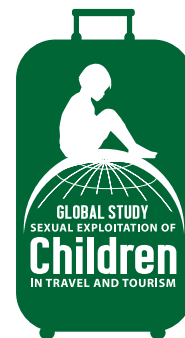


IN BRIEF

BUSINESS TRAVELLERS



SUMMARY

The globalisation of business over the past 20 years has led to an exponential increase in business-related travel. Research for the *Global Study* found that business travellers are regularly involved in the sexual exploitation of children. While some forms of exploitation involving business travellers may be region-specific, others are found on all continents. The connection between business travel and sexual exploitation of children is clear, but the issue remains under-researched and lacking in both prevention and control measures.

GROWTH IN BUSINESS TRAVEL

Decreasing travel costs and advances in information and communication technologies have greatly facilitated mobility over the past 20 years, opening up new economic perspectives for many countries. The emergence of new markets and diversification of business opportunities around the world has led to **sharply increased business travel, a trend that is likely to persist for the foreseeable future.** The Global

Business Travel Association recorded a 6.5% growth in business travel spending for 2015 over 2014, yielding a record US\$1.25 trillion. The Association expects business travel to grow by 6.9% in 2016. Its research further highlights the role of relatively new players, such as China, in this trend: China's spending on business travel is expected to show a staggering 61% rise between 2014 and 2019.

RISKS FOR CHILDREN

Business travellers have been found to fuel the demand for sex with children on all continents. Although the majority of offenders are male, businesswomen have also been reported to take part in the abuse.

The sexual exploitation of children by global business travellers takes several forms. Some trends seem specific to particular regions and cultural patterns. For instance, in East Asia, business relations are often built and cemented during after-hours meetings featuring a “night of exotic pleasure”, held in venues where the line between entertainment and prostitution is blurred. Some of those servicing patrons may be underage. In some Asian and African countries, a disturbing trend of “virgin-seeking” has also

been documented. Travellers seek young girls whose virginity is intact, either to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections or to feel “rejuvenated”, in the words of one offender.

Other trends are common across the globe. For example, research revealed a link between business conferences and an increased risk of child sexual exploitation by both foreign and domestic business travellers. It is **not clear whether these offenders plan to abuse children during their stay, or decide to do so as a result of the availability of potential victims and a general climate of impunity.** Major convention destinations such as Las Vegas and Atlanta and business hubs like São Paulo and Bogota are just a few examples of cities where this phenomenon has been documented. It also appears likely that women and children have been trafficked to Goa (India) to meet travellers’ demand during conferences and commercial events.

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

The commercial sexual exploitation of children by business travellers is fostered by several factors. Businessmen are likely to have plenty of ready cash, allowing them to make tempting offers to potential victims and facilitators. The regular presence of large numbers of business travellers encourages more and more venues to offer opportunities to engage in sex with children. This, in turn, attracts preferential offenders and provides an enabling environment for situational offenders.

A climate of impunity in relation to SECTT serves as an important incentive. When potential abusers are faced with multiple opportunities and no consequences, their likelihood of engaging in SECTT increases.

Moreover, engaging in child sexual abuse when far from home – where it would be socially and morally unacceptable – is perceived as “safer” by abusers. This is particularly visible in border areas, often perceived as “outlaw districts” where anything goes, but also applies to other business travellers visiting foreign countries who **convince themselves that child sexual exploitation is acceptable in the “other” culture.**

Finally, although the involvement of business travellers has been part of discussions of SECTT for more than a decade, **too little is known about its scale and scope.** Lack of data and research is pervasive; thus efforts to address the problem have been insufficient or non-existent. Although media, government and civil society attention has focused on preventing SECTT at mega sport events, the role of business travellers has not provoked the same interest. This failure allows business travellers to commit numerous offences in a short period of time and then depart from the jurisdiction. Even if caught, **their economic power and connections may help them to avoid arrest and prosecution.**

RECOMMENDATIONS (SAMPLE ONLY)

Businesses: Subcontract travel of staff to child safe travel agencies and hotels, e.g. members of The Code of Conduct; raise awareness about SECTT among all employees, especially those who travel; develop prevention and control strategies; impose sanctions for misconduct

Business travellers: Do not engage in sex with anyone under the age of 18; be aware of how abuse and exploitation take place and report suspected instances; stay in hotels with firm anti-SECTT policies

Governments: Develop tailored strategies to prevent and address all forms of SECTT; enforce child protection laws in “outlaw districts”; train law enforcement personnel to identify and respond to cases involving business travellers

Local authorities: Increase child protection efforts during major conferences and commercial events

Civil society: Research and document the business travel component of SECTT and raise awareness about this phenomenon; involve businesses and businesspeople in the promotion of children’s rights and the definition of prevention and control strategies; promote The Code of Conduct among businesses that send their employees abroad.

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