

CAMPAIGN ON PREVENTING TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN: SITUATIONER REPORTS

**Extraordinary precarities: Lived experiences of trafficked and prostituted women
and children in Davao City with case studies**

TALIKALA Inc.

**Echoing voices of trafficked survivors:
A Visayas situationer on child trafficking**

Children's Legal Bureau

**CATWAP Situationer Report:
Cases of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation**

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Campaign on Preventing Trafficking of Women and Girls

I. Background

The Commission on Human Rights, as Gender and Development Ombud under the Magna Carta of Women undertakes regular monitoring of women's human rights, especially women in the marginalized sectors. Since the establishment of its Center for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center, sectoral monitoring of women, girls, and LGBTQI human rights have been undertaken. Initial situationers were released on indigenous and rural women, women with disability, LGBTQI, girl-children, women in detention, urban poor women, and older women. From these sectoral monitoring, policy recommendations are forwarded to key government agencies. Reports drawn from women's insights and identified issues also inform submissions to human rights treaty bodies and inputs to reports of human rights mandate holders. As Gender Ombud, the Commission is also mandated to advocate for the promotion and protection of women's and girls human rights in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710).

One of the key provisions of the CEDAW directs the State to address the issue of trafficking and exploitation of prostitution as forms of violence against women and girls. Under Article 6 of CEDAW, States are specifically mandated to 'take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.' As observed, however, by the General Recommendation 38 of CEDAW on trafficking - despite the 'plethora of existing anti-trafficking legal and policy frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, females continue to comprise the majority of detected victims, and perpetrators enjoy widespread impunity. In the Philippines, our amended Anti-Trafficking law (RA10364) adopted in 2012 strengthened the country's anti-trafficking laws through higher penalties and further strengthening of the Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT). This notwithstanding, global and domestic trafficking data highlight the magnitude of the problem. The 2018 UN Office of Drugs and Crime report states that women and girls account for 72% trafficking victims detected globally. Most women and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.¹

Guidance from CEDAW General Recommendation 38 and 2016 Concluding Observations

The most recent guidance from the CEDAW Committee on Trafficking can be found in General Recommendation 38, released in 2020. The GR expounds on the State's obligation under Article 6 of CEDAW, and further detailing actions that the State can undertake in addressing trafficking of women and girls.

At the onset, GR 38 stresses the importance of a gendered analysis of the crime of trafficking. It reiterates that continuing gaps 'persist' due to the lack of appreciation of trafficking's gendered dimension, as seen particularly in cases of trafficking of women and girls who are exposed to different types of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. The GR links the persistence of the trafficking to prevailing economic and patriarchal structures, adverse impact of gender-differentiated labor,

¹ UN Women. Facts and Figures Ending Violence Against Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>. Accessed 18 May 2021

migration and asylum regimes that create the situations of vulnerability leading to women and girls being trafficked.²

The Committee also acknowledges that trafficking and exploitation of prostitution in women and girls is unequivocally a phenomenon rooted in structural sex-based discrimination, constituting gender-based violence and often exacerbated in the contexts of displacement, migration, the increased globalization of economic activities, including global supply chains, the extractive and offshore industry, militarization, foreign occupation, armed conflict, violent extremism and terrorism³

The GR discussed the the following as the roots of trafficking of women and girls: (a) socio-economic injustice, (b) discrimination in migration and asylum regimes; (c) demand that fosters exploitation and leads to trafficking; (d) situations of conflict and humanitarian emergencies; (e) the use of digital technology in trafficking. It then recommended measures to uphold victim's rights including victim identification, application of protection frameworks, non-criminalization and non-conditionality, right to information about rights and legal assistance; right to remedies and gender-sensitive court proceedings. Measures related to data collection, legislative, policy and institutional frameworks were also recommended.

This GR is an important guiding document on the implementation of Article 6. It provides guidance for States in the fulfillment of its obligations, including practical guidance on implementing anti-trafficking interventions that are based on a gender transformative and intersectional approach, with the focus on realizing women and girls' human rights as a strategic priority for achieving sustainable development.⁴

The UN CEDAW Committee's 2016 Concluding Observations (CO) for the Philippines' also provide added insight into the continuing gaps in the state's obligation to address trafficking. The concluding observations also identified key issues and provided concrete recommendations for the State to follow. The 2016 CO expressed concern that despite expanded legislation on trafficking, the current legal framework 'does not explicitly cover contemporary methods, such as online matchmaking, which can be used as a tool for trafficking in persons.' It also observed that prevention of trafficking remains weak especially in the context of disasters and armed conflict, and the limited number of shelters for survivors. Lastly, the Committee expressed concern that a 'large number of women are subjected to exploitation through prostitution, the continuing criminalization of women in prostitution under the Revised Penal Code, and the need to adopt measure discouraging male demand for prostitution address the root causes of prostitution, provide women with alternative income opportunities, and provide assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls exploited in prostitution, in addition to exit programmes for women wishing to leave prostitution.'⁵ The Philippines' efforts to respond to these observations shall form part of the State's report for CEDAW in 2020, a report that currently has not been received by the CEDAW Committee.

² UN CEDAW Committee. GR 38

³ UN CEDAW Committee. GR 38. (para 10)

⁴ UN CEDAW Committee. GR 38 (para 6)

⁵ UN CEDAW Committee. GR 38 (para 30)

The Commission's work on trafficking of women and girls

As Gender Ombud, and part of the Commission's Human Rights promotion and policy work, the Commission has been continuously conducting capacity building and advocacy campaigns against trafficking of women and girls. Legal assistance and other protection services are also available in cases where cases are filed with the Commission. Recognizing however, the remaining gap in the Commission's work on trafficking, focus group discussions or key informant interviews were conducted in 2020 to surface the issues of trafficking and violence in fisherfolk communities. The focus on fisherfolks communities sprang from reports from CSOs documenting instances of '*akyat barko*' or other forms of prostitution due to poverty, most especially during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have then noted the work of Talikala, an NGO based in Davao City as they have documented different forms of prostitution among girl children in fishing communities. They described how '*akyat barko*' as a system works -when a ship docks, girls together with the pimps, ride "pump boats" to meet the customers in the cabin. According to Talikala, this type of work is usually a "packaged deal", that is, the price paid for by the customer includes doing the laundry, cooking, aside from the sexual service given.⁶ They also documented the '*sistemang palit*' or barter among girl children in places near the coastal areas – in this case, sexual service is given in exchange for fish.⁷ Despite the conduct of FGDs and KIs in these areas, data on trafficking remain very minimal. This is a persistent gap in the Commission's work as Gender Ombud.

In 2021, seeking to address the continuing absence of grounded data on trafficking of women and girls, the Commission, through the Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center (GEWHRC) partnered with CSOs working in the area of trafficking on women and girls for a joint campaign in preventing trafficking of women and girls. The joint campaign engaged three CSOs, one from Luzon, one from Visayas and one from Mindanao. The partner worked with the Center in (1) drafting a localized situationer of trafficking of women and girls including case studies highlighting gaps and continuing challenges; and (2) conducting advocacy campaigns preventing trafficking of women and girls, including the conduct of a National Consultation on Trafficking of Women and Girls. The partnership responded to the need to surface and make visible the root causes of trafficking, the gaps in implementation as seen in the lived experiences of women and girls, and the need to work towards addressing these gaps through the strengthening of referral mechanisms. It had the following objectives:

Objectives:

1. To expand the Commission's partners in the campaign to prevent trafficking of women and girls;
2. To develop, with CSO partners, localized situationers and cases studies on trafficking of women and girls;

⁶ Arcilla, N. The Filipino Children in Prostitution; A Worst kind of Child Labor. 2001. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-manila/documents/publication/wcms_437078.pdf

⁷ Arcilla, note 2

3. To document the State's compliance with the 2016 UN CEDAW Concluding Observations and the continuing gaps in the fulfillment of the obligation to address trafficking;
4. To develop recommendations grounded from the experiences of CSOs and government officers working on the issue of trafficking and from trafficking survivors;

Pursuant to this project, the Commission was able to work with three dedicated CSO partners working in the field of preventing trafficking in women and girls. From May of 2021 until the end of the year, the Commission partnered with three CSOs. The first CSO partner is The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women - Asia and the Pacific. CATW-AP is a non-profit organization that promotes women's human rights, fighting sexual exploitation. The second CSO partner is Talikala Inc. Talikala is a non-governmental organization run by women for women, which offer support, advice, training and counselling to women and girls who have been forced into sex trade in Davao City, Philippines. The last CSO partner is from Cebu City, Children's Legal Bureau. Children's Legal Bureau is a non-stock, no-profit organization based in Cebu City that envisions a just world for children. CLB works towards its vision through three main programs and a support services program. Laban Bata is focused on rendering development assistance to children in the province of Cebu, Child Rights Protection Unit (CRPU) organizes the five pillars of justice to collaborate in protecting children at municipal and city levels, Juvenile Justice Program advocates for implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, restorative justice and diversion for children in conflict with the law.

The three CSO partners for the situationers were also the Commission's partners in holding a Consultation on Support Services for women and girls survivors of trafficking last July 30 of 2021, in time for international day against trafficking. The consultation surfaced continuing gaps in the delivery of support services for survivors of trafficking, the need for increased financial and psychosocial assistance, and the urgent call for the participation of survivors in the planning and evaluation of programs crafted for them. The consultation was attended by representatives of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, thru its focal person for recovery and reintegration program for trafficked persons. Likewise present were the women survivors of trafficking who also participated in the research conducted by the CSO partners. Continuing the partnership and providing a platform to validate the findings of the research/situationers, the Commission with the CSO partners also held a Survivor's Summit as a kick off of the 18 Day campaign to end violence against women.

In this compilation of three situationers, the Commission is pleased to present the work of our three CSO partners in providing a briefer on the issues of trafficking in women and girls in their different areas. These situationers tell the stories and the lived experiences of women and girls survivors of trafficking and the organizations that respond and support them. They also reveal the gaps in the State's fulfillment of its obligation to prevent and address trafficking in persons and to provide support for survivors of trafficking. We hope that these situationers, with their case studies and recommendations from survivors and CSO partners, will guide government agencies, including the Commission, in fulfilling our respective mandates to address and prevent trafficking in women and girls.

Extraordinary precarities: Lived experiences of trafficked and prostituted women and children in Davao City

Talikala Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the situation of prostituted and trafficked women and children in Davao City. The data were primarily gathered and documented by Talikala from 2016 to present. The data were derived from (8) case reports collected through one-on-one interviews with family members and friends to capture the realities and experiences of trafficked and prostituted women and children. A focus group discussion involving 10 participants was conducted in October 2021. A total of 18 women and children were interviewed through one-on-one and focus-group-discussions. Snippets from Talikala's case studies are used to narrate their struggles, uncover the reasons that led them to their current situation, and enumerate their support mechanisms.

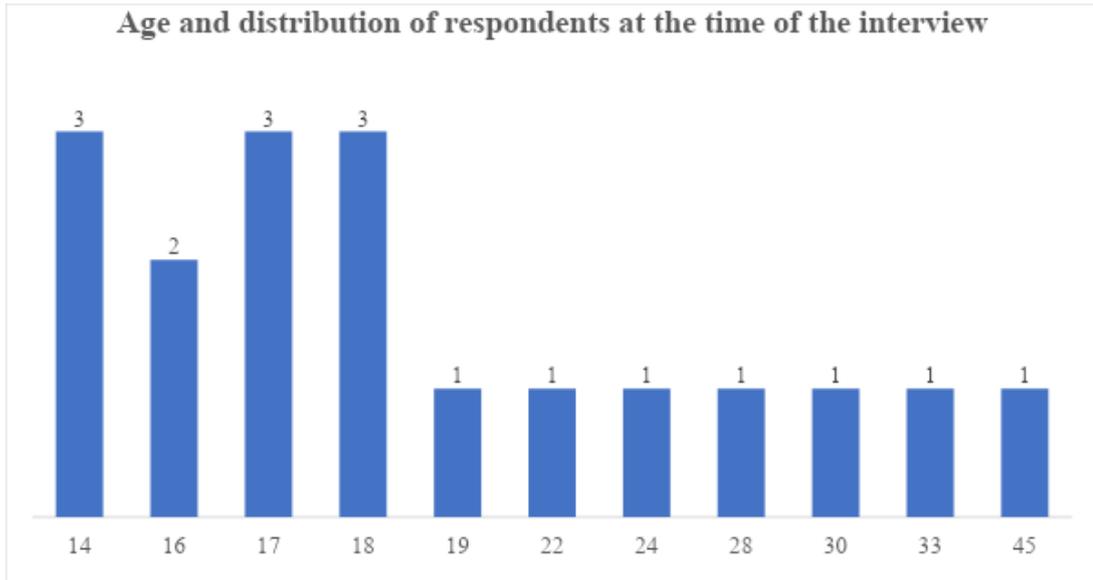
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to:

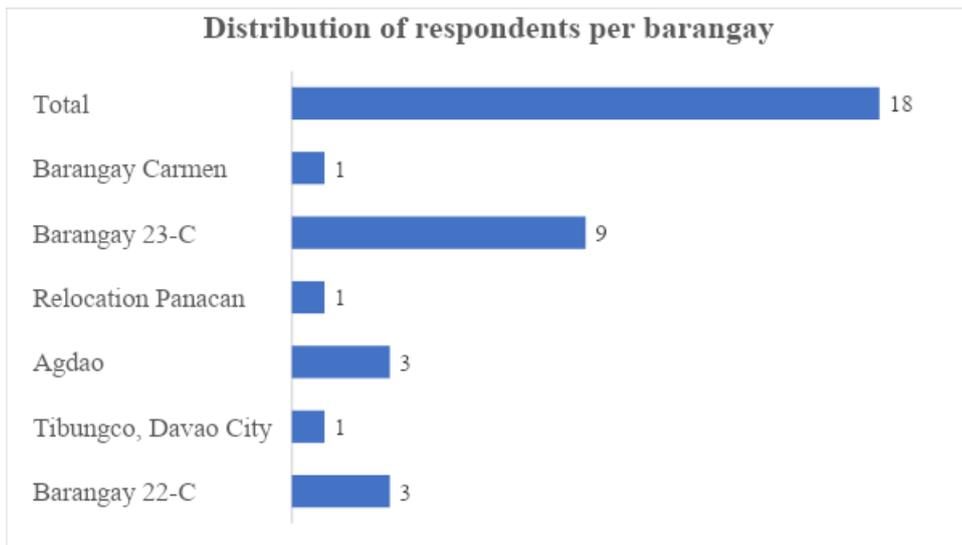
1. Provide a local situationer of trafficking and prostitution of women and children in Davao City;
2. To describe the experiences of prostituted and trafficked women and children including recruitment, fleeing in situation of trafficking and prostitution, and its entanglements; and
3. To describe the precarious situation of trafficked and prostituted women and children including but not limited to pregnancy, intimate partner violence, sexually transmitted infection, and drugs.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE RESPONDENTS

Among the 18 respondents, the median age is 21 years old. The youngest among them is 14 years old and the oldest is 45 years old at the time of the interview. Three respondents are aged 14 years old, three of them are 17 years old, three of them are 18 years old, and two of them are aged 16 years old.



From the 18 respondents, nine (9) are from Barangay 23-C, three of them are from Agdao and Barangay 22-C, and one respondent each from Barangay Carmen, Relocation Panacan, and Tibungco, Davao City. Barangay 23-C, Agdao, and Barangay 22-C are situated in downtown Davao City and known to have a high population of poor urban and informal settlers.

