RISE

Learning Network

Integration, Acceptance and Independence

Children's experiences of reintegration from sexual exploitation in Nepal

A Synthesis Report

Family for every child · SathSath Together With Children · KUMUDINI · terre des hommes stops child exploitation · OAK FOUNDATION

CONTENTS

Summary

The RISE Learning Network Project aims to promote and facilitate learning on recovery and reintegration approaches that improve outcomes for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation. This research is part of the RISE project and engages with young people affected by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) to explore their views and recommendations on what makes for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration, with the aim of strengthening policy and practice in this area. The project is coordinated by Family for Every Child in collaboration with local NGOs Kumudini (working with girls and young women) and Sath Sath (working with boys and young men).

 Small-scale research was carried out in Nepal in 2017-18 with a total of 10 boys and young men and 11 girls and young women who had experienced sexual abuse or exploitation and were beneficiaries or former beneficiaries of a reintegration program. This report synthesises the data from these two research projects.

Research Questions:

1. How do children and young people (affected by child sexual exploitation) experience reintegration in the community?

2. What are the key issues that reintegration services need to consider when enabling the reintegration of children (affected by child sexual exploitation) into communities?

Methods: the research piloted an innovative participatory research method whereby young people who had experienced sexual exploitation and are former beneficiaries of a reintegration programme, acted as 'youth researchers', co-producing the research with adults, undertaking research activities with their peers. Co-production of the research included adaptation and refinement of research questions, co-facilitating focus group discussions with adults and 'sense-checking' of initial analysis.

As the learning project was interested in getting an in-depth picture of reintegrated children's experiences the sample group consisted of 10-15 children and young people who took part in five to six group discussions of 2-3 hours. In total a sample group of 21 children and young people was reached, consequently findings cannot be generalised to the wider population of children and young people.

This report outlines the synthesised findings from the two small-scale studies in Nepal from a comparison of the key findings and conclusions from the two research projects in reference to the research questions for the project.

Key Synthesised Findings

1.Stigma and Discrimination: a gendered story of isolation and exclusion

The stigma (defined as a negative stereotype) of being sexually exploited is experienced by girls and young women in this study as being labelled 'promiscuous' which simultaneously denies their victimhood and reinforces the narrative of the 'fallen woman' who has lost her innocence.

For boys and young men stigma appears to be closely related to conceptions of masculinity and a 'lack of acceptance' of their realities. Initially, there is a lack of acceptance that boys could be victims of sexual abuse which is exacerbated by boys labelled as homosexual simply because they were sexually exploited by men.

Children and young people in this study appear to stigmatise themselves for their own abuse, talking about their exploitation as their own 'bad' qualities or behaviour. For boys and young men, the stigma is often experienced as a fear of exposure (of being a victim and therefore of being 'unmanly') – this fear is used by both perpetrators and family members to control the boys.

Discrimination is typically experienced by both boys and girls as exclusion and isolation by friends, family and the community. For girls and young women their exclusion is often pre-empted by what they call 'back-biting' (public criticism of them behind their back). Boys and young men feel that their exclusion and isolation is because of a lack of understanding by society of their experience of trauma. It appears that the discrimination both boys and girls face individually from their experience of sexual exploitation is often extended to their families and results in a subsequent lowering of the status of their family in the community.

2. Acceptance – a key indicator of re-integration

Both boys and girls stress the importance of understanding and accepting themselves as a first step in the reintegration process. Firstly, accepting that they are not to be blamed for their exploitation, that they are a victim. Secondly, accepting that they are a 'survivor' - someone who has survived a traumatic experience and thirdly, the acceptance of family members, in particular, parents accepting that their daughter or son is both a victim and a survivor of sexual exploitation.

For girls and young women, 'acceptance' is equated with 'support' - when someone accepts them and shows an understanding of their situation, they feel supported and protected by this person. Acceptance by their peers (children who have also experienced sexual exploitation) is also important, for boys in particular, many of whom feel they can't discuss their experiences of exploitation with their parents.

3. The importance of independence

Two types of independence were explored by girls - financial and emotional. Emotional Independence is described as 'standing on your own two feet', and is equated with a successful recovery from traumatic experiences. Many of the characteristics described by girls as emotional independence appear to correlate with well-known resilience factors such as self-efficacy and the ability to re-frame and learn from the past. It was recognised that emotional independence was fostered through the provision of services by NGOs such as life-skills training.

When boys and young men speak of independence they focus on financial independence; earning an income of their own and being financially independent from their family. Both boys and girls talk with pride about being a 'provider' to their families, contributing to their family's income and consequently being a good daughter or son; responsible and loyal.

For boys and young men, the acceptance and respect they received from their parents increased their motivation to work hard in their chosen career. When girls and young women compared their current lives to the lives of other young women in their community, they felt they had more freedom.

