondents to detail how they, themselves, understood sexual violence. This was done to give qualify, and give context to reports of witnessing or experiencing sexual violence. Following this, respondents were asked about instances in which they had witnessed or experienced sexual violence committed by: parents or guardians, teachers, police officers, employers, or other children.



A strong majority of respondents 69% (or 31 boys) reported some level of sexual violence from at least one of the five defined figures. This is significantly higher than the 47% of respondents, earlier in the survey, who cite being sexually touched on the genitals by an adult. These discrepancies will be addressed further in the discussion section of this report.

Looking at the five key figures, the highest levels of reported sexual abuse – both in terms of witnessing abuse and having personally experienced abuse – were reported to have come from ‘other children’ and ‘parents or guardians,’ respectively. Over half of respondents 52% (or 24 boys), cite witnessing a youth being abused by another youth, while 25% (11 boys) cite having personal experiences of such abuse. The second highest rates of sexual abuse (witness and experience) were reported to have come from parents or guardians. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents, or 13 boys, cite witnessing the sexual abuse of another child by a parent or guardian. To a much lesser extent, 7% (three boys), cite having a personal experience of sexual abuse by a parent or guardian. Three boys cite witnessing teachers committing sexual violence against another child or children, 5% (two boys) cite personal experiences of such abuse. Additionally, 7% (three children) cite witnessing sexual violence committed by an employer, and 5% (two children) cite personal experiences of such violence.

Seven children (16%) cite witnessing police committing sexual abuse against another child. While there were no respondents who report personally experienced sexual violence from a police officer, these findings are significant—particularly considering the notably high levels of physical violence—both witnessed and experienced—by boys working on the streets.

Receiving Help

Previous research has indicated that male survivors of sexual violence are very unlikely to ever ask for help or even disclose that the abuse ever happened, and, those who do disclose are often unlikely to receive adequate help (if any is available) following their disclosure (Holmes, et al., 1997). Given this understanding, respondents who disclosed sexual violence were asked if they had asked for help following the experience of violence. Those who cited having asked for help were asked in what way (if any) they received help.

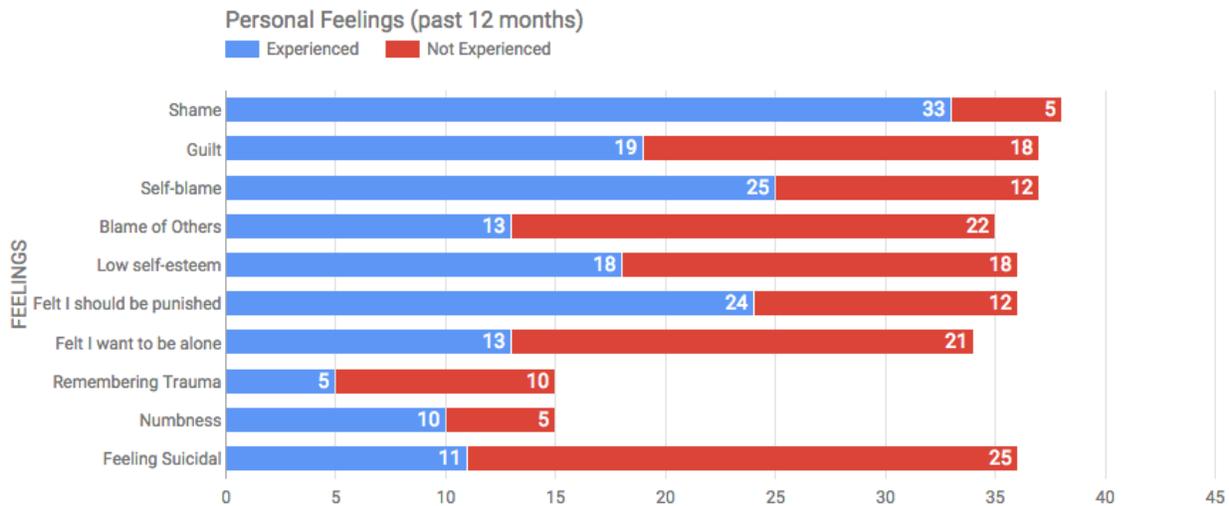
A number of questions were asked to evaluate the boy's access to persons and their families or communities who they could go to if they were angry or upset. The majority, 74% or 20 boys, indicated that they did have someone that they could go to. While seven boys 26% cited that they had no one. Among those who cite having someone that they could go to, the majority of boys 56% cite having a friend that they go to, 16% cite their mother, 6% cite a caretaker, and another six cite a social worker. To a much lesser extent, "father", "mother and father", "other relative", "sibling", and "my teacher" were mentioned each by one respondent.