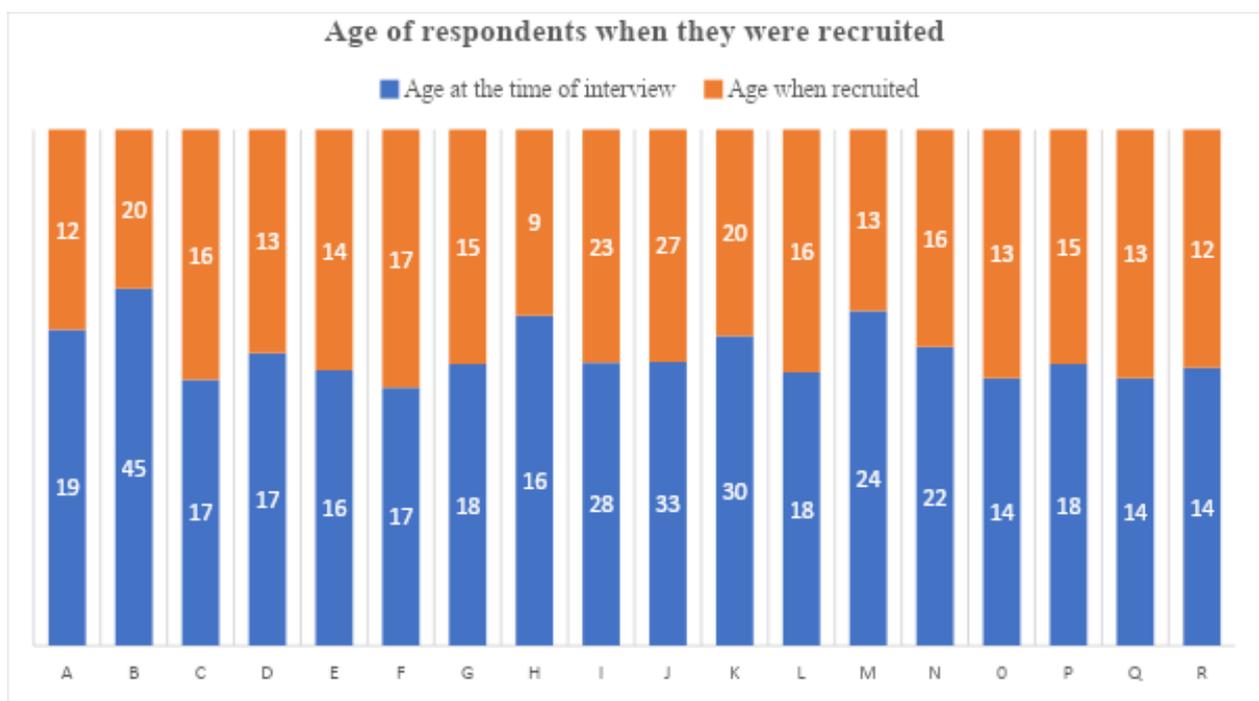


Seventeen (17) out of 18 respondents are single and one (1) lives with a partner. Many of them are in on-off intimate heterosexual relationships. One respondent had her first sexual activity when she was 10 years old with her then boyfriend. One respondent momentarily stopped prostitution when she was financially supported by her partner but resumed when they broke up. Some respondents shared that their partners knew the nature of their work. Some women also had several pregnancies both from their partners or “customers” (or patrons).

RECRUITMENT, EXPERIENCES, AND FLEEING: THE AGGRAVATING CYCLE OF TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

This section describes the recruitment process and experiences of trafficked and prostituted women and children. It also details the experiences of women and children who are currently in this situation, and how they were able to flee only to find themselves returning to prostitution. Here, the transition from trafficking to continuing prostitution is described.

Among the 18 respondents, the median age when they were recruited is 15.7 years old. The youngest victim who was recruited is 9 years old, who was pimped as a “shine girl” (usually offers “hand/blow jobs”). Moreover, one respondent was recruited to work in a bar when she was still 12 years old and was transported to Mati City, Davao Oriental. Upon reaching the place, she was immediately forced to have sex with customers.



Among the respondents, fourteen (14) were still minors when they were recruited. This means that their age put them in vulnerable situation and at risk of being trafficked or forced into prostitution.

The vulnerability of minors/young children is further grasped in the number of years that these women and children are in prostitution. Among the respondents, one of them has been in prostitution for 22

years, two of them are in prostitution for a decade, while majority has been in situation for less than a year to the seven-year range.



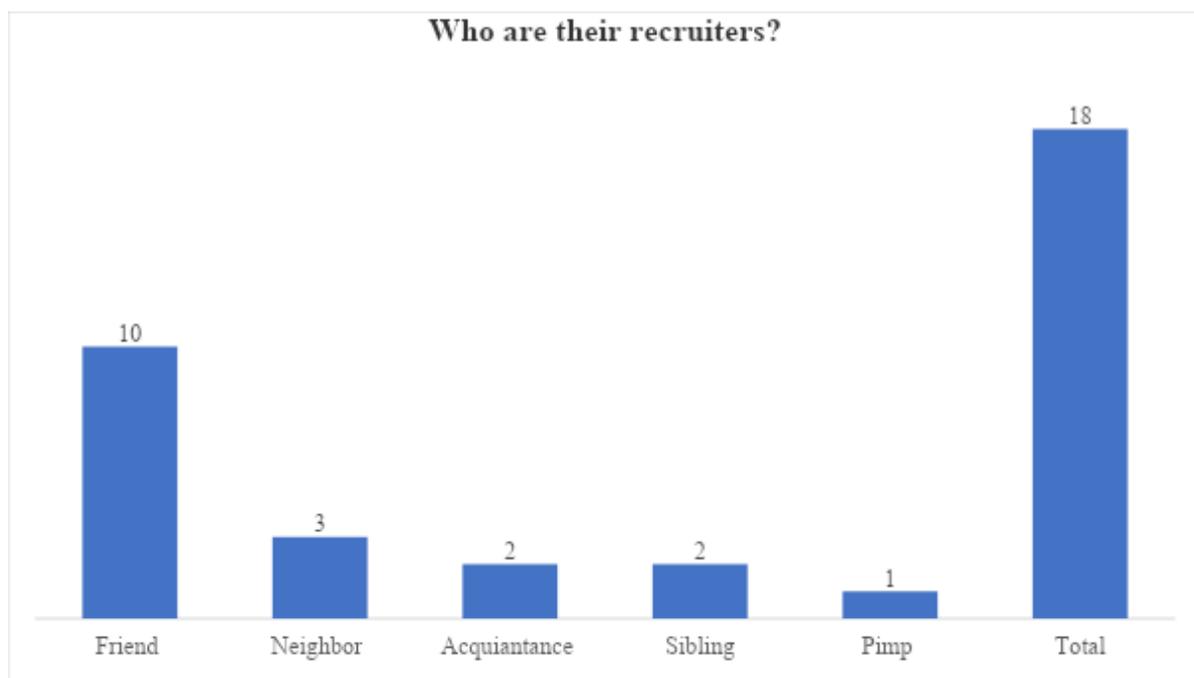
Who are their recruiters?

Most of them are recruited by someone they know, including their *barkada* (friend) and neighbors. Three of them described their *barkada* as a “gay man”, and some friends who are also in the situation of prostitution. Some are recruited by their own siblings, neighbors, and acquaintances they met online. Some of them are unaware that they were already sold to customers, while others are lured to accept monied customers.

Gel was recruited recently, during the time of pandemic, by her gay friend. When she was recruited, community restrictions were still in place prohibiting minors from traveling outside their homes. Gel, 14-years old narrated that “*habang nagabyahe gipaduko ko niya aron dili makita sa mga nagbantay sa dalan*” (while we were travelling, he made me put my head down so I will not be seen by those who are watching the roads). She travelled to Toril with her gay friend to meet a “mers” (short for customers).

Barbie was only 14 years old when she was lured by her gay friend at the time when she needed the money to support her younger siblings. She was sent to Lupon, Davao Oriental. That was the farthest place she's been to, narrated Barbie.

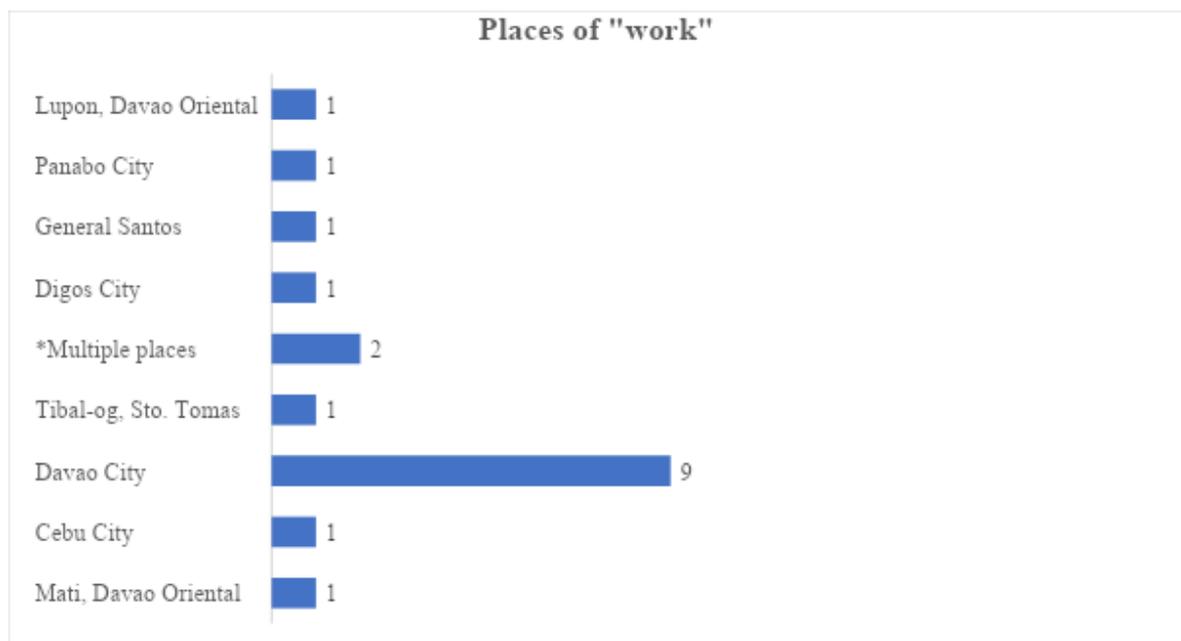
Similar to Angel and Barbie, Andi was also only 14 years old when she was introduced by her friend to a "gay man" who recruited and trafficked her to prostitution. The gay man convinced her to try an easy money job, the gay man promised that she will only be interviewed. Andi was convinced and was brought to an inn where a customer was already waiting for her. That time, the gay man sold her to a man for sex. Andi was confused and afraid. She screamed and tried to runaway but the man force her to have sex. She was helpless. After that, the man gave her P5,000.00.



What do recruiters do and where they were sent?

Recruited women and children are sent to different areas of Mindanao and the Visayas. In Mindanao, they were sent to Lupon and Mati in Davao Oriental, Panabo City, General Santos, Digos City, Sto. Tomas in Davao del Norte and Cebu City. Majority are lured and tricked to work in Davao City only to find themselves in hotels and inns where a customer is waiting. In the Visayas, they were taken to Cebu City. Two respondents were sent to multiple places including Digos City, Malita, General Santos, and Carmen in Davao del Norte. These women and children are trafficked in highly urbanized as well

as rural areas of Mindanao. Hence, when promised work, women and children would grab every opportunity they have regardless of the nature of the transaction and placement of work.



Recruiters promised them “work”. *“Mo-istorya ug kwarta, magpromise nga naay kwarta ihatag. Palamian kag istorya, ug maingganyo ka, mao ma-recruit og balik’* (They will talk about money, they will promise that money will be given. They talk good, and then you will be engaged, that’s the reason why you will be recruited again). Some were also paid in advance in the form of money given to their parents and children especially during times of crisis. They were lured (*gidani*) using money since they knew that they didn't have any. They are also told it is their time to travel to other places. They admitted that they were blinded by money. They were too young then, some admitted being *“nadala sa kantidad nga gi-offer”* (taken by the amount offered).

Reasons that led to trafficking and prostitution

Abusive family set-up, poverty, inability to meet the basic needs of the family, and early exposure to prostitution are some of the reasons why women and children are recruited and lured into trafficking and prostitution.

Fanny, 45 years old at the time of the interview, comes from a poor family. Her mother was also in prostitution before she was impregnated by her father who is her costumer back then. Fanny is the eldest among five (5) children in a family with different fathers. She didn't even know her real father.

Recruitment and the entangling circumstances of trafficking and prostitution

Women and children are trafficked and lured into prostitution because of *pangk warta* (to earn money). Some are explicitly invited by friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and friends who are also in prostitution because of the availability of customers who are willing to pay for sex. Some are unaware that they are also sold by their friends, acquaintances, or family members. Moreover, they are unaware that they will work in a casa or bar to entertain local and foreign customers against their will. They were sold without their knowledge.

Ria engaged in premarital sex with her boyfriend at the 10 years old. On December of the same year, she ran away from home and engaged into prostitution to support her basic needs. She reached Mati in 2012 where she was introduced to the bar/casa owner who immediately forced her to entertain, dance, and engage into sexual activity with customers. She stayed in a casa with other women and minors. They were not allowed to go outside the bar without the company of their manager or recruiter. She wanted to go back to Davao but the recruiter threatened her that he can find her anywhere in Davao if she plans to escape.

Mary ran away from home due to verbal abuse. At the age of sixteen, she started to try different vices such as drinking alcohol, smoking, and tried using *shabu* given by her friends. Her Aunt Nina also said that she used to sniff *vulcaseal* and every time she sleeps, she can smell that her mouth smells *vulcaseal*.

Mary was brought to a hotel. She was scared and started to cry that the customer did not touch her but still paid her P3,000.00. Her next customer was a foreigner. It was her first time to engage in sexual activity, and the customer gave her P5,000.00. Mary gave P1,000.00 pesos to her pimp.

At the age of 15 year old, Jenny decided to run away from home since her parents cannot support her needs and sometimes her father would beat her when he got drunk. She stays at her friends in Ecoland, and at night, her friend would bring her to Bonguyan (a known place for drinking and prostitution). She saw her friend kissed and hugged men who in turn would give her money worth P100.00. Later that night her friend sells her to a Japanese man who is 50 year old. Her friend convinces her to go with the Japanese man since they need money. After that night, Jereca engage to prostitution and her friend would seek customer for her.

In March 2017, while Shine was with her friends, they would go around looking for money to buy things they needed. One time her friend brought her to a hotel and instructed her to enter a room where a man was waiting. An Indian-looking man sexually abused Shine and gave her money. She was crying at that time and was shocked by her experience. After the said incident, Shine was so angry with her friends. She did not go home for two days. A week after, Shine found herself in prostitution to buy her own needs and food for her family. She also felt sexually used, a similar sense of feeling articulated by Andi.

Ara was initially treated well by a bar owner in Tibal-og, Davao del Norte. Few weeks later, she is treated the same as those women who have been working in the bar for years. She was pimped every time there's a customer wanting to have sex with sex. An amount of P300.00 will be paid to the management for every three hours (*short-time*) and an additional payment for time extension. They should also convince the customers to use the lodging house owned by Luz at least once or twice a week as requisite before they are allowed to have an outside transaction with their customers. Every "outing" (external transaction) requested by customers was being monitored by the management. Every outing and per transaction, the customer has to pay the management an amount ranging from P200.00 to P500.00 pesos.

Sharon, 18 years old at the time of the interviewed has been in prostitution for four years. She and two of her friends were recruited to travel all the way to General Santos City when she was 16 years old. She was told that work was waiting for her there. Without her knowledge that she will be working in a bar.

The transition for being trafficked to the continuing state of prostitution has placed women and children in situation where they are easily abused physically, sexually, and emotionally. They are beaten both by the customers, berated by the management whenever they make mistakes, and scolded by the customers whenever they are not satisfied by their work. They also experienced being attacked by the wives of their customers. The situation is further aggravated by the discrimination they experience outside of their work. For instance, Eleonor was accused of stealing a ring in the City Health office. A police officer forcibly undressed her naked and threaten her to file a case when the ring is not returned.

Reporting to authorities and Fleeing

Most of the victims of trafficking would not report their situation. Some would not report due to fear while others would intentionally leave their situation to their own. They would rather talk to their friends, peers, and live-in partners. Others would only disclose their history of trafficking after engaging in Talikala activities. Unreported, trafficked women and children would resort to prostitution to raise money and plan their own escape.

There are several reasons why trafficked women and children do not report that they are trafficked. They are afraid that they might lose money and that they might be imprisoned. Among minors, they fear that their parents might know their situation once they report. *“Basin kulatahon sa Mama. Wala nagreport kay mahadlok makabalo ang pamilya kung unsa ang ginahimo pero naay hinala nga naay idea ang Mama sa kahimtang after nabasahan ang text gikan sa bugaw”* (My mother might beat me. I did not report because I am afraid that my family may know what I am doing but I am also assuming that my mother has an idea that I am in this situation after reading the text from the pimp). They are ashamed that their family might know.

For Ryza, she did not report her case because she was also high on drugs when she was trafficked. They are also afraid that their family may know that they are victimized and are also engaged in prostitution.

Without any money to pay for her transportation to go back to Davao City and to buy her own food, Sharon worked for a night, dancing and entertaining men encouraging them to buy the ladies' drinks

so she can receive a commission. She used the money to flee, tricking the management that she will only be at the mall to entertain herself.

