

# THE DEMAND FOR THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN BY THE DIRECT EXPLOITERS

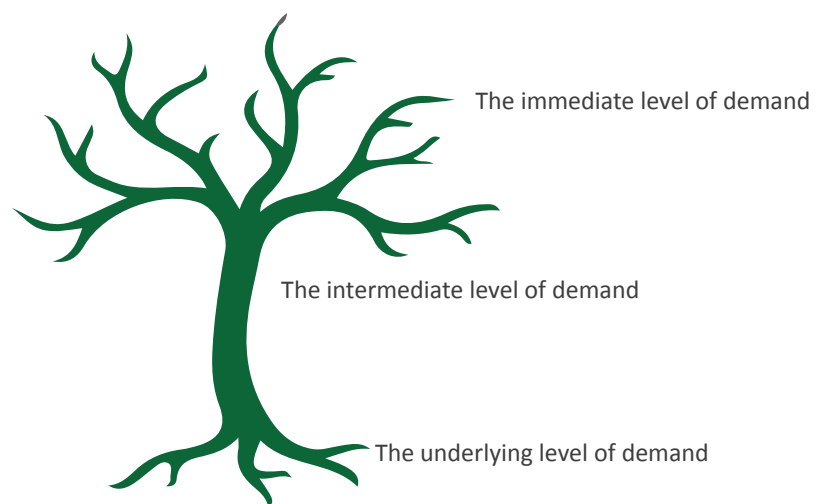
## The Sexual Exploitation of Children Demand Tree and the Immediate Level of Demand

The multi-layered demand for the sexual exploitation of children (SEC) may be visualised as a tree on which determinants can be organised at three different levels according to the degree of influence that they exercise on the SEC market. The tree model will help place each demand-trigger at the level where it impacts the process most, while contributing to establishing links that exist between the various layers of demand.

The three levels of the SEC Demand Tree include:

- *The immediate level of the demand for child sexual exploitation:* The highest level of the SEC Demand Tree relates to offenders who engage directly in SEC. In addition to conventional exploiters, such as purchasers of commercial sexual acts with children and users of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM), either travelling or acting locally, this diverse group includes more unexpected profile. For example, patrons of the entertainment industry; female perpetrators seeking boys; resident foreign offenders and pseudo care-workers; offenders misusing voluntourism and orphanage tourism, adoption, surrogacy and child sponsorship programmes; families and traffickers acting in the context of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM); perpetrators operating in connection with mega sporting events; religious clerics and military, peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel. The contact with physical children or access to CSAM can be sought in person as much as via virtual channels with the support of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Online and offline sexual exploitation may represent a continuum in a SEC trajectory leading to one single or multiple victims. The impact of the direct exploiters is to generate demand. This level of the Demand Tree is explored in this paper.

### The SEC Demand Tree



- *The intermediate level of the demand for child sexual exploitation:* The second level of the SEC Demand Tree pertains to exploiters that foster SEC, acting as intermediaries between offenders and victims. These may be individuals or groups, including traffickers; pimps; brothel owners, *mamasans*, procurers; criminal networks; corrupt police and government officials; networks of travelling perpetrators; sex tour operators; and modelling agencies. Similarly to the direct offenders, intermediaries can also leverage the Internet and other ICTs by which they can effectively make SEC services available to consumers; produce, distribute and store child sexual abuse materials; connect victims and predators; network offenders; and more broadly achieve a higher degree of anonymity and impunity as afforded by faceless technologies. Although they may act in an individual capacity, they often operate in a group or partake in larger illicit or criminal systems. The reward is often economic gain, although some forms of SEC, in particular those relating to CSAM, are increasingly exchanged freely. In the latter case, the benefit may come in other forms, such as through increased prestige within a paedophile community. The impact of intermediaries is to service the demand by facilitating the supply. This level of the Demand Tree is explored in Summary Paper 3.
- *The underlying level of the demand for child sexual exploitation:* The third, deepest level of the SEC Demand Tree concerns broader environmental factors that create the conditions which help to perpetuate or even swell the demand for sexual exploitation of children. Drivers at this level include discriminatory sexual and gender norms; uncontrolled technological options; exploitative economic and political systems; negative social and cultural constructs; abusive sexual attitudes toward children; power imbalance, racism and children’s vulnerabilities; globalisation, poverty and inequality; the uncondusive influence of media and advertising; migration and urbanisation; humanitarian crises and conflicts; and lack of effective legal frameworks and prosecution mechanisms. The impact of root causes is to justify and sustain demand. This level of the Demand Tree is discussed in Summary Paper 4.

This Summary Paper will focus on the primary offenders acting at the immediate level of the Demand Tree. At this level, the direct exploiters, operating in both physical and online settings, are responsible for generating the demand for the SEC. Mapping SEC at the immediate level of the Demand Tree helps to identify offenders who directly commit sexual crimes against children, the tactics that they adopt to gain access to their victims and the most common spaces where such acts take place, including the virtual world.