Among the 31 people (69%) who disclosed receiving some level of sexual violence, only 6 people (12%) had ever asked anyone for help. Five out of the six people, who asked for help, describe the level of help that they were given. Among these, two cite that the people that they told about the abuse did not want to give them help. One boy, age 14, who asked friends for help, cites, "they didn't help, instead they shamed me." Another boy, age 13, asking for help from a teacher, notes "[the teacher] didn't want to give help, and I didn't want to say anything more."

Only two boys cite receiving any form of appropriate help from the people to whom they disclosed the abuse. One cites that the person to whom they disclosed the abuse talked to the abuser, another cites that the person to whom they disclose the abuse searched for the perpetrator in order to file a case, however, did not mention if the perpetrator was ever found. Lastly, one boy indicates disclosing abuse to an older brother, who then responded with revenge against the perpetrator. This child, age 14, cites "Another youth had made me take off all my clothes. After this, I told my older brother about it, and he stabbed (the perpetrator)."

Feelings

In addition to the witness and experience of violence, interviewers asked respondents to take a few moments to reflect on their own personal thoughts and feelings over the past 12 months. In particular, respondents were asked about experiencing feelings of shame, guilt, self-blame, wanting to blame someone else, low self-esteem, feeling that they needed to be punished, feelings of isolation, numbness, as well as suicidal ideations.



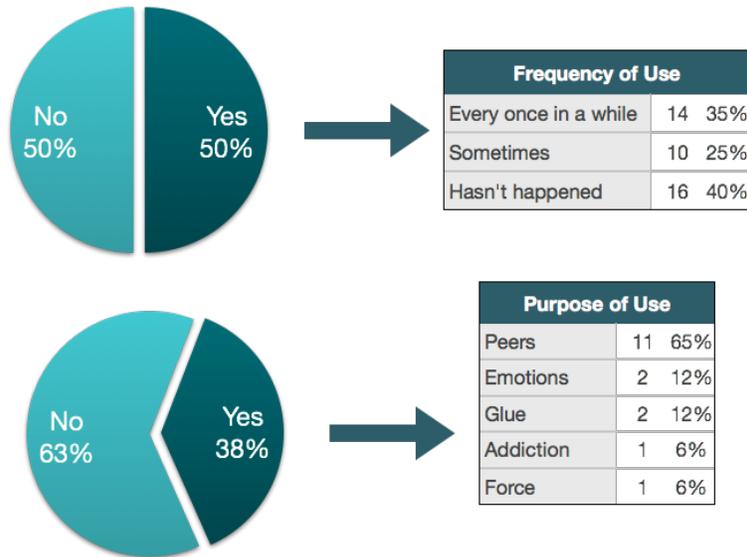
In terms of feelings, the most notable theme found among respondents were low valuations of themselves. Most notable were 87% (33 boys) cite feelings of shame associated with their life on the streets. Following this, 68% (25 boys) cite feelings of self blame, and 67% (24 boys) cite feeling that they deserve punishment. For a number of respondents, feelings of shame and self blame are tied with their work on the streets. For others, these feelings are tied with experiences of abuse. One boy, age 17, cites "I'm being shamed while I'm being beaten up, being yelled at and making a scene for other people to hear it." Another boy, age 13, indicates feelings of shame associated with a particular instance of violence. This boy questions himself as to why he allowed the abuse to occur.

Beyond this, half of respondents (51% or 19 boys) cite feelings of guilt, and another half of respondents (50% or 18 boys) cite feelings of low self-esteem. To a lesser extent, 38% cite feelings of isolation, 37% cite blaming someone else, and 31% cite suicidal ideations.

Substance Abuse

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the use of intoxicating substances. This survey relies heavily on self-reporting of alcohol consumption. Alcohol usage was found to be very common among street-involved boys with half of all respondents (50% or 25 boys) citing usage. While drinking seemed to be commonplace, respondents did not report frequent usage of alcohol. Among those who cite usage, 35% (14 boys) cite drinking alcohol "once in a while" and 25% (10 boys) cite drinking only "sometimes".

Drugs and Alcohol

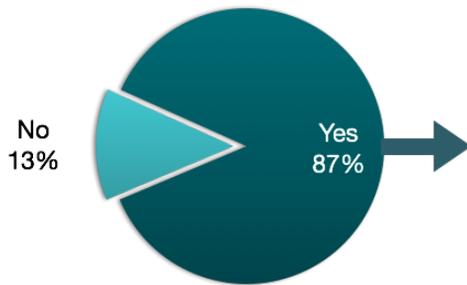


Well over one-third of respondents (38% or 18 boys) cited using illegal drugs. Among these 18, 72% (13 people) cite huffing solvents, 44% (8 boys) cite smoking marijuana, and 22% (4 boys) cite using crack cocaine. Those citing drug usage asked why they used drugs. Most commonly, respondents cited friends or peer pressure 65% of the time (11 boys). Beyond this, 12% (2 boys) cite using drugs as a means of dealing with emotions. Another 12% (2 boys) cite using drugs as a product of huffing glue. To a lesser extent, one person cites using drugs do to an addiction, and another one person cites using drugs because someone forced him.