Ara, however, has to stay working in a bar for more than a year. She had a chance to go home when the bar owner overheard about the raid among bars that allowed and recruited minors to work. Threatened, the bar owner immediately pulled out the minors including Ara.

Others experienced that their customers helped them to go home by giving them money. One of them experienced being ferried home using the police car. Meanwhile, in December 2012, a co-worker of Ria who worked in the bar helped her escape and she was able to successfully go home from Mati City to Davao City. She was traumatized by the incident and frightened that the recruiter will find her.

Added precarity: pregnancy, intimate partner violence, sexually transmitted infection, and drugs

After a month of disengagement, Ria found herself in prostitution again since her father was not able to support her basic needs. On 2013, when she is still 13 years old, she decided to live with her boyfriend. During their cohabitation, she experienced beatings, she was forced to take drugs (*shabu*) and marijuana, and her partner sexually abused her.

On 2015, Ria decided to separate with her boyfriend because of violence and abuse she experienced during their relationship. In the same however, she was impregnated. During the entire stage of pregnancy, she finds it hard to handle her situation since no one in the family is supporting her. In May 2016, she delivered her first-born. The child is in custody of her ex live-in partner's family until today since she is still incapable to sustain the needs of her child. Few months after delivering her first born, she tried disengaging herself from prostitution; she worked in Uyanguren as sales lady and tried to work in a restaurant as waitress and washer.

Meanwhile, Fanny's childhood boyfriend was the one who taught her how to use drugs. He uses her money to buy drugs. She became a drug user and a runner (one who sells drugs). They got separated since he is incapable of taking care of their child, addicted to drugs and alcoholic, and has several affairs.

While Fanny is in Cebu, she contracted gonorrhea from her Filipino costumer. She was also impregnated by her Japanese customer. Back in Davao, she worked as an “*akyat-barko*” for several years in Tepasco in Panabo where some of her costumers are Russian, Chinese, Japanese. She was impregnated four (4) times by her Russian customers. She decided to abort the three pregnancies, afraid that her mother would get angry over her several pregnancies. The Russian customers also would not take responsibility and they wanted Fanny to abort her pregnancy. Fanny asked for \$200.00 dollars to buy the medicine needed that are effective for abortion. She was impregnated again by a Filipino. In total, Fanny had 19 pregnancies from her customers and live-in partners. Among these 19 pregnancies, 11 are alive and are living in on their own and other family members. Two young children are staying with her and her partner.

Ara exchanged sex for drugs instead of money. The behavior was tolerated by the bar management since they themselves are using drugs that they bought from their customers who were also identified as drug dealers. In some instance, Nice, Ara’s pimp, convinced and forced her to have sex in exchange of drugs with the customer. Nice, in return, would also benefit from these transactions as she is also given drugs that serves as a separate payment for pimps.

Andi has her friends in their neighborhood with the same age as her. They influence Andi to drink alcohol, use cigarettes, drugs, and cut classes. Andi’s environment affects her behavior by influencing her to try different vices.

Services received

Ria decided to stop regular school on 2014 and planned to enroll in ALS (Alternative Learning System). After a few sessions attending classes in ALS, she stopped since she cannot focus because no one supports her. In 2017, she decided to go back to school and studied at Davao City National High School. She is actively engaging in campaigns regarding issues of children in prostitution and continued submitting for counseling sessions in Talikala. She is also making bracelets under the Blue Heart campaign, a call to end trafficking. According to her, through

this engagement she is able to educate the public and able to support her needs in school. She is also one of the grantees of the educational assistance program of Talikala Inc.

Despite Andi's experience in prostitution, she is willing to change and continue her dreams to finish her studies. She actively joins activities in Talikala and submits herself to therapeutic and counseling sessions. Support from the family is also a big help for to achieve her goals.

Gossips did not affect Nikki's education. She disclosed that her class adviser asked "*pakgirl ka Nikki?*" [are you a pakgirl (slang of fuck girl), Nicole? Her neighbors spread gossips about her when they learned she sells her body in prostitution. Nikki ignored the rumors and kept her silence even if some neighbors tried to bully her.

Many of the respondents joined Talikala's campaigns, counseling sessions, food items, and hygiene kit. They are received support from the DSWD. These supports are both long term and short term that address the most urgent concerns.

CONCLUSION

The stories of women and children who are trafficked and forced into prostitution are stories of poverty and desperation. Their parents' sources of income are irregular, working as tricycle drivers, plumbers, laundry, and laborers. These jobs could not support the entire household even to basic needs like food and education of young children. Young women resort to prostitution whenever they need money to buy school projects or provide food for the family. They will then contact their "friend" to find them customers.

The data disproves the common perception that recruiters are strangers. Recruiters are someone they know who take advantage of their dire economic situations. They are their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. The popularity of social media has provided a new venue for recruiters and possible recruits to meet and interact. This needs to be further studied and how this condition operates in the local context particularly in Davao Region.

Recruiters give them money as a form of “down payment” or cash advances that immediately address the needs of women and children and their family. Even if transactions are to their disadvantage, possible recruits are still enticed easily just because they need the money.

Women try to free themselves from being trafficked by fleeing. Without their knowledge and even with resistance, women and children are trapped into prostitution once they start. As seen from the data, from being trafficked, women and children eventually transition to prostitution. At a young age, their bodies are the only means and the only tool that they can use to support their own and their family’s needs.

Women do not report cases of trafficking due to fear. They fear that their family members may know their situation. Trafficking largely remains unreported. Moreover, they cannot report it as it is their source of income. They only report to the police cases of violence they experienced from their customers as these involve their immediate safety, security, and physical wellbeing. If they are harmed, they can no longer work. These cases also involves women versus the customers. Whereas, reporting cases of trafficking threatens their source of income that enable them and their family members to live.

Women and children in prostitution experience multiple precarities such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, drug abuse, and physical violence committed by their intimate partners and violence. These are the harsh realities they have to face as they try to survive.

Many of the respondents, especially young women, wanted to finish their education and receive their diplomas. Those who consider themselves as “second” or “third generation” trafficked and prostituted women want the cycle to end with them. They are hoping that one day they can work and earn money without endangering themselves, a kind of work that they dream that contribute to their individual well-being and the development of their communities.



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Sputnik corner Panganiban Streets
Dona Vicenta Village
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CASE STUDY

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name : Wilma
Nickname : Wilma
Age : 29
Sex : Female
Civil Status : Single
Birth Ordinal Position : 3rd
Birth Date : October 30, 1992
Birth Place : Laak, Compostela Valley
Educational Attainment : High School Level
Present Address : Kl. 11 Sasa Bayview, Davao City
Ethnicity : Mandaya

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The client was born and raised in Laak Compostela Valley, There were (3) siblings in the family, and she is the youngest. Her parents were both from laak Compostela Valley. Growing up she had no idea that she is an adopted child until the age of 13 years old

when her parents told her that she was. Her father died at the age of 60 while her mother died due to a complicated disease.

She ran away from home at the age of 14 years old and started to go around with her peers. She was duped with the offer of her friend to work as nanny for one year. After a year of working as nanny, she stopped and started to hang around with her peers in the streets until she reached eighteen years old. Another friend offered her to work in an establishment bar in Bayview, Sasa. She worked there for 5 years when she was recruited by a friend to work in one of the known big clubs in Manila. Her friend told her that she will earn more money there than in Davao and it is easier. True enough, she was earning 200 pesos for every ladies' drink and 2,000 pesos when a man will take her out when she ended in two of the biggest bars in Manila. The recruiter assisted her in getting health permit so she can stay as entertainer in the bar. She narrated that she experienced abuses from the customers of the bar like verbal abuse when she refused to be touched in private body parts, humiliation and even physical. She was not also spared from being forced to go out with men even if she does not want to. While in Manila, she regularly sent money to her family in Davao for her child whom she left to their care. Her child was the reason she stayed in Manila because she needs to support his needs. She worked there for more than 2 years until she decided to come back to Davao. She never told her family of her ordeal in Manila because she knows that they cannot help her also.

Upon returning to Davao, a neighbor asked her to go with her to Carmen, Davao del Norte to try their luck in one of the karaoke bars there. She stays there as entertainer and also goes out with men until the pandemic hit.

Her experiences on abuse is not limited to men whom she met in the bars but also with her intimate partners. When she was 26 years old she met the father of her son in the bar work in Bayview, Sasa. They lived together for a month and the man left her when she got pregnant. The man did not support her while she is pregnant and continuously work as entertainer until her sixth month. She tried to ask for child support from the man but he just ignored her plea. She raised her son alone by working in a karaoke bar. In 2020 she met another man who became her closest friend and eventually became her partner. This made her decide to quit working in the bar and started to sell food in the neighborhood. Her partner abused her by hitting or slapping and these resulted to bruises when they quarrel over petty things. She tried to put up with the violent tendencies of her partner but she decided to end the relationship when it got worst.

She is currently tending to her sari-sari store, a livelihood she got from the Department of Social Welfare and Development but the income is not enough for her daily needs.

Prepared By:

Elaidia Mae C. Rosillo, RSW

Social Worker

Social Case Study

I. Identifying Information

A. Client

Name: Ria

Address: # 385 Block 22 Barangay 22-C, Davao City

Age: 21 years old

Date of Birth: June 19, 2000

Place of Birth: Davao Medical Center, Bajada Davao City

Civil Status: Single

Religion: Roman Catholic

Educational Attainment: BSSW- 1

II. Background Information

The client is a 19 year-old girl, fair-complexioned, and 5'0 in height. She graduated elementary from Manuel A. Roxas Elementary school and spent her High school in Sta. Ana High School. She stopped going to school when she was 2nd year due to financial difficulty. She decided to enroll in ALS but was not able to finish since her father cannot support her education. Recalling her childhood years, her mother beat her forcefully leaving bruises and marks as form of corporal punishment when the client commits petty mistakes. Despite of her situation in the family, during her elementary years the client diverted her attention to academic activities and is an above average student during this time. The parents of the client tried to continue with her study and basic needs when she was in grade school.

On 2010, her parents separated because of financial incapacities and jealousy. They argued often and her father physically beats her mother. After the separation, the client was emotionally disturbed and was not able to focus on her studies. Her father has the full custody of the client. On November 2011, her mother died due to Sarcoma (Cancer). She suffered extreme emotional distress because of her mother's death. She engaged in premarital sex with her boyfriend at the 10 years old. In December of the same year, she ran away from home and engaged into prostitution to support her basic needs.

In October 2012, she was recruited by her friend alias Aking and was trafficked to Mati, Davao Oriental. When they reached Mati, she was introduced to the Bar/*Casa* owner and immediately forced her to entertain customers, dance and engaged into sexual activity with the customers. She stayed in a *Casa* with other women and minors. They were not allowed to go outside the bar without accompaniment of the manager or recruiter. She wanted to go back to Davao but the recruiter threatened her and he will find her in Davao whenever she plans to escape. On December 2012, Jay-jay who also worked there helped her escape and she was able to go back to Davao City. She was traumatized by the incident and frightened that the recruiter will able find her. After a month, she engaged again in prostitution since her father was not able to support her basic needs. On 2013, she decided to live with her boy friend. During their cohabitation, she experienced beatings, forced to take drugs (shabu) and Marijuana and sexually abused her. She decided to stop from regular school on 2014 and planned to enrol in ALS. She attended few classes of ALS, she stopped since she cannot focus because no one supports her.

In 2015, she decided to separate with her boyfriend because of violence and abuse she experienced during their relationship. In November 2015, she got pregnant and during pregnancy, she finds it hard to handle her situation since no one in the family is supporting her. She gave birth to her first-born, a baby boy in May of 2016. The child is in custody of her ex live-in partner's family until today since she is still incapable to sustain the needs of her child. Few months after delivering her first born, she tried disengaging herself from prostitution; she worked in Uyanguren as a sales lady and also tried to work in a restaurant as waitress and washer.

In 2017, she decided to go back to school and studied at Davao City national High School. She is actively engaging in campaigns regarding issues of children in prostitution and continued submitting for counseling sessions in Talikala. The client is also making bracelets under Blue Heart campaign, a call to end trafficking. According to her, through this engagement she is able to educate the public and able to support her needs in school. She is also one of the grantees of educational assistance program of Talikala Inc. She graduated from high school by attending Alternative Learning System and was able to start her first year of Bachelor of Social Work but had to stop from schooling.

She is currently working as a call center agent and live on her own.

Prepared by: Jane C. Duller, RSW

CASE STUDY

I – IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name	:	Nikki
Age	:	18
Sex	:	Female
Birth date	:	February 16, 2003
Status	:	Single
Religion	:	Roman Catholic
Educational Attainment	:	Grade 8
Present Address	:	Sta. Cruz, Barangay Leon Garcia, Davao City
Ethnicity	:	Filipino

Background of the Client

Recalling her childhood years, Nikki was taken care of by her paternal grandmother who lives in Bangkal, Davao City. Accordingly, she was one year old when her parents decided to let her grandmother take care of the child temporarily as they are financially incapable. During her childhood years, she recalled her grandmother beating her furiously when she makes petty mistakes. She lived with her grandmother until she was seven years old. Her mother took her permanently take care of her. She went to school and during this time, she experienced being beaten by her father when he was drunk. Her mother was busy doing laundry in their neighborhood so she can buy food for the family since her father's income as a tricycle driver is not sufficient for the needs of his family. Her younger siblings are in school and her mother is the one who monitors and sends them to school. At the age of nine, Nikki started to have friends who encouraged her to hang out. She started to have sexual activities with her 14-year-old boyfriend.

At the age of 14 year old, a certain "Inday" pimped for her to be a "shine girl." She was told that she would be earning money and she can help her family with the daily needs, in addition to be able to continue with her studies. Her involvement in prostitution enable her to earn P200 for every sexual service she had with customers. She, along with other children who engaged in prostitution stayed along Dacudao road, one of the streets in Davao City which is not known for prostitution. According to the child, their main customers are taxi drivers. She is engaging in such situation two to three times a night to support her family's needs for food and other basic necessities. Her father knew about her entering into prostitution from the rumors spreading in the neighborhood. He allowed her to continue in prostitution because he can demand for money from her. Her mother, upon knowing about her involvement, just said that she should be careful not to get infected with diseases. A pimp who three year older than Nikki, she transacted her and got a cut from the money she earned. While in the streets, sometimes was arrested (rescued)

because of violation of curfew of minors being imposed in the city even before the pandemic. Sometimes these so-called rescue were being abused by law enforcers to have free sex with the girls in exchange of freedom.

The client is still active into prostitution yet she went back to school as a Grade 6 student in Jose L. Porras Elementary School and graduated on April 2018. She was not able to attend the graduation ceremony because on the eve of her graduation, she went out with a customer because they have no food in the house. When she went home from school, she does household chores and in the evening, she engages in prostitution. Accordingly, she forced to engage into prostitution when her family does not have something to eat. She engages into prostitution once or twice a week enough to sustain her needs in school and for the family. According to the client, her parents are happy when she goes home bringing food and milk and diapers for her youngest sibling. She pities her younger siblings when they are hungry and this is the primary reason she is still in prostitution.

The client disclosed that her class adviser a certain Mr. Mark asked her “pakgirl ka Nikki?” since her neighbors spread gossips about her when they learned she sells her body in prostitution. Nikki ignored the rumors and kept her silence even if some neighbors bully her. This matter has reached the school principal through the regular consultation between Talikala and DepEd in Davao City.

The client tried her hand on online work as animator to support herself and her family and this made her stop from prostitution at this moment.

Prepared by:

Jane C. Duller, RSW
ISI Officer

Case Study

I. Identifying Data

Name: Mary

Age: 18 years old

Birthdate: November 16, 2003

Civil Status: Single

Sex: Female

Place of Birth: SPMC hospital, Davao city

Address: Leon Garcia Malaysian St. 4th Avenue Davao City

Highest Educational Attainment: Grade 9

Religion: Roman Catholic

Ethnicity: Cebuano

II. Background Information

Mary is 18 years old, a shy type and talks less due to her difficulty in speaking. She also experienced being bullied by her friends and classmates and sometimes called her "Bungi" that made her self-confidence so low especially in class participation. She is a grade 12 student and currently studying at Santa Ana National High School. She experienced going to school with an empty stomach and sometimes her parents would not give her money or fare to go to school and this led her to skip classes or absences from school.