## Local Offenders

In most contexts, local men account for a significant, if not the predominant proportion of the demand for SEC. As with all sexual exploiters of children, local offenders propel demand for SEC through a complex interplay of power seeking, a sense of impunity and a prevalence of anonymity. This, in tandem with an overwhelming supply of opportunities for exploitation and notable advancements in ICTs, dramatically exacerbates the problem.<sup>1</sup>

## Travelling Offenders

Travelling offenders are also responsible for SEC. The exponential growth of travel and tourism, driven by expanding global market opportunities, has been greatly facilitated by cheaper and increased airline connectivity. Over the past couple of decades, tourism has grown into a leading global economic sector, generating an unprecedented number of international tourist arrivals, which swelled from 527 to 1,184 million between 1995 and 2015.<sup>2</sup>

1 Greenaway, Samantha (2014) “4 Disturbing Ways Child Molesters Use Tech to Commit Crimes”, 15 March 2014, *Business Insider*, accessed 10 July 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/child-molesters-technology-2014-3>.

2 UNWTO (2016), “International tourist arrivals up 4% reach a record 1.2 billion in 2015”, 18 January 2016, accessed on 5 July 2016, <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2016-01-18/international-tourist-arrivals-4-reach-record-12-billion-2015>.

Cheap, mass travel makes both domestic and international journeys affordable to travelling child sex offenders. In poor countries, where the need for tourist dollars is high and child protection mechanisms weak, the introduction of casinos, bars, restaurants and brothels to meet the demand generated by tourists potentially increases exposure to commercial sexual exploitation of local residents, as observed, for example, in the context of the Special Economic and Free Trade Zones proliferating in South East Asia,<sup>3</sup> or in tourist destinations like Ukraine, Estonia, the Netherlands, Hungary and Latvia being promoted online as sexual paradises.<sup>4</sup>

As profit-making opportunities evolve, mapping the demand for SEC across constantly shifting national and regional source, transit and destination areas is an increasingly daunting task. ECPAT International's recently published global study on sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) has highlighted that SEC should be interpreted as the result of local offenders exploiting victims in their own communities, in addition to travelling offenders moving mainly within their own countries and regions, while individuals from wealthy nations continue to access children in the low-income countries. The up-to-date SEC map sketched in the study highlights that the demand by travelling child sex offenders is organised mainly on an intra-regional scale, where perpetrators preferably travel within countries, to border areas or to neighbouring nations.<sup>5</sup> Not only predators travel to meet their victims, but also victims are transferred to locations closer to their exploiters through both domestic and cross-border sex trafficking.<sup>6</sup>

ICTs are used in this context to facilitate communication between individuals involved in SECTT. Travelling sexual offenders exchange information on children and target locations, circulate images of victims and share personal experiences, plan their trips anonymously or purchase sex tours, creating online communities and peer networks.<sup>7</sup>

## The Entertainment Industry

As in adult prostitution, children are not only engaged in the mainstream sex industry, but also in a number of entertainment establishments, massage parlours, nightclubs, dance cafés, clubs, bars where young waitresses, dancers, masseuses and entertainers are exposed to various forms of sexual harassment and violence, and may be enticed gradually to engage in commercial sex. When it turns into a continuum of the sex industry, the entertainment sector can contribute to diversifying the child sex business.<sup>8</sup> In establishments operating in several countries, such as the cabin restaurants proliferating along the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, the line separating entertainment from commercial sex is blurred. Young people engaged in such settings are expected to make themselves available to the entire range of possible demands being made by abusive locals and outsiders in order to encourage consumption of food, alcohol or sexual services.<sup>9</sup> They also provide indirect income for brokers, such as taxi drivers, for example, who service such exploitative establishments and act as intermediaries along the demand causal chain.

3 U.S. Department of State (2014), "Trafficking in Persons Report 2014," 239.

4 See e.g. <http://www.sextourism.net/destination/europe/>

5 ECPAT International, Defence for Children-ECPAT Netherlands (2016), "Offenders on the Move. Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism", May 2016.

6 *Ibid.*

7 UNODC (2015), "Study on the Effects of New Information Technologies on the Abuse and Exploitation of Children", May 2015, Vienna: UNODC, 16.

8 ECPAT International (2014), "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in South Asia: Developments, Progress, Challenges and Recommended Strategies for Civil Society", November 2014, Bangkok: ECPAT International, accessed 5 September 2016, [http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/Regional%20CSEC%20Overview\\_South%20Asia.pdf](http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/Regional%20CSEC%20Overview_South%20Asia.pdf); Das, Bijoyeta (2013) "Nepal's Sex Industry Boom Lures Young Jobseekers", Women's eNews, 9 February 2013, <http://womensenews.org/2013/02/nepals-sex-industry-boom-lures-young-jobseekers/>, accessed 5 July 2016.

9 ECPAT International (2014), "The commercial sexual exploitation of children in South Asia: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies", 24.