Future Alternatives

The final sections of interviews looked to the respondent's current life and work and explored hopes, dreams, and desired skills for the future. A strong majority of respondents (36 people or 77%) cite that learning a foreign language would help their income generation. An even larger majority (40 people or 87%) cites specific skills that they hope to be able to learn for their future. Among this group, the largest majority of people (27% or 10 people) cite desiring skills in the area of art, dance, or music. To a lesser extent, desired skills or learning areas such as: becoming a police officer, playing sports, and receiving a general education, were cited by three people each. Beyond this, computer skills, cooking, becoming a lawyer, becoming an auto mechanic, science skills, and social work were mentioned by two people each.

Do you have any skills that you would like to learn?



SHELTER TYPE	Freq	%
Art/Dance/Music	10	27%
Police	3	8%
Sports	3	8%
General Education	3	8%
Computer Skills	2	5%
Cooking	2	5%
Lawyer	2	5%
Mechanic	2	5%
Science	2	5%
Social Work	2	5%
Army	1	3%
Carpenter	1	3%
Driving	1	3%
English	1	3%
Junk Shop	1	3%
Tailor	1	3%

In contrast to this question, respondents were asked where they saw themselves in the next two years. A content analysis of these responses was done, which considered if the boy's response was positive, negative, or neutral about the future. This analysis found the largest portion of responses to be positive. Beyond this, 27% (13 boys) give negative responses, indicating a bleak outlook for the next two years of their lives. Lastly, another 27% (13 boys) gives neutral responses for the future. Looking at the content of what respondents see for themselves in the future, 35% of responses involve completing studies, 14% (7 people) see themselves still working on the streets, 12% (6 people) see themselves in some other kind of work, and 10% (5 people) cite that this was something that they do not or can not know.

Discussion

Communities and Contexts

Data for this study was collected from street-involved boys in four key areas of Manila in which children are commonly known to work on the streets. For the purposes of comparison and the privacy of our respondents, these four areas will be condensed into two broader geographical areas: the Tondo area (in Binondo near Chinatown) and the Ermita-Malate (ERMA) area, which includes areas along Manila Bay, Quirino, and Taft Avenues). Slightly more than half of all respondents (55%) cite to work within the ERMA area, and slightly less than half of all respondents (45%) cite working in the Tondo area.

Significant differences exist between these two areas of Manila. The Tondo area is located in the northwestern corner of Manila and is primarily industrial and residential. Over the past several decades, this area of Manila has become locally known for its densely-populated communities of urban poor, street vendors, and high rates of crime including: street crimes, drug trafficking, robbery and theft, and other forms of violence (Santidad-Leones, 135). People on the streets in this area are predominantly local Filipinos, or Filipino shoppers visiting from other parts of the Metro-Manila area. The ERMA area is comprised by two significant districts in Manila (to the south of Tondo), which have become known for their cultural and historical significance. Ermita, north of Malate, is an area of Manila that surrounds the historic Intramuros district (the old Spanish colonial, walled city), which is a common tourist destination for those visiting the Manila area. Malate, over recent decades, has become a known cultural and entertainment area of Manila, which is also very commonly visited by transient professionals to the Manila area, tourists, and local Filipinos. Among the entertainment venues are numerous KTV (Karaoke) bars, spas, and show bars where sexual services are solicited from both males and females. In our previous work, focusing on the vulnerabilities of males in the massage industry in the metro-manila area, nearly all (95%) of respondents indicated providing sexual services and 70% indicated meeting clients for sex within the past week (Davis & Miles, 3).

Perhaps the most notable difference between types of work in each of these areas is the high concentration of children working as beggars in the ERMA area. This could potentially be due to the number of foreigners and visitors to this area who are often perceived (by street-involved children) to be wealthy and thus more likely to give money. Street-involved boys in the Tondo area report working a wide variety of different jobs in order to earn money. These jobs ranged from assisting other street vendors (19%), trash picking (14%), directing cars into parking places (14%), begging (10%), calling for jeepney passengers (10%), selling various trinkets (10%), among others. Comparatively, boys working in the ERMA area report a much more narrow range of jobs compared with those working in Tondo. The majority of street-involved boys in this area (15 boys or 56%) cite earning money through begging on the streets. Aside from begging, three boys (11%) cite earning money by washing cars, four boys (15%) cite selling various items on the streets and two boys (7%) cite calling for jeepney passengers. In addition to this, one boy cites cleaning a house, another cites that he is a thief, and another cites that he does anything that he can to earn money on the streets.