Mary is the eldest among her four siblings and they all lived in a two story house made of plywood. The down part of their house was occupied by her mother's siblings. They resided at Malaysian St. Leon Garcia Davao City together with her family, including her grandmother, aunt and cousins. The client's father Mr. Jimboy, 40 years old and currently working as a trisikad driver and a part time construction worker while Mary's mother Marltes, 32 years old and work as a laundry woman. She has four siblings, namely John Nino grade 7 student, Jay Mark grade 5 student, Jimbo a grade 3 and Jasmine 2year old. Her grandmother's name is Susana, 59 years old, currently unemployed and her aunt is Nina Jane who has a three daughters. Everyone in the family depends on Mr. Jimboy that sometimes earned small or not enough to sustain the family knowing that his children are all attending school.

At the age of thirteen, she started to go out with friends and would go home late at night. She was influenced by her friends to runaway from home and would stay in her boyfriend's house at Tibungco. She started running away from their home because her father would beat her with a wooden stick every time she goes home late. She was afraid that her mother would scold her again and hurl hurtful words. There were times when her mother would follow her in Tibungco and fetch her from her boyfriend's house. According to her mother, she was very worried and she stated that "pangitaon jud nako siya ma'am bisag asa pa siya, matingala nalang na si Mary ug muingon "naabot man ka diri ma?" kasab-an man gud na siya sa iyang papa ma'am "(everytime my daughter will come home late, I always find her at her friend's house and bring her back home because her father will get angry).

At the age of sixteen, she started to try different vices such as drinking alcohol, smoking and tried shabu when her friends would give her. Her Aunt Nina also said that

Mary used vulcaseal (roof sealant) and every time she is sleeps her mouth smells vulcaseal. Last 2017, her neighbor named “Nelyn” recruited her to go with her so she can earn money. Since she needed money for her studies and food she grabbed the offer without really knowing the how to of earning. Mary stated that “nisugot nalang ko te kay pait man kayo mi sa balay ug hapit nasad to akoang birthday, para naa sad koy pangbirthday” (I was forced to join her because of poverty and my birthday that time was fast approaching).

She was brought to Ponciano St. and Central Bank along Tionko St. and her first costumer was a Chinese and knows how to speak bisaya. She was brought to a hotel but when they got there, she started to cry because she was scared since it’s her first time with a man. The costumer still gave her money worth 3,000 without touching her. Her next customer was a foreigner and that time she engaged into a sexual activity and the costumer gave her 5,000 pesos and Mikay gave the 1,000 pesos to her pimp. She gave some money to her mother and when asked on the source of the money she will just reply “I cleaned someone’s house and they gave me money”. According to her friend named “Sheene” she is still engaged in prostitution. Last December, Mary would even asked Sheene to come with her and use shabu but Sheene would resist since she decide to stop to use drugs. In January 2019, Mary’s friend name Shine stated that they went to Queensland hotel and met Mary’s costumer via facebook but did not succeed because her costumer did not show up.

Mary was introduced to Talikala and that was the time she know about her rights as a woman. She also participated in some processing activities and shared her stories. While in the program, she still engage in prostitution because of the economic difficulty her family experienced. The client undergo regular counseling and was planning to stop prostitution and go back to her studies.

Currently, she is a Grade 11 student and she received educational assistance from DSWD.

Prepared by: Jane C. Duller, RSW

CASE STUDY

I – IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name	:	Jenny
Age	:	21
Sex	:	Female
Birth date	:	July 27, 2000

Status : Single
Religion : Roman Catholic
Educational Attainment : Grade 10
Present Address : Piapi, Barangay 22-C, Davao City
Ethnicity : Filipino

Background of the Client

Jenny is a 21 year-old woman who is living with her parents Mr. Bernardo A and Mrs. Matilde. They lived in Barangay 22-C, Davao City with her siblings Maridel, Ivy, Cris Melody, Berly, Jocelyn and Leonard. Her father is working as a trisikad driver while her mother is a tailor of “payong-payong” Tricycle. At home, Jenny’s mother is the one who disciplined them, and she experienced physical and verbal abuse from her mother when she was little. Jenny is close to her sister Maridel and share her feelings whenever she has a problem. She was also aware of her sister who engaged in prostitution. She knows and understands the situation of her sister because Maridel supports her child and her partner. She started to work as house helper to support her needs in school since her parents cannot provide all their needs. As a child, Jenny experienced days when they have nothing to eat because her father has no work and unable to provide for her family.

At the age of 15-year-old, Jenny decided to run away from home since her parents could not support her needs and sometimes her father would beat her when he gets drunk. She stays at her friends in Ecoland and at night, her friend brought her to Bonguyan. At first, she saw her friend kissed and hugged by men and gave her money amounting to one hundred pesos. Later that night, her friend sold her to a Japanese man who is 50 year old. Her friend convinced her to go with the Japanese man since they need money. After that night, Jenny engaged in prostitution and her friend would look for male customer for her.

She stopped at the age of 17 when she met her boyfriend who supports her needs. After they broke-up she went back home and continue with her studies. Her parents are still the same and cannot support her fully in her studies. Jenny would find part time job to pay for her school fees. She did not ask money from her parents for her school payment since she is more concern of her other siblings’ basic needs than hers. She is concerned that her siblings are not eating three square meals a day.

Jenny reached Grade 10 and she continued in prostitution to support her needs and her studies. Her case was referred to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for educational assistance which would mean stopping from prostitution since there will be some funds which will help her.

Prepared by:

Jane Duller,RSW

ISI Officer

CASE SUMMARY REPORT

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name : Jana
Nickname : Jana
Age : 26
Sex : Female
Civil Status : Single
Birth Ordinal Position : Eldest
Birth Date : March 2, 1995
Birth Place : Ranso, Paquibato District, Davao City
Educational Attainment : Elementary Graduate

Present Address : Brgy. San Pedro , Purok Lapu Lapu ,
Panabo
Ethnicity : Ata-Manobo

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The client was born and raised in Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao together with her mother Jocelyn , 43 years old, step father named Roel , 44 years old and two step sisters (Anessa, 22 years old and Roxanne, 16 years old). Jana finished her elementary years in Katipunan Malatibas Elementary School. After Graduating elementary, the client decided to help her parents earn a living by selling coffee (Painitan) in Panabo City since they were not able to support her studies anymore. While staying on their stall, one woman went to them and ask the client if she wanted to work as a vendor in Nanyo Purok Kalabasa and her salary will be 1,500 per month. The client together with her mother agreed on the offer of the

woman but after 3 months, the client left because she got pregnant and live in with her boyfriend Jomar 24 years old. After six months of giving birth, her partner started to abuse her physically and became addicted on drugs which makes him more irresponsible in providing the need of the family and that was the time that her sister-in-law Rodelyn , 30 years old, invited her to work as a vendor and server of alcoholic drinks in Pantalan but then, when she arrived there, she was forced to entertain their customers so that she can earn more money in exchange of having sex with them. For almost 1 year, she felt threatened and afraid because she thought that her customers will kill her inside the motel so after having sex with them, she will leave immediately.

After staying in “pantalan” (port) her friend Joy recruited her to Mawab and after more than a year, she was recruited again to Panabo but this time, she thought that she will just serve alcoholic drinks in “Binggohan of Maricel as what her friend told her but she have no choice because she needs money for her family so she continued until one day, the daughter of her sister-in-law named Kim recruited her to work as a vendor in Pantukan but when they arrived to the area, she saw bars and have no choice but to work there to earn money. The client stayed there for two years and leave after meeting her partner Randy Eyana, 19 yeears old. Their relationship lasted for four years because her partner abuses her physically and decided togo back in Binggohan and later on transferred to Lapu- Lapu “Maricel Bar” together with her two children.

While staying Lapu- Lapu, she met another guy who was her customer and got pregnant. She had difficulties on her pregnancy since the guy didn’t give support for their daily needs especially for her regular check- ups. April 19, 2021 the client was referred to St. Therese Center together with her 2 children, and later on was transferred to Group Home for girls in Ma-a Davao City while her 2 children were transferred to RSCC last April 27, 2021.

On June 2021 she gave birth to a baby boy, she was given livelihood assistance from DSWD to put up a sari sari store in their province and was reintegrated with her family in Ranso Paquibato District. After a few months the client went back to Lapu- Lapu because her livelihood from DSWD did not sustain their needs especially that her baby got sick and needs nebulizer for his asthma. On October 2021, the client went to Carmen to have her baby’s cough checked and she was then advice to admit her baby but the client insisted because she was afraid that the hospital will charge her child as a Covid patient. The client was also referred to CSWDO for medical assistance and on the other day, the barangay health center worker visited their place and advice to check the baby’s condition but the client did not went to the health center instead, she let her child take medicines that was not prescribed by the doctor and herbal medicines such as lagundi and calamansi juice. November 17, 2021, the client’s baby died due to dehydration and infection. Up until now, their bar owner convince her to go back on her bar so that she can earn money for her family.

Prepared By:

Maria Rosario Almazan, RSW

CASE STUDY

Identifying Information

A. Client

Name: Fanny

Nickname: Fe

Age: 48 years old

Sex: Female

Address: Purok 10 Tibungco, Davao City

Civil Status: Single

Date of Birth: September 19,1973

Place of Birth: Davao City

Educational Attainment: Vocational Course

Religion: Catholic

Background of the Client

Fanny, 45 years of age, experienced sexual harassment by her stepfather when she was on her early age. Fanny came from a poor family, her mother was a prostituted woman who got pregnant by her father who was a costumer. She is the eldest among the five children in the family with different fathers. She didn't even see and know her real father. She experienced maltreatment from her stepfather. When she was 4 years old until she reached 12 years old she experienced being sexually abused and beaten up by her stepfather. According to Fanny that sometimes when they were in a deep sleep, her stepfather took off her undies and

touches some sensitive parts of her body. It happened several times and she told her mother about those incidences but her mother didn't believe in her story. Her stepfather told her mother that **"ayaw ug tuo anang bataa na bakakon kay na"** and because of that there's no one could help her to stop the sexual abuse.

Years past but the abuse continues until she reached 15 years old and she decided to run away from their house because of the fear that the rape will continue. She had a friend who help her to find a place to stay in Malita, Davao Del Sur and she stopped schooling and worked as maid and a vendor for 3 years.

When she was 18 years old she eventually went back to their house **"ning uli japun ko kay murag gimingaw ko sa akong mama, gipatambalan diay ko sa akong mama para makauli ko pero kabalo nako musukol."** She went back to Davao City and her mother said that her stepfather is already a change man. When she came back to their house her step father didn't touch her anymore but he didn't allow her to hangout outside. **"Nisukol naman ko mao tu wala ko ni puyo sa ilaha."** After that she didn't stay in their house and she live with her friends. She went back to school and work in an eatery and give support to her family. An auntie, sister of her stepfather promised to her and her sister that she will provide for their education in exchange of working as domestic helper. But her auntie did not fulfill the promise and only her sister was send to school while Fanny worked as full-time domestic helper. Her auntie sent her sister to school with no allowance and sometimes Fanny steal some food for her sister so she could have something to eat while in school. She sometimes steal some food for her sister so she could have something to eat while attending school. One day they had a fight with her auntie, she got beaten up and told her auntie that **"ana ka pa skwelahon ko nimo gihimo rako ninyong katabang"** and her auntie response that **"ngano pa skwelahon man taka dili man taka pag-umangkon?"**. Fanny escaped from her auntie and instructed her sister to stay on since she does not know where to go and does not want her sister to suffer. She promised her sister to contact her and her mother on her whereabouts.

In 2001, she worked as maid in one household earning 150 per month doing all the work. Because of the meager salary, she escaped from her employer and started to work from one house to another until she met a family of doctors who eventually became her employer and pay her a monthly salary of Php 800. But she resigned from the job because she had a difficulty in taking care of the employer's child who has a special needs. She transferred to another employer and this time she likes her working environment.

Her sister asked her to go home so she could attend her graduation and went home to Davao. It was then that she learned to drink and smoke when her sister teach her to do it. While in Davao , she worked as salesgirl and met her first boyfriend.

At the age of 20 years old, Fanny had her first sexual intercourse with her boyfriend and he gave her parents 500 pesos so she could bring to a lodging inn. Her parents consented and push her to go with her boyfriend. She got pregnant with her first child and her boyfriend wanted to abort the baby and in fact, gave her some medicine to induce abortion. Her

boyfriend stated that he was not ready with the responsibility because he is still a student. She did not want to abort to child so she continues with the pregnancy and gave birth and leave the baby to her mother while she continues to work.

A friend offered her to worked on club because her income is not enough to support her child and her family. She ended as guest relations officer (GRO) a euphemism for entertainer. Her younger sister also ended up as entertainer like her because of their economic difficulty. She lived with her childhood friend when her stepfather told her to get out from the house and they had two children. Her partner look after their children while she is working in the club. Her partner who has no job was the one who introduced Fanny to use prohibited drugs and the man uses her earnings to buy drugs that they used. In order to sustain their vices and there were times that that they cannot buy drugs, she resorted to selling drugs. She decided to separate with the man because of his drug addiction, jobless and affairs with several women.

She was recruited by her sister who is working in a casa in Cebu and she ended in the same sex den where she is earning from dancing and going out with some Japanese men to support her children and her family. Her partner followed her in Cebu to get back together. While in Cebu, she used drugs given to her by customers. She also contracted sexually transmitted infections from having unprotected sex with a customer.

Fanny was already pregnant by the Japanese customer before she reconciled with her partner. They went back to Davao City on the 7th month of her pregnancy and gave birth and in became pregnant again in 2002. They separated after giving birth and she was looking for some income to feed her children and she became Akyat Barko in Panabo City. It was there that she had foreign men mostly working in the ship as her customers. She got pregnant by Russian customers /boyfriends but only one was born because these men do not want any responsibility.

All her children were living with her mother and they were not spared from abuse done by her stepfather. She told her children that if they cannot take the abuse anymore they are free to leave their grandparents' house. Her daughters confided to her before that their grandfather asked for some massage and after her daughters did the massage, their grandfather kissed them on their faces. Because of it, Fanny took her daughters away from her parents' house and they live with her. She was scared of the thought that her daughter might suffer the same fate as hers.

In 2019, a recruiter convinced Fanny to go to Surigao and she ended as entertainer there after she gave birth to her 10th child. Despite the fact that her current partner is earning, she still is in prostitution to support her other children who is still studying. Her partner is against her decision to go to other places and Talikala has been doing the counseling and therapeutic sessions.

Talikala refers her case to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for livelihood and possible employment and one of her children is under the program of Talikala who send the child to school.

Prepared by:

Jane C. Duller, RSW

Case Study

I. Identifying information

A. Client

Name:	Ara	Alyas: Say-say
Age:	23 years old	
Date of birth:	July 6, 1998	
Religion	Roman Catholic	
Educational Attainment:	High School graduate	
Civil Status:	Single	
Address:	Relocation Panacan, Purok 3 Davao City	

II. Background of the Client

Ara is a twenty-three year old and currently resides in Relocation Panacan with her two children and live-in partner.

On 2012, when she was 14 years old she became a victim of child trafficking. The recruitment happened in Sasa 12 and Ara together with her friend "kimsay a 13 year-old girl were being recruited by "Nice" who was also a resident of Sasa 12. Accordingly, the recruiter said that they will only serve drinks in a Bar in Sto. Tomas Tibal-og and the children were convinced to work there because they want to earn money to survive and also to support their family basic necessities.

When they arrived in a bar (Sniper Bar) in Tibal-og, they didn't work only as waitresses but they became prostituted girls. They described the set up as the establishment is a Videoke

Bar with a lodging house of four rooms which is located beside their quarter. The owner or the manager will talk to the male customers regarding payment and these girls will go directly to the room and wait for the customer if the negotiation is successful. These girls gave sexual services even during day time and they are not allowed to go outside without the recruiter accompanying them who happen to work also in the same bar. The client had experienced being paid with a prohibited drugs in exchange of sexual services and this was allowed by the management of the bar. She also observed that even the manager and some of the girls are using drugs which are given by customers who are identified as drug dealers.

The child also experienced having sex with customer while one of the workers in the bar took video record behind closed doors. According to Ara, she stayed there for more than a year and endured the exploitation because she need to help her family. She was able to go back to Davao City because the owner and the manager heard the news that there will be raid to be conducted in the area because the local government had learned that there are minors working in the bars. The owner immediately instructed all the minors to go back to their homes or to the place where they came from.

