

# PROTECTING VIETNAM'S CHILDREN

## An Analysis of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in Selected Provinces and Cities of Viet Nam



unicef 

# Background

- Population of Vietnam: 87.84 million
- Children under 16 years old: 23.6 million
- Child in need of special protection: 1.6 million

# Tourism in Vietnam

## Tourism is growing:

- Vietnam welcomed more than six million international visitors in 2012
- The most popular source countries are China, South Korea, Japan.
- Significant tourist numbers also coming from the US, Germany, UK, Australia, Russia and other European countries.
- Tourists are travelling beyond major cities for experiences in remote areas and ethnic hill tribes.
- Tourism is important to Vietnam, but we want to ensure Vietnam's children are safe.

# Research Locations



## Key Provinces:

Northern Border Area

Lao Cai (including Sapa)

Capital City

Hanoi

Central Coast

Khanh Hoa (including Nha Trang)

Major City

Ho Chi Minh City

Southern Border Area

An Giang

# Child Sex Tourism

## Research findings:

- The majority of child victims interviewed reported that their abusers included foreigners.
- Children reported that the perpetrators come from all over the world, including Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and the US.
- Girls and boys are victims of foreign sex abusers.
- Child sex tourism was occurring in all research locations (including rural and remote provinces).
- Foreign sex offenders are known to operate independently and within organised networks.
- Between 2005 – 2006, seven foreign citizens were arrested for sex crimes against Vietnamese children (from Germany, Austria, United States, United Kingdom and Australia).

# Ethnic Minority Communities

*Tourists are now going to ethnic minority communities because they speak English well. The tourists who want sex stay at the home of local families because they believe they can avoid the police.*

Vietnam Women's Union

*In Sapa, the ethnic minority women reported that a male tourist visiting their home-stay asked if her children could go in the herbal bath with him. So, we know the problem can emerge in new locations outside the main cities.*

Vietnam National Administration of Tourism

# Border Locations

*We see the border economy increasing near the Vietnam/China border. Many businesses have grown around this area. The businesses need hostesses. Older women don't get many customers. If the businesses offer younger girls, the customers increase. Then the older women become brokers themselves.*

Vietnam Border Guards

# Major Cities

*In the city, shoe shine boys and lottery boys have a big problem. When they work on the streets, foreign customers come and ask them to go for pho (noodle soup) and in some cases the foreigners take the children back to the hotel. There's a very high risk of these boys having sex with men because they have no money.*

*Interview with former male street child, now 19 years old, HCMC*

*If you go to Pham Ngu Lao St (in HCMC) at 10pm, you can see children speaking and playing with foreigners. You can see them hold hands with foreigners. There is a very high risk. We know of girls in Pham Ngu Lao who are sponsored by foreigners. They receive mobile phones from them. We must teach them how to protect themselves from the risks.*

Thao Dan Social Protection Organisation, HCMC

# ICTs and exploitation

## Research findings:

- Digital technology provides new mechanisms for foreigners and traffickers to lure their victims.
- 14 child respondents reported that customers had collected images of them while they were engaged in sex.
- Sexual abuse images of Vietnamese children are available on DVD and accessible on the internet and via mobile phone. Internet is becoming more popular than DVD.
- Vietnamese children have been forced and enticed to participate in 'body show' and 'chat sex' with known and unknown viewers.
- Chat sex shops have been established in HCMC and other provinces.
- Customs officials have confiscated inbound pornography at border posts featuring children from other countries.

# ICTs and exploitation

*Some clients want to take a photo of us to keep as a souvenir. We don't know what they will do with it. But sometimes they were violent if we say no.*

Interview with girl victim, now 17 years old, HCMC

*There are many children using the internet in Nha Trang. Most of them are school students. They chat with foreigners via webcam (blue web), they then engage in body show and chat sex.*

Peer Educator, Khanh Hoa

*We viewed child pornography with the customers before they engaged us in sex. They showed us so we know what to do.*