Notably, street working boys in both areas demonstrate considerable vulnerability to physical and sexual violence, sexual exploitation, as well as low levels of enrollment in any formal education.

However, looking at the two areas separately, vulnerabilities in each area seem to be unique. Street-involved boys in the ERMA area seem to be more likely to be living more independently, away from families, and relying on the streets and the various relationships that they provide for their daily subsistence.

Key Vulnerabilities between ERMA and Tondo

Feeling Unsafe: While the majority of children living in either area cite that they do not feel safe within their communities, boys in the ERMA area cite somewhat higher rates of not feeling safe in their communities, compared with those in Tondo. Sixteen (16) of the 24 children (77%) interviewed in the ERMA area cite that they do not feel safe in their community. Among those who give reasons for not feeling safe within their communities, the most common reasons include, the witness or experience of violence (bullying, fighting), mentioned by seven boys, and fears of being taken to the Child Reception and Action Center ('RAC'), which is a child-shelter under Manila city government, mentioned by three boys. Within the Tondo Area, 12 or 59% of boys cite that they do not feel safe within their community. Reasons most commonly cited for not feeling safe in the Tondo area include, the witness or experience of violence (bullying, fighting), mentioned by three boys, and knowing of someone in their community who had been murdered, mentioned by two boys.

Absence of Family Members or Caretakers: Street-involved boys living in the ERMA area were significantly less likely to be taken care of by at least one member of their family, compared to children in the Tondo area. Only 58% of the boys interviewed in the ERMA area cite having at least one family member as a caretaker, compared to 100% (n=22) of the boys in the Tondo area. Significant numbers of street-involved boys in the ERMA area cite either living alone or having no caretaker (15.4% or 4 boys) or having various forms of informal "adoptive" parents (19.2% or 5 boys).

Sleeping on the streets: Boys working in the ERMA area were also notably more likely to report sleeping directly on the streets (having no informal structure or tent to sleep in) as a part of their day-to-day lives. More than half of street-involved boys in the ERMA area (58% or 15 out of 26) cite sleeping on the streets, compared with only 36% (8 out of 22) who report sleeping on the streets in the Tondo area. In addition to this, previous migration from a provincial area was found to be more common among street-involved boys in ERMA compared with those coming from Tondo (44% compared with 29% in Tondo).

School enrollment: School enrollment rates among street-involved boys in the ERMA area were significantly lower compared with street-involved boys in the Tondo area. Forty percent (40%) of boys in ERMA cite that they were not currently enrolled in any form of education, compared to 25% in the Tondo area who cite the same. Similarly, greater numbers of boys cite being out of school for extended periods of time (more than one year) in comparison with those in the Tondo area. While 56.6% of those in the ERMA area cite being out of school for more than one year (including those who have had no formal education), only 38.1% in the Tondo area cite the same.

Physical Violence (from Police and Other Youth): While various forms of violence, both sexual and physical, were commonly reported in both areas, the ERMA area demonstrated significantly higher rates of physical violence from police and child-to-child violence. A strong majority of children in the area

(62% or 16 out of 26) report physical violence from police, compared to the Tondo area in which 44% of boys (7 out of 22) report experiencing such violence from police. Many of these instances reported in the ERMA area include violent narratives of beatings with bats, sticks and other various instruments, as well as being kicked and punched in the head and stomach for sleeping on the streets. Experiences of child-to-child violence were almost ubiquitous in the ERMA area, reported by 89% of the group (or 24 of the 26 boys). This is significantly higher than those in the Tondo area, of which group 45% (or 10 out of 22) cite experiencing physical violence from other children.

Sexual Abuse / Sexual Exploitation

While the overall disclosure rates of being sexually touched by an adult were high in both areas, street involved boys in the Tondo area were slightly more likely to report such abuse (50%, compared with 41% in the ERMA area). Corollary to this, one-in-three (33%) of children in the Tondo area cite the same receiving money, food, or gifts in exchange for sexual services, while one-in-five children (21%) in the ERMA area cite the same. A similar pattern is found regarding disclosure of instances in which children have been shown pornography by adults. In the Tondo area, 59% of street involved boys cite being shown pornography by adults, while 38% of street-involved boys cite the same in the ERMA area.

Sexual Abuse / Sexual Exploitation

Considering all forms of sexual abuse, including disclosures of adults showing boys pornographic images, as many as 65% of street-involved boys (or 33 of the 51 boys interviewed) in Metro-Manila disclosed some form of sexual abuse. Most commonly, street involved-boys report being shown pornography by adults (22 boys or 49%) in their communities or in the areas in which they work. Twenty-four (24) boys or 47% of those interviewed report sexual touching and 13 boys or 27% reported further instances of sexual abuse that went beyond just touching. If instances of sexual touching and instances of further sexual abuse are taken together, 51% of street-involved boys (26 out of 51) disclose experiencing some form of sexual abuse through physical contact--excluding instances of being shown pornographic images by adults. In addition to this, 13 boys or 27% indicate instances of commercial sexual exploitation (sex in exchange for items such as food, money, protection, or gifts). Lastly, three boys (18% of those responding to this question) cite instances in which they were filmed for what they believed to be pornographic purposes.