Ara went back in Tibal-og last April 2015 to get her blue card (records of her pap-smear checkup) and according to Ara the owner asked her to work again. She refused the offer because she is scared of thinking that the same exploitation will happen to her. On June 6, 2015 another incident of trafficking happened to Ara. She wished to continue with her studies as a college student but since her family is not capable to support her nor her relatives, she decided to go back to Tibal-og when a recruiter enticed her to work again in a bar. For the second time Ara found herself in the same bar and with same owner. She said that the owner treated her well at first and eventually, the same exploitation happened to her. The owner constantly sold her to male customers for her service without any let-up. She was sold at P300 for three hours and the same amount for an extension. The owner also instructed the girls that they are not allowed to use other lodging inn except the one owned by the bar owner and they need to convince their customers to follow it. The girls should do do it twice a week so they will be allowed to go out with customers. Even if Ara wanted to escape from the bar, they are being monitored by the owner. Every *outing* (external transaction) requested by customers were being monitored by the management and considerable amount ranging 200-500 pesos should be paid to the management in every transaction. There were times that "Nice" (pimp) convinced and forced Ara to have sex in exchange of drugs with the customer for she in return would also benefit from the drugs, a separate pay for the pimps.

There were other minors in the bar named a "Carla" and "May-may" both 16 years old. Sometimes, especially weekends, the daughters of the owner who were also minors (grade 7 and grade 4) were assigned to be the cashier of the said bar and were also exposed with that type of setting. Ara was in that predicament and endured the situation for almost 5 months and on October 2015 she decided to go home since she was being maltreated verbally and economically by the owner and their former recruiter "Nice". When she arrived in Davao City

on October 10, 2015, "Carla" allegedly sent a message asking for her exact address and sent death threats. The client immediately changed her cellphone number since she was scared of their threats.

Ara did not report the case for fear of her life but she was able to attend some of Talikala's activities which help her address her feelings. She also was put in the case management of Talikala and was able to access educational assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and took up Bachelor of Secondary Education. She was not able to finish her course because she got pregnant and decided to focus on her new family.

Prepared by:

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Psycho-social Staff

**Echoing voices of trafficked survivors:
A Visayas situationer on child trafficking**

Children's Legal Bureau

I. Background of the organization

Formed on May 28, 1997, the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) is a non-government organization incorporated and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Envisioning a just world for children, CLB has been implementing different projects and programs in Cebu and now in Negros Oriental and Iloilo provinces on child protection and rights advocacy for over twenty-four years of its existence.

The organization is also committed to empowering children and communities while engaging with law enforcement, prosecution, rehabilitation, courts, local government units, and the private sector for the protection of rights and promotion of justice for children in the Visayas region.⁸

Since its inception, CLB has been at the forefront of the fight against child trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation of children in the region through its advocacy and training work, capacity building and network building efforts, and litigation services.

In the past, CLB has implemented different child welfare and protection projects such as but not limited to the following: Rescue and Litigation Component as part of the Consortium Stop Abuse of Minors Association (SAMA) in partnership with Terre des Hommes (TDH) Netherlands (July 1997-July 2000); Empowering Communities in promoting justice for children through Development Legal Aid in partnership with TDH Netherlands (April 2002-March 2006); Child's Rights Protection Unit (CRPU) Cebu Project in partnership with Consuelo Foundation (October 2002-December 2013); Anti-Children and Women Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation as part of the Consortium Against Trafficking of Children and Women in Sexual Exploitation (CATCHWISE) in partnership with Karl Kubel Stiftung (KKS) and European Union (EU) (May 2003-April 2006); Organizing the Five Pillars of Justice for the Promotion of Children's Rights with TDH Netherlands (July 2006-August 2011); Improvement of Prosecution of Child Sex Tourism Cases in Cebu in partnership with TDH (September 2007-August 2011); and Joint Project of Organizing the Five Pillars and Child Sex Tourism in partnership with TDH (October 2011-September 2014).

CLB has been active in providing interventions against trafficking in persons (TIP) throughout the years. Among the direct services provided by the organization are: 1) legal services, which include legal advice, investigation and validation of suspected incidents of trafficking, rescue of trafficking survivors in coordination with law enforcement, agencies preparation of legal documents, and the eventual handling and prosecution of trafficking cases with the

⁸ VMG, Values, and Target Beneficiaries. *Children's Legal Bureau*. Available at: <http://clb.org.ph/target-groups-and-beneficiaries/>

supervision of the public prosecutor; and 2) support services and referrals, which consist of home visits, client monitoring, group therapy sessions, provision of support during court hearings, support to families of survivors, facilitation of referrals to other service providers.

In terms of policy advocacy and networking concerning anti-TIP efforts, CLB is a member of various government-mandated councils, including the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) Central Visayas, Regional Council for the Welfare of Children, and Regional Council Against Child Labor (RCACL). The organization has also been chosen to form part of the Technical Working Group (TWG) in the Senate on the amendment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Law. CLB has long advocated for the passage of ATIP ordinances and helped form or organize provincial networks and local councils, including the strengthening of Local Councils Against Trafficking (LCATs) through capacity-building activities and the formation of its barangay counterparts or the Barangay Council Against Trafficking (BCATs). CLB has also collaborated with other non-government organizations in ending trafficking, part of which is its membership in the APPROACH Consortium.

II. Research objectives

Through this research output, CLB seeks to meet and be guided with the following objectives in mind:

1. To expand women and girl trafficking prevention campaign through a localized situationer as part of the research output;
2. To present actual case studies on trafficking of women/girls based on handled criminal cases by the organization;
3. To determine existing gaps and limitations in addressing trafficking of women and girls; and
4. To provide recommendations in addressing trafficking of women and girls

III. Research methodology

Gathering of Secondary Data. Contained in this local situationer are statistical data from various government agencies and offices, reports from credible news outlets, academic and research works, and other reliable information sources to provide context on the extent of trafficking in the Philippines and locally in the Visayas areas as well as the identified ways and means to address the grave concern.

Focus Group Discussions. At least three (3) focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in the course of the research.

Eight (8) child respondents joined the focus group discussions conducted by CLB sometime in July 2021. The respondents are all clients of the organization in Cebu. These clients are either complainants or witnesses to actual trafficking cases filed where CLB stands as a private prosecutor. During the first FGD, at least three (3) respondents attended the discussion in Cebu City. The last five (5) respondents were interviewed in Cordova town, Cebu. Only two (2) of the respondents were biologically male while the rest of the respondents are females.

As part of the child-sensitive effort in handling the FGD, an orientation was made before the discussions. The respondents voluntarily signed consent forms on their participation in the FGD. To avoid respondents from revisiting their experience before their rescue, their case profiles were made by summarizing pieces of information found on their respective case files.

On the other hand, two (2) female respondents are trafficking survivors and clients of ATIKHA and Bidlisiw Foundation, both of which are non-government organizations based in Iloilo. An orientation similar to the Cebu group was also conducted.

Lastly, the third FGD was conducted to elicit responses and insights from frontline staff members of the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB) who have worked with trafficking cases for a significant number of years.

IV. Limitations of the Research:

Data gathered from the agencies on some indicators related to trafficking in persons is limited due to strict protocols in asking for data, time and movement concerns. Most of the data from online sources are at national level not segregated by region. Also, based on online articles, some data available in one region may not be available in another region and some data are available in one year but not the other years.

The trafficking survivors respondents were limited to Cebu and Iloilo, most were clients of CLB and minors when they were rescued. CLB was not able to interview survivors from other parts of the Visayas due to limited resources.

The focused group discussion (FGD) on the concerns related to trafficking cases was limited to CLB staff. Thus, being a legal advocacy NGO, the focus is mostly on the legal aspect such as rescue and prosecution.

V. Literature Review

The Philippines continues to retain its Tier 1 status based on the 2021 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report by the United States Department of State,⁹ which means that the Philippine government fully meets the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking through the sustained efforts in prosecuting more traffickers; charging of defendants who have used child soldiers; sentencing of the majority of convicted trafficker; adding more prosecutors and staff to anti-trafficking task forces and coordination bodies; the opening of a specialized shelter and one-stop service center; and assisting more than 1,000 victims.

⁹ Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

Despite this achievement, the same Report identified several issues to which the Philippine government could improve including the failure to convict officials who were allegedly complicit in trafficking crimes, lack of vigorous investigation of labor trafficking crimes, lack of training to labor inspectors on trafficking indicators; and the reduction of identified victims of trafficking.

In support of the US State Department TIP Report's finding on government officials who may be complicit in these crimes, reports have surfaced over certain government officials who have been bribed and have colluded with trafficking syndicates. A National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM)-led research¹⁰ succinctly describes the problem in this wise:

“xxx According to government experts, there are reports that smuggling and trafficking syndicates pay off vulnerable consular officers of the different embassies for the issuance of genuine entry visas. Syndicates also pay off vulnerable immigration, customs and police officers to facilitate victims' departure from their country of origin and entry into the country of destination. Other officers who might be susceptible to such corruption are airport personnel, airline personnel, coast guards, officers of the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and police and immigration officers assigned at the ports of exits/entry. xxx”

Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has also raised concerns over the vulnerability of children from abuse and exploitation. During the height of strict lockdowns last year, the Office of Cybercrime of the Department of Justice reported a 260 percent increase in cyber-tips related to online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC).¹¹ An investigative report also cited that more than 1.29 million images and videos of child abuse materials came from the Philippines in 2020, attributing the data to the rise in unemployment among Filipinos during the pandemic.¹²

Several forms of trafficking have emerged throughout the decades such as labor trafficking, sex trafficking, child trafficking, cyber trafficking, among others. While OSEAC may be categorized differently, such heinous act may be prosecuted under present trafficking, anti-child pornography, and child abuse laws.

Before the global pandemic, the Philippines has been tagged as the global epicenter of live-stream sexual abuse; the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) in

¹⁰ Leones, Celia and Caparas, Donna, *Trafficking in Human Beings from the Philippines: A Survey of Government Experts and Law Enforcement Case Files* (United Nations Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2003)

¹¹ Manila Bulletin. (2021). *Save our children (Editorial)*. Available at: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/06/04/save-our-children/>

¹² Servallos, Neil Jayson (2021). The Filipino mothers selling their children for online sexual abuse. *Rappler*. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/filipino-mothers-selling-their-children-online-sexual-abuse>

2016 found that 8 out of 10 children are vulnerable to being victims of online sexual abuse or bullying.¹³

Poverty, natural disasters, and insurgencies in many rural areas are considered push factors that make children and women vulnerable to be subjected to human trafficking.¹⁴

Based on the latest data, poverty incidence in the Visayas is pegged at 15.2% among families and 20.2% among the population.¹⁵ Eastern Samar has the highest poverty incidence (40.9) among the provinces in the Visayas, followed by Northern Samar (27.6) and Samar (Western Samar) provinces (22.2).

Compared to its preceding year, unemployment and underemployment rates significantly increased in the three regions located in the Visayas in the year 2020. Central Visayas has the highest unemployment rate at 16.7% while Eastern Visayas has a greater underemployment rate, pegged at 21.8%.¹⁶

In the case of Cebu City, Cecilia Flores-Obenda writes that the city has become a convenient jump-off point to and from Luzon, Mindanao, the rest of the country, and the different parts of the world, making such easy connectivity as very conducive as the point of entry and exit for human illegal transshipment. As a regional hub with an international airport and numerous seaports, Cebu province has been capitalized as the transit point by human traffickers to transport their victims to offshore destinations.¹⁷

Cebu welcomed a recorded number of 1,414,048 tourists in 2020, mostly domestic tourists (906,955), followed by non-Philippine residents (504,439) and more than 2,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).¹⁸

Cebu is no stranger to cases of trafficking. In March 2021, at least four women pleaded guilty to online sexual exploitation of children in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu.¹⁹ Recently, a foreigner arrested in Compostela town, Cebu was arrested for seven counts of child prostitution and eight counts of violation of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act last May 2021.²⁰

¹³ OSEC: A Modern Face of Human Trafficking. *World Hope International*. Available at: <https://www.worldhope.org/osec-a-modern-face-of-human-trafficking/>

¹⁴ International Justice Mission. (2010). *Demonstrating the effectiveness of enforcing anti-trafficking law: Results and evaluation*. Project Terminal Report of 2010

¹⁵ 2018 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES)

¹⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority, Annual Labor and Employment Estimates 2016, 2017 and 2018, and 2019 and 2020

¹⁷ Flores-Oebanda, C. (2011). A staunch advocate against human trafficking. *Asian Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.asianjournal.com>

¹⁸ 2020 Central Visayas January-December Regional Distribution of Travelers (Final Report)

¹⁹ Moaje, Marita. (2021). 4 convicted for online sexual exploitation of 11 kids in Cebu. *Philippine News Agency*. Available at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1132331>

²⁰ Mascardo, Iris Hazel. (2021). Foreigner held for child prostitution, human trafficking. *The Philippine Star*. Available at: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2021/05/20/2099470/foreigner-held-child-prostitution-human-trafficking>

On a regional scale, records of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Central Visayas (DSWD-7) that the number of Violence against Women (VAW) cases, including human trafficking cases, dropped by 42 percent in 2020. Recording only 124 cases in the same year, the regional office attribute the decrease to the difficulty in facilitating referrals and reaching out to victims due to localized lockdowns as part of the community quarantine amid the Covid-19 pandemic.²¹

Another indication of the identified concern of underreporting of trafficking incidents is the reports received by the law enforcement agencies. In an official report by the Philippine National Police Central Visayas (PRO 7), there are only nine cases of recorded cases of violations of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in 2020. Cebu and Lapu-Lapu city police offices had recorded the most number of cases, with three reported cases in each city police office within the same period.²²

In a 2013 localized research²³ focused on Cebu City's anti-trafficking efforts, it found that efforts for combating human trafficking in Cebu City remain inadequate and lacked have full coordination among different stakeholders. It is however noteworthy that at the time of the research, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) is in its formative stage.

In the same research, the researchers further recommended strong coordination between government agency implementers and stakeholders. Additional recommendations in the anti-trafficking efforts in Cebu City include the following: conduct of seminars on human trafficking; close coordination with different civic society groups; strict monitoring and surveillance of activities within beer houses and various establishments; prosecution and dismissal of military and government personnel who may be proven to be involved as "facilitators" of human trafficking activities; conduct of rescue operations; inclusion of psychological services, skills training, medical assistance, and possible employment or livelihood assistance in programs for the rehabilitation of victims.

In Eastern Visayas, DSWD Regional Director Restituto Macuto has earlier expressed alarm over human trafficking cases in their region. Their office recorded 131 human trafficking cases from the year 2015 to the third week of July 2018.²⁴

Recent statistical data also portrays the state of child labor in Central Visayas. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Region VII has profiled 12,275 child laborers as of

21 Aguilar, Jyle Rachele. (2021). Covid-19 affects government response to VAW cases. *SunStar*. Available at: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1888209/Cebu/Local-News/Covid-19-affects-government-response-to-violence-against-women-cases>

22 Reported trafficking cases in 2020 were presented during the Central Visayas Regional Council for the Welfare of Children (RCWC) meeting last June 2021

23 Ferdinand T. Abocejo and Fernando K. Gubalane. Implementation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law in Cebu City, Philippines. *International Forum Vol. 16, No. 1 April 2013 pp. 36-48*

24 Meniano, Sarwell (2018). Eastern Visayas human trafficking cases alarm DSWD. Philippine News Agency. Available at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1042623>

September 2021. Negros Oriental topped among the provinces in the region, with 4,266 child laborers.²⁵

Present Philippine laws offer legal guarantees and protections to trafficking victims, as well as the prosecution of offenders. These provisions include the right of survivors to protection and support; entitlement to the Witness Protection Program; right to confidentiality; right to free legal assistance; and immunity from suit of law enforcement officers, social workers, or persons acting in compliance with a lawful order.²⁶

In the Visayas region, a total of twelve (12) shelters for abused and exploited women and children are under the supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).²⁷

In Western Visayas, survivors can be placed in any of the following shelters: Home for Girls; Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth (RRCY); and Haven for Women. Central Visayas has the most number of shelters, which include the Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Children (RRCC), Home for Girls, Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth (RRCY), Haven for Women, and the Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (AVRC II). For Eastern Visayas, it has four (4) established centers: the Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Children (RRCC), Home for Girls, Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth (RRCY), and Haven for Women.²⁸

Among the services provided in these shelters are the following: psychological services, protective custody, casework/group work services, psychological and psychiatric interventions, aftercare, comprehensive intervention against gender-based violence (to reduce vulnerabilities on GBV), individual and community services, and recovery and reintegration program for trafficked persons. In addition, other interventions for victim-survivors of trafficking may be provided logistical support during post-rescue operation of victims, referral for temporary shelter and protective custody, case management, support services for victim-survivors, medical assistance, educational assistance, and economic reintegration services.²⁹

VI. Women and girl child trafficking situationer in Visayas

A. Background of Respondents

1. Cebu respondents

²⁵ Updates on the CL Profiling, DOLE Central Visayas, presented during the Regional Council Against Child Labor 3rd Quarter Meeting on October 26, 2021

²⁶ Training in the Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking-in-Persons Cases, presented by Fiscal Maria Theresa Casino during the World Day Against Trafficking (WDAT) last July 30, 2021

²⁷ Number of Shelters in Regions VI, VII and VIII for Abused and Exploited Women and Children, Program Management Bureau- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ List of Services offered by DSWD for Abused and Exploited Women and Children For Children in Need of Special Protection cases (by virtue of RA 7160 or the Devolution Law) in coordination LSWDOs, Program Management Bureau- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

At least eight (8) respondents joined the focus group discussions (FGDs) in Cebu. These respondents are trafficked survivors who are either complainants or witnesses to five (5) actual trafficking cases filed before the Prosecutor's Office or courts and represented by the Children's Legal Bureau. The majority of the perpetrators in these cases are foreigners, with some perpetrators who are still detained in the course of the pendency of their cases. All of these cases are pending before Regional Trial Courts (RTCs). They are either private complainants or witnesses in criminal cases, particularly violations of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, as amended, Anti-Child Pornography Law, and Child Abuse Law.