Recommendations for prevention

- Develop community based peer-to-peer education programs for girls and boys (separately) on sexual abuse - that address local concepts of masculinity and feminity and highlight the fact that boys as well as girls can be sexually abused and exploited.
- Provide safe (non-judgemental and confidential) spaces for all boys and girls (boys in particular) to discuss sexuality – some of these safe spaces should be online.
- Develop activities that can intercept potential perpetrators operating online who are targeting boys to sexually exploit them.

Recommendations on reintegration practice

Provide interventions that take a holistic approach to reintegration, incorporating the following approaches to ensure that all aspects of children's wellbeing are covered:

- Provide individual and group counselling, that makes use of creative processes (such as Dance Movement Therapy), and enables children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation:
  - to understand that they are not to blame for their exploitation and to accept that they were a victim;
  - boys should, in addition, have opportunities to explore their sexual orientation and the particularly corrosive stigma associated with homosexual abuse;
  - to explore the trauma they are experiencing as a result of this exploitation and help them to acknowledge the connections between their behaviour and recovering from a traumatic experience and;
  - to explore how they are a 'survivor' of sexual abuse, looking at their resilience in overcoming difficulties and what they have learned from the experience. Counsellors should focus on creating a safe, non-judgemental environment.
- Provide activities and spaces for girls and boys who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation to make friends with each other, this could be through peer support groups or organising social events.
  • Provide activities and spaces for parents of girls and boys who have experienced sexual exploitation to learn about the exploitation process (so that they can accept that their son or daughter is a victim) and the indicators of trauma, so that they can offer emotional support. Activities could also take the form of peer support groups for parents.
- Explore further the possibility of supporting young people to live with their peers and setting up integration programs in urban communities rather than re-integration programs with their families in rural communities.
- To encourage acceptance of children by the communities in which they are reintegrated, provide activities for the communities surrounding children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation to come together to celebrate events, such as festivals, or to work together, for example, on a community project.
- Enable boys and girls who have experienced sexual exploitation to become financially independent by supporting further study, vocational and life-skills training or employment opportunities.

Foreword

Research illustrates that children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation are often excluded and disempowered by the services provided to support them[1]. They are often treated only as victims, rather than as 'agents of change' who have their own views or ideas about affecting change in their lives and circumstances. For children who have had little power or control in their lives, providing them with spaces to make choices and have a voice is critical. Although it can be challenging to ethically and safely involve children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation in data collection, it is vital, as children and young people, when asked, often highlight a number of problems with the care and assistance received.

It was on this premise that the RISE Learning project, a project led by Family for Every Child, set out to engage children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation through this research. Through this research children and young people were engaged as "experts" based on their own experience of recovery and reintegration; to be able to recommend improved services to ensure better reintegration outcomes for children affected by child sexual exploitation.

The RISE team set out to create evidence through this report not only of children and young people's recommendation of recovery and reintegration; but also on the rigorous and ethical process that is the core of any child led research. This was a very significant learning experience for the RISE team, the research partners, Kumudini and Sath Sath; also this research provided important inputs to the participatory research experience and learning of Family for Every Child. The greatest learning came from the children and young people involved in this research, whether it be their perspectives of (re)integration with continuing family connection; or in their interpersonal relationships with their mothers; their insights on managing risks during the research process, etc. All these learnings were clear evidence of the importance and value of engaging children and young people through safe and ethical ways; to facilitate spaces for them to be able to voice their views and recommendations for practitioners and policymakers to improve recovery and reintegration, beyond meeting ticked checklists.

This particular research creates ways for more future work on the theme of child sexual exploitation, children and young people's participation, and their meaningful, safe and ethical engagement in strengthening individual needs specifically towards recovery and reintegration in an integrated way to all programming for children's care.

Lopa Bhattacharjee

Family for Every Child / RISE Coordination Lead

---

1. Brown, K. (2006) 'Participation and Young People Involved in Prostitution', Child Abuse Review, 15 (5), pp. 294-312

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Reintegration (as defined by Youth Researchers)

For the purposes of this study, reintegration was defined by youth researchers as: to enable the children to have a permanent, protective, healthy and independent environment, along with the identification of their goal and objective in their lives, after taking them out from exploitative/vulnerable situations or places.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. A child may be considered to be a victim of sexual exploitation 'when she/he takes part in a sexual activity in exchange for something (e.g. gain or benefit, or even the promise of such) from a third party, the perpetrator, or by the child her/himself' (ECPAT International and ECPAT Luxembourg)

Child sexual abuse

Is defined in The Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007) for the purposes of criminalisation as: "engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities" It should be noted that this definition does not cover consensual sexual activity between children.