The age of consent in the Philippines is 12, which is the lowest age of consent in Asia. This means that under Philippine law, a child cannot consent to any form of sexual contact with an adult before the age of 12. However, Philippine law forbids sexual contact with a minor (under the age of 18 if the child has consented to the sexual act in exchange for money, gain, or any other kind of remuneration. In this study, sexual abuse is understood as a sexual act committed against a child, which includes inappropriate touching and further sexual acts in a situation in which a child does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent, or for which the child is not yet developmentally prepared (UNCRC, 6). On the other hand, sexual exploitation (a form of abuse) is understood as a form of coercion and violence (UNCRC, 7). Within this study, money, food, and gifts were found to be used as a means of coercion for a child to consent to sexual abuse, which is defined as exploitation.

There are difficulties in finding clear themes of sexual violence among street-involved children with only a limited number of respondents. This is partly due to the fact that, in many cases, instances of sexual violence against street-involved boys are often layered, multifaceted, and committed by a variety of

individuals (i.e. peers, family members, teachers, employers, and individuals on the streets). More focused research, considering larger groups of street-involved children would be needed to provide a more adequate, in-depth understanding of such experiences among the children living and/or working on the streets in the Metro-Manila area. However, what is clearly notable is the fact that experiences of sexual violence were commonly reported among a strong majority all street-involved youth interviewed in all areas in which interviews were conducted. While it may not be possible to provide detailed, quantitative analysis of these themes of violence, a few broad themes were clear among reported instances of sexual violence against street-involved boys:

Sexual exploitation from people on the streets

A number of the reported instances of child sexual exploitation seem to come from opportunistic encounters within areas of the city locally known as areas where children can be found for sex. While only 26% of street-involved boys cite being provided with food, money, or other forms of remuneration for sexual services, 76% of the boys interviewed cite that they are aware of children who are asked by adults to provide sexual services. There are two main areas in Manila that are commonly associated with child sexual exploitation, one in Tondo and the other in the Ermita/Malate area. In each of these areas, street-involved boys describe instances in which they, themselves, or other street involved boys are approached by adults in these particular areas who will provide them with food, money, or other forms of remuneration in exchange for sexual services. Qualitative data indicates that the majority of these cases are opportunistic in nature, indicating that perpetrators meet the boys on the street and have not necessarily had any prior contact with them. Remuneration for sexual services varied from case-to-case and was often in the form of simple items for survival such as food or small amounts of money.

An example of this kind of sexual violence is the case of Felix (an alias), a 16 year old who sells flowers along the street. Initially Felix came into street-work when he and his mother left his father who had been physically and verbally abusive. Although he remains in contact with his mother, Felix presently lives independently on the streets along with a group of his friends, sleeping in a small structure made of cardboard and cement. It is through these friends that Felix notes that he has learned to look for a living. The money that he earns largely goes to pay for food, cigarettes, clothing, and solvents for huffing. At the time of his interview, he had not yet been able to earn any money during the week from selling flowers. He describes a particular area of the city to which he and other youth in the area can go to meet with “foreigners” looking for sexual services. Felix cites that he was 15 the first time that he was approached by an adult for sex. He was taken to a nearby hotel where he was asked to perform a number of sexual services, which he cites he did not want to do. He was given a candy bar in exchange for the acts that he performed.

While most of the encounters described to take place in these areas seem to be largely opportunistic, and used as a means of survival for some street-involved youth, a few of these instances seem to suggest that child sex brokers or “pimps” could also be involved. Respondents often describe meetings their clients with phrases such as “they meet us at the side of [a particular building in the area]” or “they approach us in the plaza”. In one such instance in the Tondo area, a respondent recounts, “I was brought to another person’s house to service them (sexually).”² Information on the extent of the

² “*Dalhin sa bahay ng iba para serbisyuhan sila.*”

involvement of brokers is not made explicit from interviews. More focused and qualitative research, including more extensive field research on the involvement of child sex work in the Manila area (and perhaps other regions of the Philippines) is greatly needed.

Vulnerabilities to sexual violence associated with sleeping on the streets

In other cases, respondents commonly cite instances of sexual abuse which occur as they are sleeping on the streets. Descriptions of these experiences are often diverse, and seem to be largely opportunistic in nature. In most of these instances, the experiences occur through the night as respondents are exposed, sleeping without a tent or other form of shelter. In one instance, a boy recalls a recent experience in which he was startled from his sleep by an adult that he did not know. The adult had inserted his hands into the boy's shorts and was filming the act. In addition to the vulnerabilities to sexual abuse associated with sleeping on the streets, numerous respondents cite experiences of often brutal physical violence by police, when they are caught sleeping on the streets past a certain time of the morning. These instances will be explored further in the next section of this report.