The respondents are residents of Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue cities and Cordova town, Cebu. They were all minors when they were trafficked. At the time of the trafficking incidents, most respondents came from low-income families.

Some respondents were abused or exploited online such as the showing of private parts of the survivors while other respondents were personally abused by the perpetrators. However, the trafficking crimes committed against the survivors were prosecuted under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, as amended, whether they are committed online or offline.

All respondents from Cebu have already reintegrated into their respective communities, with some respondents joining the workforce while others have continued their academic pursuits.

2. Iloilo respondents

As for the Iloilo respondents, there were two (2) respondents, all females. They are clients of ATIKHA and Bidlisiw Foundation, respectively. They also both came from low-income families.

While both females were subjected to human trafficking, they differ in their experiences. One respondent is a survivor of labor trafficking abroad and was subsequently rescued, while the other respondent stayed in a shelter after she was trafficked. The ATIKHA client is already of age, while the Bidlisiw client is a minor. The former's case has been closed after reaching an out-of-court settlement, while the latter has yet to file a complaint.

The adult respondent, who was trafficked abroad, was subjected to physical abuse. Her employer prohibited her from going back to the Philippines.

In the case of the minor female respondent, she disclosed that she was exploited by one of her friends without her knowing about it. She was then rescued during the conduct of curfew monitoring and later placed in the Crisis Intervention Unit in Iloilo City.

Both respondents have already reintegrated to their communities.

3. Children's Legal Bureau

There were two (2) respondents for the organization who have shared their experiences in handling trafficking cases. They are Earl Anthony Tapayan, a paralegal staff; and Christine Quinamaque, a social worker.

Tapayan, who has worked with CLB for over eleven (11) years, was involved in fourteen (14) rescue operations. Quinamaque, who has assisted child survivors during rescue and post-rescue activities for eight years now, has handled at least thirty-three (33) girls and ten (10) boys during the course of her work with CLB.

B. Situation Based on the Results of the FGD with Respondents

1. Root causes of trafficking

Poverty, search for better opportunities, lack of parental attention, peer influence, ignorance over the crime of trafficking, and the vulnerability of survivors, especially minors on the account of their age, were the primary reasons they saw that caused them to become survivors of trafficking.

“Tungod sa pagka inosente, walay kaalam kung naabuso ba. Kulang sa ka-alam, tungod kay pobre (Because of my innocence, I did not know I was abused. I also lacked knowledge because I am poor),” one of the Cebu respondents expressed.

“Children are involved in trafficking cases because they need money for food. Their parents are also irresponsible. Some children become involved in trafficking because of peer pressure-to be able to buy expensive things,” Tapayan adds.

A male respondent in Cebu, however, believes that any person can be a victim of trafficking regardless of personal status, particularly sex. For one, two of the respondents in Cebu are biologically male.

“Wala koy mahuna-hunaan nga rason. Para nako bisag unsa imong sitwasyon ug status, dato o pobre, babay, laki o bayot, bata o tiguwang, pwede gihapon ka mahimong biktima, (I cannot think of any reason. For me, regardless of your situation and status, rich or poor, male, female, or gay, child or adult, you may become a victim,” the male respondent explained.

Quinamaque also observed that cases of male victims have increased and hinted at the underreporting of their cases. “Culture is also a factor because males are least likely to share their dilemma and they feel that reporting the incident will make them look weak,” she explains.

CLB staffers also share the observation that Cebu stays as a transit point in trafficking people due to the existence of numerous ports and the fact that tourism is one of the main industries of the island. According to Tapayan, the islands of Bantayan and Camotes, as well as the Municipality of Oslob, among other local government units that relies heavily on tourism, may be considered as trafficking hotspots. Their distance from the island’s capital, Cebu City, makes it difficult to continuously monitor the said areas.

Although no reports have surfaced on suspected trafficking cases in ports in Visayas, there are recorded incidents in other parts of the country including the interception by the Bureau

of Immigration (BI) of three women suspected to victims of human trafficking bound for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the Clark International Airport in Pampanga.³⁰

Tapayan added he had learned reports of suspected trafficking incidents in the provinces of Bohol and Leyte and Dumaguete City in the recent years. Such claim is corroborated by the fact that Bohol and Leyte are identified as hotspots for online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) by the International Justice Mission (IJM).³¹ A 2020 report show that operatives arrested a foreign national and his live-in partner for trafficking and rescued four women in Dumaguete City.³²

2. Assistance and protection for trafficked survivors

Most of the respondent survivors were able to avail of government assistance and services with the facilitation of the NGOs.

CLB, for its part, would report suspected cases to their partners in the community concerned before making an investigation plan. One of the current efforts of CLB to obtain reports of suspected cases is the Children's Legal Assistance Form made available to the public through Google Forms.³³ Coordination efforts with the police would usually follow, including the possibility of rescuing trafficked survivors. CLB also follow the protocols for case management of child victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation issued by the Department of Justice Committee for the Special Protection of Children.

“During the rescue, firearms (of policemen) are not allowed. The safety of the children is the priority. No media is allowed to protect the privacy of children and to gather evidence properly. Media is allowed only after rescue. Hard drives are then taken into custody for forensic examination,” Tapayan says.

Quinamaque explains her role during the rescue as a social worker: “During the rescue, the social worker should be present to secure the children. The children should also be transported in a separate car. Children are then sent to DSWD to assess which shelters are appropriate for them. It is also explained to them why they were rescued.”

Among the identified government offices and programs which have helped trafficked survivors after being rescued and during the pendency of their cases in court or the prosecutorial service are the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), particularly through its Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP) and Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU), the Witness Protection Program of the Department of

³⁰ Sarao, Zacarian (2021). BI intercepts suspected human trafficking victims in Clark, Pampanga. Inquirer.Net. Accessible at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1487889/bi-intercepts-suspected-human-trafficking-victims-in-clark-pampanga#ixzz7Bo1q67Wq>

³¹ Barcelon, Paolo (2021). Reports on alleged online sexual exploitation of children up three-fold in 2020 – anti-trafficking council. CNN Philippines. Accessible at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/1/20/children-online-sexual-exploitation-2020.html>

³² Gallarde, Juancho (2020). Foreigner nabbed, human trafficking 'victims' rescued in NegOr. Philippine News Agency. Accessible at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101421>

³³ To access, click the link: tinyurl.com/clbcrimeform

Justice (DOJ), the Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC), local social welfare and development offices in their respective municipalities and cities, and shelters like the Home For Girls in Cebu City.

The witness protection program of DOJ has recently allowed provisions for witnesses with active trafficking cases in the amount of five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) every month.

For non-government organizations (NGOs), the following organizations were mentioned by the respondents: the Children's Legal Bureau (CLB), Bidlisiw Foundation, World Hope Foundation, Paglaum Training International (PTI), ATIKHA, and My Refuge House (MRH).

CLB also recognizes the efforts of the member organizations of the IACAT and the Regional Council against Child Labor (RCACL).

As for the specific government assistance they have received, the majority of the respondents provided various answers while three Cebu respondents did not confirm in receiving assistance.

One Cebu respondent received livelihood assistance worth ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00).

"Nakatabang siya sa among panginahanglan pero kadyot ra kay nahurot ra pod dayon tungod sa inadlaw nga panginahanglanon sa panimalay sama sa pagkaon (It was able to help meeting our needs but it did not last long because of our daily needs at home such as food)," the respondent added.

"NGOs have limited funds. They are all dependent on the availability of project funding. Hence, NGOs continue to coordinate with local government units to continue the financial assistance of victims," Quinamaque said.

Another Cebu respondent was able to receive funds to allow his father to start his pedicab business through the DSWD-RRPTP program. Other respondents expressed gratitude over the forms of assistance provided by DSWD such as referrals to private organizations, including the provision of legal services, educational aid, and facilitation of recreational or sports activities. Based on the FGDs, it appears that all assistance and opportunities that reached the respondents were properly utilized or availed of by the respondents.

"Yes, there was financial assistance that was given to me. I was able to buy seedlings of corn and produce abundant products until now," one of the Iloilo respondents expressed.

The respondents have also recognized help from NGOs. For the Cebu child respondents, they cite CLB for being instrumental in providing legal, advocacy, training, and financial assistance, as well as continuously monitoring them. They also attribute to other NGOs as to psychological and educational assistance.

3. Post-rescue interventions and experiences

Except for the ATIKHA respondent, the respondents agree that the rescue operation helped end their suffering and attain justice. However, most respondents share similar sentiments on the lack of proper notice to their parents about being placed at the center.

As a contextual background, CLB has catered to children whose parents may have been suspected in committing acts of trafficking, child pornography and other similar crimes. Due to this reason, the suspected parents are not immediately informed of the whereabouts of the children. On the other hand, the belated communication to parents do not apply if the parents are not suspected to commit such crimes.

“Parents are usually informed late by the local social worker who should be the one to assess whether informing the parents is necessary especially in terms of their willingness to cooperate in filing cases. There are even instances when parents should not be informed because they are also being investigated, Quinamaque explains.

Although two Cebu respondents admitted to having experienced sadness after being away from the family, the respondents agree that their experience at the shelters helped them recover. It has nurtured and protected them by giving them an avenue for values formation.

They generally felt safe and experienced fun inside the shelter where they formed new friendships and participated in different activities such as skills training and educational events. One Cebu respondent also recounted having to learn that she was a trafficked survivor at the shelter.

“Adunay mga disiplina sa shelter ug structured ang mga buluhaton sulod sa center. Nakahimamat sab ko og uban pang mga bata nga gipangluwas sa pagpangabuso (People are disciplined at the shelter and the tasks are also structured in the center. I was able to encounter other children who were rescued from abuse),” another Cebu respondent shared.

Most respondents felt happy upon their return to their families as part of the reintegration process. Some respondents, however, expressed apprehensions and doubts about reintegrating with the community because of the shame they have felt after they were subjected to trafficking.

Despite the advantages of being at the shelters, some respondents shared their bad experiences inside. One respondent remembered being locked inside one room with the other girls. They were allowed to only go out to take their meals. A great number of respondents experienced loneliness especially in times when their family members had failed to visit them.

Before the eventual reintegration of trafficking survivors, CLB would request for a case conference with the local social welfare and development office (LSWDO) to discuss essential matters, including the conduct of monitoring of survivors after their release from the shelters, and referrals to the government or non-government organizations for further assistance such as education.

Generally, the respondents expressed that their respective lives improved in the course of pursuing the cases against their perpetrators. Several opportunities also came in their lives to feel empowered such as livelihood and education. They have manifested a more positive outlook in their lives.

Avoiding to trust people easily especially those persons who may have attempted to or have lured vulnerable persons with material gifts, becoming more open to their families, listening to their parent's advice, and staying strong and speaking out about their experience among the learnings of the respondents when they were asked about the lessons they have learned from the trafficking incidents.

"Nausab akong kinaiya ug natarong ko. Dili nako magchat og mga dili kaila. Maminaw ug magpahibalo sa mama kon asa ko mulakaw (I was able to change my attitude and I corrected my ways. I do not chat people I do not personally know now. I have learned to listen to my mother and inform her of my whereabouts)," a female respondent in Cebu shared her realization.

One of the respondents in Iloilo laments: "I learned that I should obey and respect my parents. Now, I am helping my family in taking good care of my siblings by teaching them in their school modules. I also help in doing the chores now."

4. Challenges in Assisting Survivors of Human Trafficking:

Based on the experience of CLB, there are several challenges in assisting and protecting survivors of human trafficking, among them are:

- a. **Lack of willingness of some victims to cooperate** in filing or prosecuting trafficking cases (esp. parent perpetrators), some are threatened, some are bribed, even lawyers (of the respondents) meet with parents of victims to convince them to withdraw the case.

Quinamaque and Tapayan of CLB share the observation that some victims hesitate to pursue cases against parent-perpetrators, which results in either failing to prosecute or entering into a plea bargaining deal.

"It helps if the victims are inside the shelter because they would later become educated about what exactly happened to them. But still, it remains a challenge because most children don't want their parents to go to prison," Quinamaque said.

There also persists the issue of perpetrators, mostly foreign nationals, who attempt to bribe parents and victims in exchange for desisting from filing charges against them. For one, CLB is actively handling a case against a foreign national who attempted to pay the mother of the trafficking survivor sums of money after filing trafficking charges against him, an act that is considered to promote trafficking and prohibited by law.

"Some opposing lawyers meet victims or convince parents. Such acts affect the decision of the child," Quinamaque revealed.

- b. **Limitations of law enforcement agencies.** This include lack of resources which is frequently the reason for their belated responses to reports and referred cases. Another problem is their lack of skills in drafting affidavits which could sometimes cause dismissal of cases before the prosecutor's office.

- c. Frequent change of supervising lawyers. CLB usually acts as private prosecutor representing the victim in these cases. However, because of CLB's nature as an NGO, lawyers are usually project staff and thus when projects are terminated, the lawyer is also terminated and thus not able to continue representing the victim. The lawyer who takes over with a new project will have to again establish rapport with the client.
- d. There is also a challenge related to courts and judges. First, the demand to recount the factual antecedents concerning the allegations against traffickers during court hearings, which could possibly re-traumatize the victim. Another challenge relates to foreign perpetrators usually being allowed to post bail. After posting bail, they could easily go out of the country and end up jumping bail with their lawyers alleging that they cannot anymore be contacted. Thus, their cases are archived.
- e. **Slow prosecution and administration of justice.** Prosecution of cases could take more than five years. The court's dockets are full and several hearings are scheduled in one day, thus, hearings are at times reset specially if the case is scheduled near the last hours.
- f. **Inoperative mandated councils** like the Local Council Against Trafficking (LCAT) in some jurisdictions. Not all the municipalities and cities have established LCATs. Some have been created through Executive Orders in compliance with the law but are inactive.
- g. **Inadequate Services.** Although government agencies such as DSWD have existing services for survivors, these are inadequate. There is a lack of shelter for boys and limited financial support by social welfare offices to survivors in the course of prosecuting trafficking cases. Added to that are difficulties in accessing support services in the government and at times, the lack of capacity of some survivors to properly utilize the financial assistance provided to them due to lack of entrepreneurial and marketing skills.
- h. **Inadequacy of the law for online sexual abuse and exploitation.** Most of the time, cases of OSAEC are prosecuted under Anti Trafficking in Persons (RA 9208), 7610 or 9775 in relation with 10175. These laws do not cover all the acts involved in the process of OSAEC. For instance, RA 9208 would require certain acts of trafficking such as transportation and others which may not be present in an OSAEC case as "transportation" is virtual. RA 7610 is not specific about online child sexual abuse as it only covers actual touching and the acts defined under RA 9775 does not cover some acts that can be considered as OSAEC. Furthermore the laws do not address the money transfer agencies which is usually where the money profited from OSAEC are channeled.

VII. Conclusion

Trafficking in Persons still persist in the Visayas and in the Philippines even with traffickers being prosecuted and victims given assistance. Although the Philippines has been given a Tier 1 classification which means that trafficking in persons is being addressed, this research shows that the problem of trafficking in persons is very much present and there are many challenges that has to be overcome, one of which is addressing the root causes of the problem.

