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Combating Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth in Asia: Directory of Organizations



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Chief
Health and Development Section, Emerging Social Issues Division
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
Rajadamnoen Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66) 2-288-1052
Fax: (66) 2-288-3031
E-mail: escap-healthdev@un.org
Web site: www.unescap-healthdev.org

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Preface

The sexual exploitation of children and youth (SEC), including trafficking, is a global problem. In the Asian and Pacific region, it is estimated that there are over 1 million child victims of sexual exploitation. In addition to thriving cross-border trafficking networks which lure or force children as young as 13 into commercial sex work, young people are also entering commercial sex work unaware of the psychosocial and physical consequences of their decision.

SEC is becoming particularly acute in developing countries of the region that are undergoing rapid social and economic change. Socio-economic and cultural factors, such as lack of education, family breakdown, lack of economic opportunity, traditional beliefs and practices, and poverty, make young people particularly susceptible to sexual exploitation. Children and youth in the region are also at risk of sexual abuse, usually by someone whom they know and trust. Young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation face high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, as well as developing mental and behavioural problems.

Despite the increasing severity of the problem, there exists a wide gap between the need for psychosocial and medical services for children and youth who are victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and the availability of such services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Between 1998 and 2003, ESCAP implemented a regional capacity development programme to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth. The programme covered 12 countries in two subregions (South Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion). The programme has been widely acknowledged for its contribution to awareness-raising and capacity-building for combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in Asia and the Pacific.

As part of this programme, ESCAP undertook in 1998 the compilation of a database of available services and organizations working to combat SEC in Asia. This Directory of Organizations is an expanded and updated version of the database. While it is by no means exhaustive, the Directory aims to assist psychosocial and medical service providers in identifying existing services in the field and helping victims to access services. It is also meant to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources within the region, as part of the overall fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and youth.

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