Sexual exploitation by people met online

While exploitation through online means was not specifically addressed in the research instrument, qualitative data seems to indicate that social networking platforms do serve as a means of sexual exploitation in at least a few cases among those interviewed. In one case, a 15-year old respondent from the ERMA area cites being shown pornographic pictures by an adult acquaintance that he had met on Facebook. Later in the interview, the same respondent discloses receiving money in exchange for sexual services from someone who had slowly befriended him. Unfortunately, further information connecting the acquaintance met online and the acquaintance that befriended, and eventually exploited, the boy was not disclosed during the interview.

Throughout the dataset, there are sporadic points which indicate social networking services, such as Facebook, to be both in high demand and a strong potential venue for sexual exploitation among street-involved children, however large gaps in this baseline data prevent any conclusive findings. Apart from this, it is known that computer use at Internet cafés was cited as a top expense for 9 boys or one-in-six (18%) of those interviewed. Additionally, anecdotal information from service providers cites the usage of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, to be almost ubiquitous among street-involved boys in the Metro-Manila area. Significant and more focused research on the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse and exploitation through social media, as well as the role played by the inexpensive internet cafés located all throughout the metro-Manila area is needed. While it is not clear from these limited data points, it would be useful for research to explore the extent to which such internet cafes are used as venues for sexual exploitation and/or areas where children may be groomed for abuse and/or exploitation with porn. More understanding is needed to bring further understanding to this as a potential vulnerability for Filipino youth.

Sexually harmful behavior from other youth

While most discussions on violence against children focus on adults as perpetrators, it may be important to note the various forms of violence against children that are committed by other children. Within this

study, experiences of sexually harmful behavior from other youth was an ongoing theme of violence disclosed by street-involved boys, cited by 11 (or 25%) of the boys interviewed.

For some youth, experiences of sexual violence from other youth were more common than others. In one case, a 14-year-old boy describes another youth within community who he says continually treats him badly. The respondent cites that this youth shows him pornographic pictures and videos, which in one instance had led to the respondent being forced to have sex with another child in the respondent's community. In a separate instance, the respondent tells of another youth in his community who had forced him to remove all of his clothing.

Beyond sexually harmful behavior, experiences of other forms of physical violence from other youth were a common theme among most boys interviewed. While one-in-four boys report experiences of sexual violence from other youth in their communities, more than 3-in-4 boys (36 or 77%) report physical violence from other youth. In one instance, a 12-year old respondent cites having a .38 caliber pistol pointed at him by another youth. Other boys cite being bullied or commanded to do various tasks for other youth, and then report being kicked or punched if/when they do not comply with the commands.

Within this context, one factor possibly contributing to this vulnerability (among others) is the seeming lack of supervision by adults in their communities. Nearly all street-involved boys in the Metro-Manila area indicated that they either work with peers (78% of respondents) or alone (14.5% of respondents) and few seem to have parents or other adults providing any form of supervision.

Physical Violence

Nearly all street-involved boys reported physical violence. Most commonly mentioned was physical violence from 'parents', cited by 41 boys or 85% of the group. Following 'parents', 35 boys or 77% of the group cite bullying and other forms of physical violence from other youth in their communities. Quite notably, 25 boys or 57% of the group cite significant, and often brutal forms of violence from police officers. Narratives of these forms of violence often include punching, being dragged, as well as being kicked in the head and stomach. Lastly, 20 boys or 43% of the group cites violence from teachers. This often includes narratives of being hit by teachers and having erasers thrown at them in classrooms.

Recommendations

General Recommendations

Individualized care.

The study finds the needs and vulnerabilities of street-involved boys in Manila to be very diverse. While physical violence, sexual violence, family poverty, lack of education, and other related issues of vulnerability were common themes among interviews with street-involved boys, as a whole, the occurrence and severity of all of these factors vary greatly. Given this, it is important for practitioners to realize that cannot be one set of responses or a 'catch all' solution (or solutions) to mitigate the vulnerabilities to exploitation and violence among street-involved groups. Rather, street-involved children and their families should be offered individualized care and support for their needs.

Advocacy and Education.

The vulnerability of boys and young men to sexual exploitation and violence is seldom discussed within development circles in the Philippines and the broader region. Further, national statistics on sexual abuse do not adequately reflect the prevalence or severity of the issue. Of the 1,433 cases of sexual abuse filed for the entire nation in the year 2011, only 29 of those cases involved males as victims. The present study finds 33 of the 51 boys interviewed (65%) who disclosed some form of sexual violence. Thus, the present study has uncovered more instances of sexual abuse among a sampling of 51 boys, than was recorded for the entire nation (with a population of more than 101 million people) in the year 2011. This indicates a significant gap.