The disclosures made by the respondents support the observations stated in the General Recommendation 38, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that socio-economic injustice, demand that fosters exploitation and leads to trafficking, and the use of digital technology are among the roots of trafficking of women and girls. Respondents have disclosed that they come from low-income families. Some respondents were victimized through online means brought by the demands of foreigners outside the jurisdiction of the Philippines.

Although some key offices in combatting trafficking were identified to have helped the survivors, not all respondents have received government assistance after the trafficking incidents were exposed, as evidenced by the varied responses of the respondents on the aid and assistance they have received from the government offices.

The assistance from non-government organizations was recognized by the respondents in providing them different services such as legal representation, referrals, shelter, livelihood, education, among others.

While all respondents agree that being rescued has helped them heal from their disturbing experiences, the majority of them lamented several issues in handling their situation after the rescue including the lack of proper notice after being compulsorily placed at centers, concerns over their mental and emotional health, the lack of opportunities to meet their families while inside the shelters, and the apprehensions of respondents in reintegrating to their communities after their life at the shelters.

With some respondents subjected to sexual exploitation online, their trafficking cases represented by CLB were not prosecuted based on a specific law concerning OSEC. Instead, these cases are prosecuted in several available laws such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, Anti-Child Pornography Law, or the Child Abuse Law. This also supports the statement made in the UN CEDAW Committee's 2016 Concluding Observations (CO) for the Philippines on the continuing gaps in addressing trafficking where it stated that the current legal framework does not explicitly cover contemporary methods, such as "online matchmaking, which can be used as a tool for trafficking in persons.

VIII. Recommendations

While the Philippines strives to take appropriate measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women³⁴ as part of its international obligations, the fight against trafficking of women and girls should be sustained and continued, especially in the use of online or digital technologies to facilitate trafficking. This means that efforts shall be concretized through policy changes, including the amendments to Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the eventual passage of a separate legislation punishing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). Through policy amendments, it would address the need to combat trafficking in these contemporary times.

³⁴ Article 6, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

One of the recommendations of the interviewed respondents is to continue rescuing abused children. This huge responsibility is expected from law enforcement agencies in coordination with social workers and other anti-trafficking partners to create an environment that will encourage victims to report trafficking cases. Moreover, the manner of rescue and through governmental and non-governmental efforts shall be assessed and improved, especially in reducing the feeling of fear and insecurity of the child survivors who may have been separated from their parents temporarily during the rescue. Improvement of rescue protocols shall also be considered.

Conducting anti-trafficking awareness-raising activities such as seminars and trainings are deemed useful by the respondents in preventing more trafficking cases among children. It must be noted that some respondents revealed that their lack of knowledge over the crime of trafficking and their inherent vulnerabilities as minors were identified as root causes of trafficking.

Sustainable livelihood assistance, as recommended by some respondents, may be included in the programs catered to trafficking survivors. Considering that most survivors come from low-income families, it will help the survivors and their families to cope effectively during the pendency of their cases.

Coordination with foreign jurisdictions, including the identification of suspected traffickers, shall continue because of the continuing demand of digital or online sexual content of Filipino children by foreigners. Considering that Philippines has been tagged as the global epicenter of livestream sexual abuse trade and that most identified suspects or perpetrators are foreigners, this matter shall be taken seriously. In the past, Children's Legal Bureau has worked with foreign authorities such as the Australian Police, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, among others.

Similar to the prioritized recommendations under the latest Trafficking in Persons Report by the U.S. State Department, there must be increased support to government and NGO programs that provide specialized care for trafficking victims. Amendments to the domestic ATIP law shall also boost recovery and reintegration programs, provide focus on specialized care for survivors, and other forms of assistance.

There must also be a need to address the concerns of rescued children while they are placed at government or accredited private shelters, including visitation rights of families, mental health programs for children, and more child-sensitive handling of rescued children.

Support must also continue to pour in programs initiated by NGOs in assisting trafficking survivors, including those that provide legal services, education, shelter, and recovery and reintegration.

Multi-sectoral efforts to address trafficking shall continue, including the collaborative efforts of the so-called five pillars of justice- prosecution, corrections, courts, law enforcement, and the community, including non-government organizations.

CASE STUDY

Jackie's ordeal: Trafficking survivor rises from online sexual exploitation A Case Study from the Children's Legal Bureau

Jackie (real name withheld), now 24 years, old, is a resident of Cordova town, Cebu. Jackie's parents are usually out of their home. Her father works as a pedicab driver and a seasonal worker while her mother is a housekeeper, both earning meager incomes. She is the eldest child of seven (7) children. Jackie was responsible to perform household chores and looking after her younger siblings and sickly grandmother.

Jackie did not enjoy a happy childhood. She and her siblings had experienced physical abuse from her father. Her mother is also a battered wife. One of her siblings had been involved with illegal drug use while another sibling has not returned home because of their father's maltreatment. Their mother seemingly lacked the required attention to her children.

Sometime in January 2010, Jackie, then a minor child, was recruited by her neighbor, Tessa (real name withheld), to perform lewd shows in her house. At the time when Tessa approached Jackie, she told the minor victim that her daughter, Rosa (real name withheld) was looking for her. When Jackie finally entered their home, Rosa instructed Jackie to sit beside her while she was having a video chat with a foreigner. Rosa directed Jackie to show her breasts to the foreigner on the computer through the webcam.

After the said incident, Tessa would often visit Jackie's house to ask her to do more shows. During these instances, Rosa would ask Jackie to show the latter's buttocks and private parts to a foreigner on the computer. There are other times when Rosa would instruct Jackie to use a sex toy. The acts performed by Jackie mainly depended on the requests of the foreigners.

Jackie performed these shows three times a week, depending on foreigners' requests. She would normally receive between two hundred pesos (P200) to three hundred fifty pesos (P350) from Tessa every after show.

One time, Jackie performed a show with another child, Christine (real name withheld). Each of them received two hundred pesos (P200). There was also a time when another show was performed in the house of Bella (real name withheld), with Bella's child joining the show. She was given a hundred pesos (P100) for doing the show.

Jackie would give her mother the amounts she had been receiving for doing the shows. Her mother would later suspect the generosity of her child since Jackie has been only given a small allowance. Jackie's mother later learned about the sexual exploitation suffered by her child when their neighbor, the mother of Christine, reported the perpetrators to barangay and police authorities, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Now, Jackie is working at an export processing zone and has made a family of her own. Upon her full reintegration into the community, she expresses confidence in dealing with

people, including her family. She feels lesser shame from her trafficking ordeal. She also believes that she can protect herself better now from abuse.

Looking back, Jackie admits that it was poverty and her vulnerability as a minor that allowed her to be sexually exploited online by her neighbors. She believes that as a naïve and trusting child back then, the traffickers had accomplished to deceive her.

She also expresses gratitude to the agencies and organizations that attended to her needs after she was rescued, particularly the Children’s Legal Bureau (CLB) which represented the trafficking case in court. Other organizations that helped Jackie are Paglaum Training International (PTI) and the government social welfare and development offices.

“Dako kaayo nga tabang. Kay kung dili pa sa CLB ug sa rescue team, ambot og asa nako karon o makalingkawas ba ko sa mga abusado (It was a huge help. If it were not for CLB/rescue team, who knows where I would be right now, or if I would even be free from the hands of my abusers),” Jackie says about the organizations that helped her throughout her ordeal.

After being rescued, Jackie was placed in a shelter that according to her has taught her good manners and helped her move on from her horrible past. It was inside the shelter that she was able to graduate from her elementary studies. She was able to continue further studies after being referred to PTI.

She, however, recounted instances when she missed her family and occupied herself thinking of the trafficking incidents while inside the shelter. She has once thought of committing suicide.

Talking about the trafficking case filed against Tessa and Rosa, Jackie believes that her abusers are now paying for their crimes by being imprisoned.

Jackie suggests that law enforcement agencies and other competent organizations should continue rescuing minors who have been victims of human trafficking and supporting trafficking survivors. She adds that anti-trafficking seminars for children and the youth shall be conducted to provide awareness of possible abusers in the community. She encourages victims to stay hopeful, to speak out to attain justice, and for the abusers to be held accountable.

Cases of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation (2016 to March 2022)
By Jean Enriquez

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Cases of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation (2017 to March 2022)

by

ABSTRACT

Significant increase in trafficking for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation has been documented by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) in the last five years (since 2016), even as a more systematic and pro-active documentation was started nine months ago, in June 2021.

In a project on online sexual exploitation and abuse with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – Philippines, CATW-AP and partner survivor groups brought their services online. Sex trafficking survivors, including CATW-AP staff/consultant, took the role of peer facilitators of thirty (30) support groups.

With the lockdowns imposed in relation to the Covid19 pandemic, abusers contacted women and girls for sexual exploitation via information and communications technology.

Victims-survivors of sex trafficking were disproportionately women and girls, while perpetrators were men, the profile of some were included in the research. The majority of victims-survivors of online trafficking were young women aged 15-24, and among these ___ were adult women.

The support groups also documented the interventions within comprehensive case management, as well as the limitations in services from government, as mandated by the anti-trafficking law, Magna Carta of Women and international standards.

Utilizing the standardized form from the Inter-Agency Council on Violence against Women and Children (IACVAWC), the support group facilitators also systematized the data in a logsheet/tool developed by CATW-AP. Case summaries prepared by the survivor case managers and validated by the survivor, a registered social worker and CATW-AP, were bases of the data.

Trafficking Data as Gender Statistics: Framework

The study uses the United Nations framework on trafficking and sexual exploitation, including the 1949 Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish

Trafficking in Persons and the 2003 UN Secretary General's Bulletins on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, Discrimination and Harassment.

The study refers to the 2017 regional ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and to national legal frameworks such as the 2003 Anti-Trafficking Act (RA 9208, and amended in 2012 as RA 10364), the 2004 Anti-VAWC Act which includes punishing the act of prostituting a woman or child, and the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710).

The legal frameworks agree that the act of receiving a person, through abuse of vulnerability, for the purpose of sexual exploitation is an act of trafficking, regardless of the presence or lack of a third party. The element of "force" is immaterial, following the definition of trafficking under the UN Protocol where consent is immaterial, therefore covering all acts of prostitution as trafficking.

The trafficking cases are gender statistics because:

1. The majority of victims are women and girl-children.
2. The root causes of the trafficking cases are gender stereotypes, such as the sexual objectification and commodification of the victims by their perpetrators. Their victimization in trafficking is part of a continuum of gender stereotype-based violence from girlhood, where they were also abused by older male relatives as the latter's sexual properties. The individual biographies of the victims-survivors reveal grooming of the women to accept their victimization in sex trafficking as their lot, or increases their vulnerability to accept the victimization as a natural course of life.
3. The majority of the perpetrators are men who are privileged with purchasing power (and mobility for men in uniform during lockdowns), and the gender stereotyped ideas of higher rank in society with power to abuse women sexually on the basis of their purchased consent.

Therefore, the cases of violence against women were recorded from a human rights perspective. The rights violated and methods of violence were identified and categorized based on women's experiences.

Finally, the cases are recorded from a gender perspective, with recognition of the layers of oppression of women, therefore their added vulnerabilities were identified. Our analysis is underpinned by intersectional/integrated structural perspective on women's issues, decades of direct experience in comprehensive empowerment programs for victims-survivors, as well as by engagement with law enforcers in prosecuting perpetrators and other service providers in assisting the victims-survivors.

Sharp Rise in Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: Profile of Victims-Survivors

The timeframe of the study (June 2021 to March 2022) showed the rise in the number of victims-survivors to one hundred and fifteen (115) women and girls (and some boys) a month being brought to the attention of CATW-AP and affiliated survivors' groups in 2021, compared to thirty (30) in one month in 2016.

During the time period of nine months, we recorded the cases of 1,042 victims-survivors of trafficking, all towards sexual exploitation. Only three (3) are boys/young men, and they are aged 14, 15 and 21.

Of this number, 952 or 91.3% are aged 18 and above, and therefore, considered as adults.

According to the United Nations, youth is defined as those aged 15-24 years old.³⁵ Within this category, four hundred and ninety eight (498) of the N=1,042 or 47.8% would be included. Of this number, 423 or eighty four (84%) of the young people are 18 years old and above.

Six (6) of the victims-survivors are indigenous women – 1 Aeta, 2 Manobo, 3 Mandaya. There are four (4) Amerasian women.

³⁵ See <https://en.unesco.org/youth>.

Twenty-nine (29) came out to their peer facilitators as lesbians and one (1) as a bisexual woman.

Ninety-five percent (95%) are poor or has income of less than P12,082 per month set by the Philippine Statistics Authority as needed by the average family of five members to meet their minimum basic food and non-food needs.³⁶

The most prevalent form of of online sexual and gender based violence is sex trafficking, including for prostitution and pornography, thus, the male abusers are preying on the economic and other vulnerabilities of the victims. Others are rape and rape threats, forced sexual acts online by their partners, sexual harassment, and intimidation online or by text following rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The victims-survivors' location during the time of abuse are the following:

Region	Province	City/Municipality (if known)	Number
CAR	Benguet	Baguio	1
Region 1	Ilocos Sur	Narvacan	2
		Santiago	1
		Sta. Maria	4
		Vigan	3
	La Union	Caba	1
	Pangasinan	Anda	1
		Agno	1
		Bolinao	1
		Bugallon	1
		Burgos	7
		Dasol	2
		Infanta	2
		Rosales	5
Sison	3		
Region 2	Isabela	Alicia	1
	Nueva Vizcaya	Bambang	1
Region 3	Bataan	Dinalupihan	1

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<https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/Highlights%20of%20the%202021%20First%20Sem%20Official%20Poverty%20Statistics%202015Dec2021.pdf>

		Morong	1
	Bulacan	Angat	13
		Balagtas	6
		Baliuag	2
		Bocaue	18
		Bulakan	3
		Bustos	11
		Calumpit	2
		Guiguinto	2
		Malolos	5
		Marilao	30
		Meycauayan	5
		Norzagaray	1
		Pandi	152
		Plaridel	12
		Pulilan	1
		San Ildefonso	3
		San Jose del Monte	8
		Sta. Maria	9
		San Miguel	4
		San Rafael	1
	Nueva Ecija	Cabanatuan	1
		Gabaldon	1
		Palayan	2
		San Jose	1
	Pampanga	Angeles City	8
		Apalit	1
		Floridablanca	1
		Macabebe	1
		San Fernando	3
	Tarlac	Paniqui	1
	Zambales	Olongapo City	59
		Subic	5
NCR		Caloocan	16
		Las Piñas	4
		Makati	1
		Malabon	2
		Manila	136
		Marikina	3
		Muntinlupa	2
		Navotas	5
		Parañaque	4
		Pasay	7
		Pasig	18
		Quezon City	189
	San Juan	10	

		Taguig	1
		Valenzuela	12
Region 4A	Batangas	Sto. Tomas	1
	Cavite	Dasmariñas	1
		Gen. Trias	1
		Imus	1
		Mendez	1
		Naic	1
		Tanza	1
	Laguna	San Pedro	1
		Sta. Cruz	1
	Palawan	El Nido	8
	Quezon	Lucena	2
	Rizal	Antipolo	7
Cainta		15	
San Mateo		1	
Taytay		1	
Region 5	Albay	Legazpi	1
		Tabaco	1
	Camarines Norte	Capalonga	1
Region 6	Antique	Patnongon	1
	Iloilo	Iloilo City	1
		Sara	1
	Negros Occidental	Bacolod	4
		Manapla	3
Talisay		1	
Region 7	Bohol	Candijay	3
		Catigbian	1
		Mabini	1
		Tagbilaran	1
	Cebu	Balamban City	1
		Cebu City	1
Mandaue		1	
Region 8	Leyte	Mahaplag	1
		Ormoc City	1
	Eastern Samar	Salcedo	1
	Samar	Catbalogan	2
	Southern Leyte	St. Bernard	3
		Maasin	14
			Malitbog
Region 9	Zamboanga del Sur	Zamboanga City	2
Region 11	Davao del Norte	Panabo	6
	Davao del Sur	Davao City	109

Region 12			
Region 13	Agusan del Sur	La Paz	1
			3
	Province of Dinagat Islands	Loreto	1
		Tubajon	5
	Surigao del Norte	Surigao City	2
Oman		Muscat	6
Saudi Arabia		Al-Khobar	1
Singapore	Ang Mo Kio Planning Area	Yio Chu Kang area	1
Taiwan		Taipei	1
UAE		Dubai	1

Gender-based and Economic Privilege: Profile of Perpetrators

The majority of the perpetrators are Filipinos while foreign abusers are from China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

All them are male who have money even as students, or who earn as teachers, businessmen, engineers, seafarers, pilot. Among public employees are police and soldiers, including American soldiers.