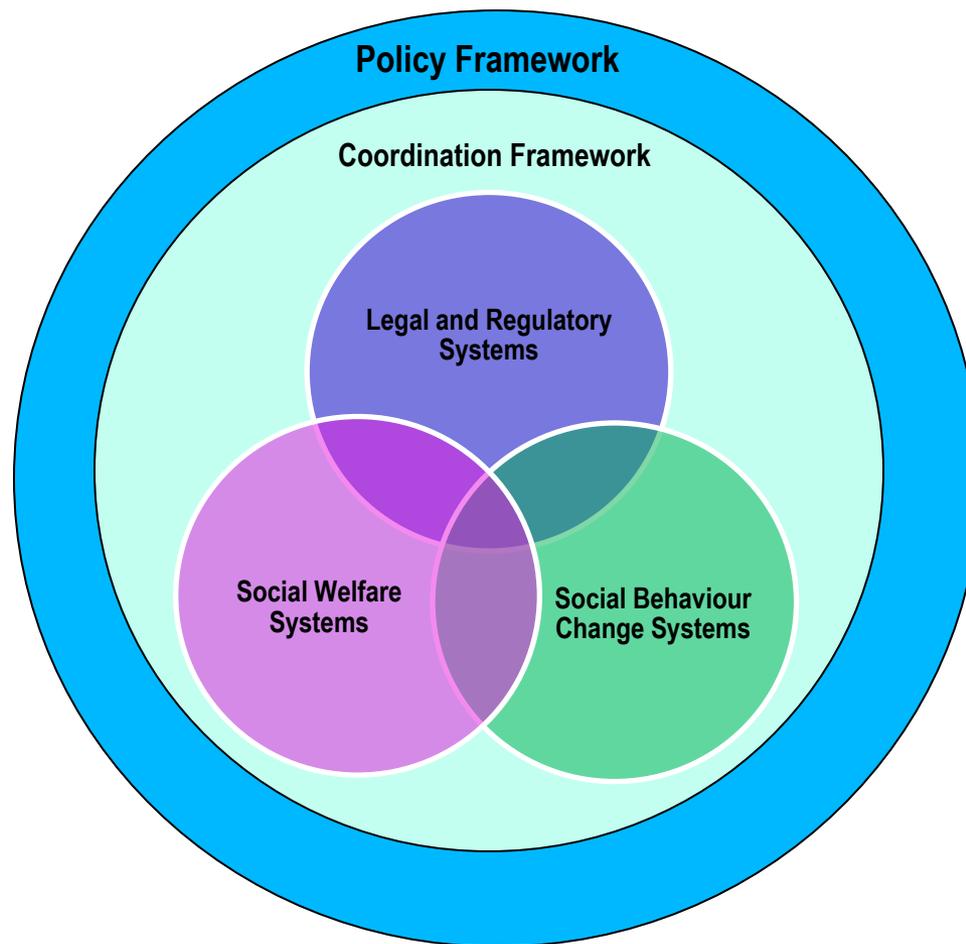
Interview with girl victim, now 18 years old, Khanh Hoa

*Young boys don't usually operate in brothels. In the past we were very exposed. Now everything happens on the privacy of a computer. The web, internet, technology has hanged the whole operational methods of involving children in sex.*

Interview with male victim, HCMC

# Protecting Vietnam's Children

The recommendations recognise that urgent and collaborative action is required to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation:



# Messages from children . . .

*I hope you will do your best to help other children who face the same circumstances as us. It is not too late to protect the other children from these problems.*

16 year old girl, An Giang

*We ask all adults to pay more attention to children and our difficult situation.*

14 year old boy, Ha Noi

*We have dream that other children will never encounter the same situation.*

19 year old girl, Ba Vi 05Centre

*We would like the Government to stop children being sexually exploited in Viet Nam.  
We ask you to do your best to protect Viet Nam's children so they can't be exploited.*

19 year old girl, HCMC



UNICEF Vietnam and MOLISA

*thank you*

for your interest in this study and

*invite you*

to join us in protecting Vietnam's children  
from all forms of commercial sexual  
exploitation.

Please find the report on our resources page at:

[www.unicef.org/vietnam/](http://www.unicef.org/vietnam/)