It is important that advocacy initiatives, training, and social work education use language that normalizes the reality of male vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation. DSWD should increase their efforts to represent and serve both males and females. As a part of this, it may be necessary to develop better reporting mechanisms for victims of sexual abuse. It is important that both males and females are given opportunities to talk about violence (particularly sexual violence) and their vulnerability as persons. In addition to girls, boys and young men must be provided with 'safe spaces' in which they can be heard, empowered, and educated on their rights as children.

This is something that needs to be extended to all levels of Philippine society, particularly with regard to sexual abuse and exploitation. This includes the sensitization of law enforcement, families and service providers, who may not believe or take seriously accounts of sexual violence against boys and men as they would violence against women and girls. Additionally this sensitization should be extended to males themselves, challenging gender norm and allowing space for males to express their own vulnerabilities without removing or challenging their masculine identities.

Child-Centered Research and Programming.

Current research and social programming in the Philippines is commonly implemented with a top-down approach, with social practitioners and educated 'experts' serving as the prime sources of information

and authority on the needs of vulnerable street-involved groups. Children are often left at the receiving end of social services and often have little-to-no input in the development of programming to meet their needs, or even the definition of what their needs actually are. Similarly, it is often consultants and public health experts who undertake research, developing questions that they have deemed to be most important to explore vulnerability factors in a child's life. While adult input is needed, it is similarly important that researchers and practitioners allow children to serve as the 'experts of their own realities', utilizing their experiences and understandings of their own environments to develop better and more child-centered social programs and research methodologies.

As a part of this, there is a need for the development (and utilization of) strong educational resources for awareness and prevention of sexual abuse/exploitation, such as, the resources at www.good-touch-bad-touch-asia.org and the accompanying training developed by the Stairway Foundation and Love146. Beyond this, there is need for better advocacy and vigilance for children within their communities. It is important for parents and other adults to understand that boys are equally at risk of abuse as well as girls and that they are in need of protection. Community centers, youth clubs, and churches should introduce education about sex, appropriate loving relationships, sexual abuse, and the dangers of pornography, and work to provide a safe and non-condemning place for children and young adults to discuss about sex and sexuality.

Male-Inclusive Legislative and Structural Protections

The Philippine Government has been very active in passing legislation aimed at the protection of females, as well as numerous institutional reforms and new programs to prevent violence against women and children. This includes the establishment of Women and Children Concerns Desks in police stations nationwide, violence against women desks within the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Women's and Children's Protection Units in 44 Hospitals nationwide, and regular programs for women and children implemented by DSWD (Santidad-Leones, 138). In addition to these institutional reforms, the Philippine government has signed all United Nations declarations and conventions pertaining to women and children and has gone much ahead of other countries in coming up with very specific measures to address its women's issues, particularly violence against women (138). While these reforms are meaningful, boys and men are commonly denied the structural and legislative protections that are readily afforded to women and girls. It is important that such structural and legislative foci do not imply that men and boys are not vulnerable to exploitation and violence, but rather exist to ensure that all people, regardless of gender have adequate protections and services accessible to meet their needs.

Public Awareness and Stigma Reduction

Public awareness campaigns within communities and through media, which communicate the humanity, dignity, and personhood of street-involved children (both boys and girls). Rather than viewing street-involved children as shameful nuisances or public 'eyesores', it is important that media, NGO's and other socially involved agencies work to educate both the public and politicians on the deeper, systemic social and economic realities that underpin the issue of street-involved children.

Children in this study indicate a high interest in arts, music, dance, and sports. It may be important to utilize these interests and resources to both develop the self-identities, expression, and confidences of street-involved children, as well as improving their perception within the public eye. Some of these could be accomplished through community initiatives such as mobile theater, sports programs, art training

programs, and other community development activities geared toward raising the awareness (and perception) of street-involved groups.

Psycho-social Support for Street-Involved Children and Families

A strong majority of respondents cite experiencing physical violence within their families, including some cruel and unusual forms of violence including choking and being hung upside-down from a tree and beaten. Qualitative data from respondents, as well as anecdotal information indicates alcoholism to be at least one factor that serves as a driving force for violence within families. Additionally, half of the street-involved boys interviewed indicate alcohol use (25 boys), and more than one third indicate abuse of other substances (18 boys), which includes inhaling solvents (77%), marijuana (44%), and crack cocaine (22%). Given this context, it is important that such vulnerable communities be provided with increased opportunities for counseling and psycho-social support from social workers, including increased support for alcoholism and drug rehabilitation for street-involved children and their families.