A Continuum of Gender-based Violence: Dynamics of Exploitation

Ninety-five (95%) of the victims-survivors had vulnerabilities exploited by perpetrators of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The majority of the victims-survivors told their peer facilitators of earlier sexual abuse by relatives.

The psychological impact of early abuse coupled with economic desperation, push the victim-survivors to agree to meet up with exploiters. They are contacted by exploiters

through Tiktok, Facebook, dating apps such as Badoo, Tinder, Filipina Dating (Filipino2Meet), Foreigners Dating Filipina, as well as through cellphone. After technology-facilitated contact, they are physically/sexually exploited. Exploiters go to their house or pick them up (during lockdowns) or arrange for meet up. Rape or other forms of sexual violence follows.

The victims-survivors are also harassed or blackmailed by abusers to continue to succumb to their pressure for continued sexual exploitation, such as by threatening to post their nude photos or videos.

Impact to Victims-Survivors:

Twenty-five of the victims-survivors are HIV positive. All of them contracted the infection during sexual exploitation. Many suffer from complications including tuberculosis and cancer. At least two of them had children who are also HIV positive.

Others were diagnosed with various sexually transmitted infections.

The women tell their peer facilitators of their worries, fears, and other difficulties. The comprehensive response program of CATW-AP and partner organizations, including direct interventions on safety, health, education of themselves and their children, livelihood, and most especially the continuing support group healing conversations address these needs as the victims-survivors feedback are documented.

Comprehensive Empowerment Program: Interventions

As we know, victims of violence, especially sexual violence are still silenced by the stigma they suffer from coming out with their experience. The peer facilitators, however, prove to be accessible to the victims-survivors, as they exude trust and respect, other than being strategically located in the three major islands of the Philippines: Buklod in Luzon, Empowered Women Survivors Collective and Bagong Kamalayan as nationwide organizations, Sowing Legacy Movement in the Visayas, Lawig Bubai in Mindanao.

The online support group members or peer facilitator-survivors are all trained on gender-sensitivity, understanding dynamics of different forms of gender-based violence especially trafficking and prostitution, women's rights laws, as well as rights-based, survivor-centered and gender-responsive approach to victims and cases.

The peer facilitators underwent continuing or regular trainings as needs arise, such as on psychological first aid (PFA), forensic interviewing, trauma-informed care, self-care, leadership and organizing.

At first contact, PFA is applied. During PFA, the victims' rights and options are presented, including the referral pathway for counseling, legal assistance, and other services as mandated by laws. The peer facilitators and our program also provide accompaniment to clinics/hospitals, facilitation of formal and informal education, livelihood and access to justice, among others. UNFPA's cash for protection provided much-needed stimulus for the women to start their recovery and rebuilding of lives towards self-sufficiency and economic independence.

Organizing, Advocacy and Resistance

The women attest that the most powerful intervention are the healing conversations both individually and as groups, as well as the series of education/trainings on gender issues, trafficking and prostitution, women's rights and laws provided by CATW-AP. The online trainings where they were able to relate their stories safely with the feeling of being understood have been most important and crucial in their healing and empowerment.

Being able to join activities of CATW-AP, both online and face-to-face, to advocate for changes in their situation and of other women and children, empower them in making them understand and feel that they can change not only their own situation but also of others. Being able to see their individual lives as connected with systemic inequalities have been most important in moving forward.

Concluding Statements

The data were collectively analyzed by the consortium, although completion of nuanced data and deeper analysis are ongoing. A significant number of the women were minors when they were victimized, especially those in prostitution. This related to their early sexual abuse experiences, which in counseling processes with the peer facilitators reveal the erosion of their sense of self, considering themselves as 'damaged goods' who think to themselves: "why not earn from this, since I'm used daily anyway."

The context of trafficking and prostitution can be gleaned from the character of the source areas, which figure as consistently low in human development indices. This is the context of poverty. In some ethnic communities, there are still arranged marriages from which the girls escape. This pushes them to go with recruiters and land in trafficked situations.

Host or destination areas are characterized by high tourist influx such as El Nido and Davao. Most of the consumers are local but many lists foreign men among the demand side. The profile of abusers – being men socialized to privileges, with relative greater power assumed, especially as earning men – internalized entitlements over the women and the children – their bodies and their lives.

All regions have victims-survivors. While there is none recorded in BARMM, we find the Muslim women victimized in sexual exploitation outside of the region. The highest incidence are in areas with high urban poor presence such as Pandi and surrounding areas in Bulacan, which is a relocation province for informal settlers in the National Capital Region (NCR) and has been a source area of trafficked persons. With online trafficking, it is the site of all elements in the trafficking process. Olongapo City has been a historical spot of trafficking and sexual exploitation, given the demand created by the entry of US military vessels through the area. Southern Leyte has also been historically a hotspot/source area given poverty incidence and being in the typhoon route.

The areas of Olongapo, Pandi, the NCR and Davao are also base areas of our partner organizations, making it easier for them to reach survivors in the proximity. Of course,

Manila and Quezon City in the NCR as well as Davao has high concentration also of demand, both foreign and local.

It is important, therefore, that policies and programmes protect and support all victims-survivors, including adult women. As all the 1,042 cases include the use of technology by perpetrators, access to justice of victims-survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation especially when facilitated by technology, should be strengthened.

The online support group is groundbreaking as it sustains the helping relationship between the peer facilitators and the victim-survivors. The survivors transition from being victims-survivors to advocates and some are already starting their own support groups as facilitators. The comprehensive empowerment program modeled by CATW-AP is necessary for genuine transformation in the lives of the survivors and towards sustained advocacy for change in the system that engenders trafficking and sexual exploitation. This is consistent with the CEDAW recommendation. The government should recognize and support the comprehensive empowerment model.

Case Studies (For Publication also by UNFPA)

1-2. From Home to Tiktok: Two Young Filipino Women's Stories on Digital Sexual Violence

MANILA, The Philippines – “I did not want to breastfeed. For me, I was dirty. I did not want my baby to get dirty,” said Ann (22), as she recalled her experience when she was performing sexual acts for bar customers, and in front of a camera.

Lea (22), another survivor of sexual violence, on the other hand, did not want to check her cell phone or visit the internet. “I was so afraid that I would see my photos all over,” she said.

“This is not just one incident. We've been experiencing this our whole lives.”

“When I was seven years old, my family would often wonder why I trembled whenever I saw my cousin,” shared Lea from Balagtas, Bulacan. “He was 22, and this went on for three years. Later on, they learned that he sexually abused me, and he was sent away by my family.”

Years later, Lea, at the age of 18, decided to study in Apalit, Pampanga. Since she came from a low-income family, she worked in a canteen to provide additional funds for her daily needs and school expenses. One day, her housemate asked if Lea wanted quick cash. “She just told me to dress nicely. Then we traveled to Angeles, Pampanga (a former US-military base located one and a half hours away from Apalit, and went to a bar with many foreigners. I met a man from Brazil, and he asked me to do ‘certain’ things, and he gave me money. I was just shocked,” said Lea. “I did not want it to happen,” she said while sobbing.

Just like Lea, Ann narrated the incident of her first sexual abuse. As a farmer's daughter, she understood that their family did not have enough income to send her to school. She agreed to stay at her relative's house when her uncle volunteered to sponsor her studies at 16. “My uncle was so kind, and he paid for my tuition fees,” said Ann. Then her voice started to break, “After two years, he started abusing me. I could not tell anyone because he threatened to kill my parents.”

She ran away without telling her family. Homeless and destitute, Ann did not know how to survive without money. One of her friends asked if she would like to become a waitress. “Of course, I said yes, and I went with her. Little did I know that she meant it included entertaining men in a high-class bar – foreigners, politicians, policemen, rich and old men, and do whatever sexual acts they wanted me to do.” Ann shared, “One abuser even got me pregnant.”

From Face to Face to Online: The Shift to Online Sexual Violence and Abuse During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lea eventually graduated from a two-year college course and thought she could change her situation by applying for jobs. “Unfortunately, COVID-19 happened, and we all needed to stay at home.”

“My source of income suddenly stopped with the pandemic, and I had to feed my baby I conceived from a prostitution buyer,” Lea remarked.

Both Ann and Lea turned to the internet. A middleman would link them to “buyers” via a pornography site. Then, they will move to TikTok or Facebook messenger, and the buyers would ask for their naked photos or perform sexual acts in front of the camera and then pay Php 10,000 (USD200) for each session. “Seventy-five percent of that goes to the porn site or middleman. We only get Php 2,500 (USD 50),” Ann revealed.

Lea added, “We sometimes book buyers so we can get paid directly. However, some refuse to pay after. Then they will threaten that they will upload our photos and videos when we demand money.”

Both Lea and Ann wanted to share that they are now living with HIV. “I wish leaders and organizations will pay attention to things that are happening even if they may not see it in front of their faces,” appealed Lea. “Just like prostitution, and it’s a big issue for us women and girls coming from low-income families and having been victims of sexual abuse earlier in life.”

Healing and Empowerment

Eventually, Ann and Lea met other women survivor leaders of EWSC, Empowered Women Survivor Collective. Here, Ann and Lea received healing conversations, accompaniment to clinics, women’s rights training, legal assistance, and livelihood assistance.

CATW-AP, an implementing partner of UNFPA in the Philippines, supports EWSC. With assistance from UNFPA and the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines, the EWSC is working to reach 1000 victim-survivors of ICT-facilitated sexual and gender-based violence through the

“Improving Health and Protection Outcomes of Filipino Women and Girls during COVID-19” Project. The Project also enables awareness through online dialogues and the implementation of youth-led innovative solutions to address ICT-Facilitated SGBV.

Ann and Lea are now leaders of their survivor support groups, assisting 19 and 15 other survivors of online abuse, respectively. They underwent training on gender sensitivity, women’s rights, gender-based violence, pertinent laws, and a survivor-centered case approach. They are also leading the youth in Bulacan in an education project, also assisted by UNFPA. They both attest that they have found their true selves, and the survivors they help see them as their role models.

“You know, I thought this would be the end of me, and I was depressed. Now I understand that we can turn our life around,” Ann shared.

“ After the training and counseling, I now commit to being there for others who are in similar situations.” Lea added, “These days, I also monitor social media and report if I see any suspicious posts.”

“I can also now breastfeed my baby,” shared Ann. “I have learned to forgive myself for things that happened to me. and have become a better mother.”

3. Case of K and the violent war on drugs

K is 16 years old, in Grade 11 and a victim of online prostitution. It was in January 2021 when another counselee reported knowing another 16 year old who are made to perform in front of the computer and told to insert objects into their orifices.

K was rescued by MSWDO along with her 17-year-old-sister and another 17-year old male cousin, who was being told by foreign abusers online to sexually abuse her and her sister in front of the video camera. They are also being made to drink alcohol before the “show.”

K and her sister are orphaned by their father who was killed in front of her in the war on drugs. Their mother was also incarcerated for drug-related charges.

The support group assists K alongside counseling sessions with the MSWDO. Our partner organization EWSC was also able to provide livelihood capital to K and the siblings started to sell fresh vegetables and breakfast food. K was able to resume her studies and was reunited with their mother, who was also given livelihood assistance by EWSC.

4. Case of Anisa, a Maranao

Anisa used to reside in the streets of Cubao with her partner who sells merchandise in the hub of the city. She has a child with him. Her partner hurts her often but she could not leave the situation as their parents force them to settle. The same partner also pimped her through social media and in Cubao. She could not tell this to her Muslim parents.

She was also forced to sexual exploitation since her mother was sick. She hated being in that situation but the police forced them out of their stall in Cubao. Her partner also got incarcerated for drugs.

When Anisa became more active with CATW-AP, she left prostitution. Services provided to her included accompaniment to the social hygiene clinic, livelihood assistance, other than the regular healing conversations.

5. H: From Continuum of Abuse to Recovery

H was victim of rape when she was 10 years old. She was pimped to prostitution in 2018 and during the lockdown, was forced to remain online because of financial hardships.

H saw the activities of EWSC-CATWAP through social media and contacted Myles, the head of EWSC. From a small livelihood assistance, H worked hard and with a lot of determination, was able to expand her store. Other than continuing healing conversation, H provided testimonies on how the organization changed her life.

6. A: From a Farming Family in Bicol

A was 12 years old when raped by a relative. After high school, she was able to enroll in college but stopped because of lack of money. She very much wanted to finish college to be able to help her poor family and recover their mortgaged land.

She was 18 when she joined her cousin to Manila to work in a factory. She was able to finish two contracts with the factory but unable to save as she sends her salaries to her family in Bicol. She then applied as saleslady with SM Megamall. She got to know a recruiter while working at SM.

In 2018, this recruiter was able to entice her and her friend with promise of huge earnings at Dusit Hotel. They were provided with nice clothes and cellphones, as well as given advanced payment. They were fed and forced to drink alcohol. As she does not drink, she lost consciousness.

However, she her friend felt people around them abusing them. They could not do anything as they have no energy.

The next morning, the recruiter was very angry, saying that the Koreans complained that they were no longer virgins. A and her friend were crying as they were afraid of the men accompanying their recruiter. But both of them were made sex slaves before they were brought to Lexus Bar, where they were pushed to become dancers.

In the bar, A and her friend were injected with chemicals which they were told will make their skin lighter. They also had to take drugs. Their customers were old businessmen who also contact them online or via cellphone.

They were known to Ann of EWSC (who was also recruited to the bar before but became an organizer of EWSC), who offered help in August 2021 when the UNFPA project started.

Alyssa has resumed studies and takes care of her livelihood every Saturday and Sunday, with the help of Ann and EWSC. She is now among the leaders who assist other victims and receives regular allowance from the group. She also started a piggery in Bicol for her family.

7. M: From Pangasinan

M was a victim of sexual abuse by her uncle when she was 9 years old. She was often threatened to be burned by her uncle if she would tell her grandfather of the abuse. She used to shiver and pee whenever she would see her uncle.

When M finished high school, she escaped from her province with a recruiter. She was promised work in a factory but she was pimped to a prostitution bar. She was also pimped in the streets.

She would often have police officers as buyers/abusers. When vagrancy was used against her, she would be sexually abused in exchange for her liberty. Her customers would often hurt her, too.

When she learned to fight her pimp, she left and worked as a saleslady but a previous customer shamed her while working as a saleslady. She returned to the streets but stopped in 2017.

When the war on drugs started, her partner was framed up and incarcerated. M pled with the police to free her husband. But the police asked for P17,000 and sex with two policemen through cellphone conversation. She was abused for two days and was thrown 100 pesos afterwards. While her partner was freed but went into hiding for fear of being killed.

M is HIV positive. She is being assisted by CATW-AP and is now an active leader, who educates other women actively. Other than healing conversations, she was provided medical and financial assistance. Her store co-owned with other survivors has been thriving. She wanted to share her photo below.

8. Miel's (not her real name) Case during Lockdown

Miel was a victim of domestic violence. She was 17 when she got married. EWSC rescued her with the help of local police.

She was also a victim of online trafficking. Life became harder for her during the lockdowns.

Through the help of EWSC, she started a stall in the market and started sewing for livelihood. She also joined healing conversations through the support group. Among interventions provided were legal assistance, accompaniment for medical assistance, other than healing and livelihood.

9. R from Bataan

R had not known her biological mother and had an adoptive mother, who brought her to Olongapo. R was a victim of rape by a bar owner when she was working as a waitress. She was eventually prostituted.

Her husband used to abuse her also.

Through Buklod and CATW-AP, R was able to receive healing conversations, join a support group and cash for protection from UNFPA. She was able to start a small store in Purok 1 of Barangay New Cabalan. The store was able to support her family's daily needs. According to her: "Sobrang maginhawa sa pakiramdam dahil kahit papaaano ay nakakaraos at nakakatulong sa pang-araw-araw."

10. J: an Amerasian

J was victimized online by foreigners who asked her for nude photos in exchange for money. Through Buklod, she was able to avail of educational and food assistance as well as trainings from CATW-AP.

Through the cash programme, J started selling and delivering eggs. She also shares eggs to other youth members of BUKLOD for the latter's food. Her livelihood has since become a huge help to her and her family. She was able to buy medicines for her mother's glaucoma.

She currently saves to add rice to the goods she sells. She also assists BUKLOD in organizing survivors.