Online sexual child exploitation intersects abuse in the entertainment industry as it does in the sex business. The live streaming of abuse for entertainment is no longer an emerging trend but an established crime, the proliferation of which is expected to further increase in the near future. Live streaming methods can be used in sexual extortion cases, or in organising invitation-only videoconferencing of contact abuse among members of closed networks. The low cost to consumers of pay-per-view child sexual abuse makes it possible to order and view the abuse regularly without the need for downloading.<sup>10</sup>

The interplay of live streaming with other technologies, such as the “dark Web” facilitating anonymous sharing and pseudonymous payment systems such as Bitcoin expanding opportunities for impunity, propels demand for SEC in the entertainment industry.

## Female Perpetrators

Although men form the bulk of demand for SEC, the role played by women should not be minimized. While women generally seek men older than 18 years, cases have been documented of adult European female offenders exchanging sexual services with underage boys for monetary gain in the Caribbean and other Latin American destinations, in several African countries, including Senegal, Kenya<sup>11</sup> and Gambia.<sup>12</sup> In Asia, Sri Lanka and Goa in India, in particular, female sex abusers pursue so-called beach boys.<sup>13</sup> It has been noted that, while men and boys who make themselves available for paid sex in tourist destinations (known also as island boys, players, or gigolos) may not self-identify as being involved in commercial sexual exploitation and women may perceive themselves as being seduced in a sort of ‘holiday romance’ situation, the reality of such imbalanced sexual relationships is that they hinge on the same global economic and social inequalities that underpin the demand characterising the male sex tourism market.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to offending in the context of travel and tourism, female perpetrators have been increasingly found acting in the realms of prostitution and ICTs. A number of media reports in countries such as the UK and US have exposed cases of teachers who sexually abused boy students, sometimes in exchange for gifts, or involving in the production and distribution of CSAM.<sup>15</sup>

## Consumers of Child Sexual Abuse Materials

Demand for pornography accounts for a hefty share of the demand for SEC. ICTs have facilitated perpetrators to sexually abuse children without coming into physical contact with them. The production and consumption of CSAM have grown at an exponential pace in the past three decades. While it is estimated that approximately 7,000 images were in circulation in 1990, a total of 2.5 million images were recovered from one case alone in 2014.<sup>16</sup>

10 EUROPOL (2014), “Online Child Sexual Exploitation”, accessed 5 July April 2016, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/iocta/2015/online-child-exploit.html#fn:five>.

11 ECPAT International, “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Africa: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society”, November 2014, accessed 5 September 2016, [http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/Regional%20CSEC%20Overview\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/Regional%20CSEC%20Overview_Africa.pdf), 22.

12 ECPAT Netherlands (2014), “Assessment on sexual exploitation of children related to tourism and reporting mechanisms in Gambia”, 32.

13 See e.g.: Sacco, Aubrey (2009), “The Truth about Sri Lankan Beach Boys,” *Travel Blog*, 26 December 2009, accessed 5 July 2016, <https://www.travelblog.org/Asia/Sri-Lanka/Southern-Province/Tangalle/blog-463262.html>.

14 Sanchez Taylor, Jacqueline (2006), “Female sex tourism: a contradiction in terms?”, *Feminist Review*, no. 83 (2006): 52.

15 Murray, Jenny (2015), “Disturbing rise of the women child sex predators: How sickening slew of babysitters and teachers are abusing young boys and girls – but would they be punished so leniently if they were men?”, 15 October 2015, accessed 5 July 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3274956/Disturbing-rise-women-child-sex-predators-s-punished-leniently-men.html>; Swogger, Abbie Jane (2014), “The big list: female teachers with students”, *wnd.com*, 19 August 2014, accessed 5 July 2016, <http://www.wnd.com/2014/08/39783/>.

16 Sanford, Paul (2015), “The Child Abuse Image Database (CAID)”, presentation by Temporary Detective Chief Superintendent Paul Sanford, Norfolk Constabulary, accessed 5 July 2016, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/conferences/how-safe-2015-presentation-child-abuse-image-database.pdf>.

While the vast majority of CSAM is distributed non-commercially online, the illicit profits generated through the production and distribution of such materials, which remain difficult to compute, are likely to be substantial particularly in respect of video production and online streaming.<sup>17</sup>

Evidence has shown that the majority of consumers of online child abuse material are male. While the bulk are adults (over 90 percent), online CSAM users tend to be younger than offline abusers.<sup>18</sup> Some studies have raised concern over the rising involvement of young people in accessing, producing and possessing child abuse material. Overall, current knowledge suggests that demand for sexual exploitation of children online is largely fuelled by white, Westernised males, belonging to a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds, and more likely to be educated and employed.<sup>19</sup>

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17 European Financial Coalition against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Online and European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) – EUROPOL (2015), “Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Online”, 16, accessed 5 July 2016, <http://www.europeanfinancialcoalition.eu/private10/images/document/21.pdf>.

18 Babchishin, Kelly, M., R. Karl Hanson and Chantal A. Hermann (2011), “The characteristics of online sex offenders: a meta-analysis”, *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 23 (1): 92-123.

19 UN Human Rights Council (2015), “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography”, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/58, 30 December 2015, para. 31.

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