Recommendations for Future Research

Children have the rights to a family, a home, health, an education and freedom from violence and discrimination. Given this context and the limited literature available on sexual exploitation and abuse of street-involved children, more research with these groups could help to better understand how government and non-government groups can better work to protect these children and ensure that their rights are protected, including:

Research on Online Vulnerabilities to Sexual Exploitation and Violence

Qualitative data and further anecdotal information gathered during the course of this study indicates social media platforms, such as Facebook, to be both in high-demand among street-involved groups and also a prime potential outlet for sexual exploitation. Beyond data gathered in this study, other research is beginning to show that the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation online to be a rapidly growing issue in the Philippines (Jansson, 2014). In addition to this, the demand and accessibility of children for online sexual exploitation was well demonstrated in an online sting operation by Terre Des Hommes in 2013. The project uncovered more than 1000 people who offered a computer-generated Filipino girl money to remove her closed in an internet video chat room (Crawford, 2013). This underscores the need for more focused research on the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse and exploitation through social media, and exploring the role played by the internet cafés located throughout the metro area. xx

Research on Sexually Harmful Behaviors Among Children and Youth

Regarding violence, peers were commonly indicated as the perpetrators of both sexual and physical instances of violence. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of boys cite experiencing some form of physical violence from peers within their community and 44% cite various forms of sexual violence. Anecdotal information from social workers and caretakers indicates sexually harmful behaviors among youth to be quite commonplace, particularly within institutional care facilities. While sexually harmful behaviors among youth seem to be commonplace, few resources are available for caretakers and social practitioners to understand and meet the developmental needs of children who harm others. Further exploratory and qualitative research may be needed to explore the phenomenon of sexually harmful behaviors of children within the Philippines.

Research on Violence Committed Within Law Enforcement In the Philippines

Well over half of the street-involved boys in this study (57%) indicate experiencing physical violence from law enforcement officials, including some extreme and brutal instances. More research would be useful exploring the extent and prevalence of such instances of violence, including a review of child-protection training that officers have received, its content, application, and general efficacy. Results from such research could serve as an informative baseline to aid the development of appropriate training for not only for female but also male police officers in non-violent discipline and communication as well as understanding youth who have been traumatized.

Comparative Research Exploring Vulnerabilities Between Males and Females

The present study features only a small sampling of street-involved children and provides only a brief 'snapshot' of some of the key vulnerabilities that exist among these groups. It may be useful to expand the current dataset to include additional boys, as well as an equal sampling of girls in order to further validate some of the initial findings within this study, as well as provide comparative data on vulnerabilities between males and females.

Further Research Exploring Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in the Philippines

This study finds that sexual violence against males in Manila to be a significant, but largely undocumented and often misunderstood issue in the country. This study uncovered 33 (65%) street-involved boys, out of a sampling of 55, to disclose some form of sexual violence. According to national statistics in the Philippines from DSWD, only 29 boys received services for sexual abuse, nationwide, for the year 2011. This indicates a significant gap in services. Further research on the experience of sexual violence among men and boys in the Philippines, as well as an exploration of the capacities of NGOs and national services to meet their needs is strongly recommended.

Conclusions

This study has attempted to provide a brief look at some of the key vulnerabilities to sexual violence and exploitation that exist among street-involved boys in Manila, Philippines. This is to help build a better understanding of this often-overlooked group of people in order for NGOs and social service providers to serve them better. The study finds that Street-involved boys in Manila to be deeply vulnerable to a wide range of violence, including sexual and physical violence — with many boys dealing with this as a reality of their daily lives.

Sexual violence was found to be a common and, for some, frequent experience among street-involved boys in Manila. The majority of boys, or 65% (33 boys), disclosed experiencing at least some form of sexual violence on the streets or within their communities. Among these boys, 49% (22 boys) report being shown pornography by adults in their communities or in the areas in which they live and work, 47% (24 boys) cited sexual touching by adults, and 27% (13 boys) cited instances where adults committed sexual acts that went beyond just touching. Physical violence from parents, peers, and police was also found to be a common reality for the majority of street-involved boys. Notably, more than half, or 57% (23 boys) cited experiencing physical violence from police, many instances of which were brutal, including experiences of being hit with a bat, kicked in the face and side, and one boy (age 12) who cites fearing that he would be killed.

While girls have long been viewed as victims, boys are victimized as well. It is vital that churches, NGOs and government groups adopt a holistic and balanced understanding of human vulnerability. Rather than approaching issues of sexual exploitation and violence from a gender-based perspective (read: female-based perspective), it may be more helpful understand and communicate these as human issues that encompassing males, females and even the variety of gender identities in between. It is important that we understand children--regardless of gender-- as whole persons with their own individual sets of unique vulnerabilities and resiliencies. Without the development of such a nuanced and human-centered understanding of human vulnerability (as opposed to gender-centered), significant groups of vulnerable persons are at risk to remain just as they are - hidden in plain sight.

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