

PROSTITUTION OF CHILDREN

3000 children (boys and girls) are forced into prostitution every day, throughout the world. That makes it about 1.000.000 children every year and the highest concentration where this happens is in **Asia** but it is also widely spread in **Africa, South and Central America and Eastern Europe**.

PROSTITUTION IN A MODERN AND DEVELOPED WORLD

Also in the so-called developed West are more than 700,000 child prostitutes.

Contrary to popular belief, most child prostitutes come from **middle class families**, and unlike prostitutes in the developing world, are not running away from poverty, but **from a dysfunctional life**, after suffering physical, emotional and often, sexual abuse. According to the US Department of Justice, the vast majority of juvenile prostitutes are **children whose parents are divorced, deceased, drug addicts, alcoholics or mentally ill**. The absence of a safe home, together with the **expectedly low self-esteem** these children suffer from, make them far more vulnerable to exploitation from pimps.

Although child prostitution has been around for a long time, it has only recently been recognized as an issue, due to **the alarming increase** in the number of its victims. According to the **World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**, during the last two decades, the **number of children becoming prostitutes in developed countries has tripled, from less than 200,000 in the late 70s to well over half a million today**.

After the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, there was a **demand in the international sex market for the supply of prostitutes**, which would be **HIV free and provide safer sex**, and so, **pimps turned to underage prostitutes, expanding the child prostitution network**. Unfortunately, the idea that children are

somehow safer is only a misconception. **Children have not yet fully developed their natural immune system**, and are, therefore, more likely to be infected by diseases like AIDS, Syphilis and Hepatitis-B.

Child prostitutes are also **threatened by street violence and by physical, emotional and sexual abuse by their pimps and clients.**

According to the Canadian Department of Justice, one in ten incidents of street violence in urban areas is committed against a prostitute under eighteen, while **70% of Juneville prostitutes** interviewed by **Barnardo's Children Charity in Britain**, admitted that they had been raped an average of 30 times each.

PROSTITUTION IN A DEVELOPING WORLD

The children involved, are **mostly girls but boys also have a big representation among child prostitutes**, especially in the **Philippines and Sri Lanka**. Inside the world of child sex trafficking, each year, by some estimates, hundreds of thousands of girls and boys are bought, sold or kidnapped and then forced to have sex with grown men. The children are at an age of between 10 to 18 but, in some cases they have had an age of 6. Children who should be in elementary school or even in kindergarten are being exploited by adults. **These children mostly come from poor, rural families or are homeless children living on the street in some city.**

Children are often **kidnapped** or sold by someone they know to a procurer who sends the child to a **third party**. Children may also search for work in a city and with false expectations they end up forced to work in the prostitution trade.

(One 14-year-old, who was recently freed from a brothel, says she came from an extremely poor family. She says when she was walking home from school one day, she was approached by a woman offering work in a café. But the café turned out to be a brothel. With no money and no way to get home, she didn't have much of a choice and was forced into sex with grown men. So she tried to run away, but she got

captured. They forced her into a room for 3 days. They beat her and they didn't let her have anything to eat or drink.)

Living and working conditions for children that are prostituted are frequently **substandard**. Such children are **commonly poorly paid or unpaid, kept in unsanitary conditions, denied access to proper medical care, and constantly watched and kept subservient through threat of force.**

Because people who are involved in children prostitution in those countries can't speak English well, and when they talk about sex, they use simple child-like terms anyone can understand. "Yum-yum" means oral sex. "Boom-boom" means intercourse.

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The people who use the services, provided by child prostitutes are mostly men (many of them Americans) but also women are known for practising this eventhough men is the majority of the perpetrators.

The **travelling in order to exploit children sexually** is well developed. The **commercial sexual exploitation of children has a growth, similar to the growth of tourism in many countries.**

"Tourism is not the cause of child sexual exploitation but it does provide easy access to vulnerable children".

Some destinations are portrayed **as exotic, passive and submissive.**

These **false enticements** might **encourage people to buy sexual services** even if they hadn't considered it from the beginning.

Otherwise, **child sex tourists** can think that in another country there are **no normal social and moral constraints so they will not be accused for having done something bad.** This just helps the child sex exploitation and you can clearly see that the government in a country where this is usual, has a huge potential to do something about the sexual

abuse of children. But they can't do much because of the extreme poverty and widespread corruption that cause the child sex trade to flourish. And on average **40 percent** of the rescued girls return to a life of prostitution.