Stigma

A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person (Oxford English Dictionary)

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people (Oxford English Dictionary)

Introduction

The research is part of a wider project, the RISE Learning Network, which aims to promote and facilitate learning on Recovery and Reintegration (R&R) approaches that improve outcomes for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation (CSE). It is the first phase of the project implemented by Family for Every Child, a global alliance of national civil society organisations in collaboration with Retrak and the International Centre: researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking at Bedfordshire University (supporting the project in an advisory role). The project was co-funded by Oak Foundation and Terre des Hommes Netherlands.

The sexual exploitation of children is a global yet still largely hidden problem. It has devastating long-term impacts on children's physical, mental and reproductive health and social wellbeing, as well as their education and ability later to find work and safe relationships in supportive communities. It can leave them stigmatised, ostracised, without support or choices and vulnerable to further exploitation. Improving outcomes for children affected by CSE requires a holistic, flexible and individualised response.

This research is the second of two learning projects co-ordinated by the RISE Learning Network and aims to engage with young people affected by sexual violence to explore their views and recommendations on what makes for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration in order to strengthen policy and practice. The themes identified for the learning project were informed by a regional mapping conducted by the RISE team in September 2015 in the three focus regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub Saharan Africa and South and Central Asia. The regional mapping informed the following as one of the learning themes:

- Learning from survivors, and their role as peer supporters, experts and advocates in improving practice and policy, particularly on issues of shame, stigma, acceptance and community integration - acknowledging rural and urban differences that greatly affect how help can be delivered and what young people can aspire to in their future work, relationships and their role in society. The impact of other significant differences in cultural, social and economic context will be gauged through widening the circle of survivors from whose experiences we can learn.

The theme of this learning project was further informed and concretised by a thematic report on reintegration 'Connecting the Dots: supporting the recovery and reintegration of children affected by sexual exploitation' by Claire Cody (May 2017) which, effectively, acted as a literature review for the learning project.

Research Partners

Sath Sath has worked with street connected children and youth since 1998, focusing specifically on boys and their issues. Sath Sath is a pioneer organisation to work on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) of boys in Nepal. They work exclusively with boys and young men who are survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation. They work to withdraw or liberate boys from their hazardous situations and prioritise social reintegration for boys who have been sexually exploited. The social reintegration process involves outreach to boys with support offered such as capacity and skills development; progress is monitored through regular follow-up activities with reintegrated boys. Depending on the needs of the target beneficiaries, reintegration starts with temporary residence and support at a Crisis Centre. During this transition period either boys' families are contacted or boys are reintegrated individually into society. The reintegration process depends upon the individual case of each child but takes a minimum of four months.

Kumudini was set up by a team of experts in 2014 who have extensive experience in working with abused, exploited and trafficked children. Kumudini is a collective initiative that provides care and protection to girl and women victims of abuse and exploitation and also works with vulnerable groups in a preventative capacity. Kumudini is operating an emergency receiving facility for girls who are sexually exploited and trafficked, where services are provided that focus on the healing process and protect girls from further abuse. Girls and young women stay in this facility for up to six months, during this time contact is re-established with their families, risk assessments are undertaken and the girls and their families are slowly prepared for reintegration. When families are ready to accept their girls and there is no risk of re-abuse, the girls are reintegrated with their families and follow-up support provided over the course of one year.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Reintegration in Context

Child sexual abuse and exploitation

Although this report is focused on child sexual exploitation, a small number of the research participants were affected by child sexual abuse (see glossary for definitions). Consequently the term 'sexual abuse' is used when referring to the broader framework of the sexual abuse of children and young people; and child sexual exploitation is seen as a form of child sexual abuse.

Global statistics on the number of children affected by child sexual exploitation (CSE) are relatively unreliable as many children never report sexual abuse. However, a study by UNICEF in 2014 estimated that around 120 million girls under the age of 20 had been forced into a sexual act (UNICEF, 2014). Most studies focus on the sexual abuse and exploitation of girls. Much less is known about the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in general. An analysis of available data for 24 countries (primarily in high and middle-income countries) showed that sexual violence in childhood ranged from 8% to 31% for girls and 3% to 17% for boys (Ligiero et. al., 2019). The study further eludes that sexual violence against children is often shrouded in silence and stigma. As a result, many victims never disclose their experiences or seek help. The reasons for this are varied but can include fear of retaliation, guilt, shame, confusion, lack of confidence in the abilities or willingness of others to help, and lack of knowledge of available support services.

There is growing recognition of the need for research on the root causes of child sexual abuse (in order to inform prevention strategies) and for more research on the sexual abuse of boys. A recent 2018 global desk review by Family for Every Child states that sexual abuse of boys is not responded to because of gendered social norms which mean that boys are seen as less vulnerable than girls to sexual abuse. Further research undertaken by Family For Every Child on the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys in Nepal[2](Voice of Children, 2019,) and in the region more generally (Blagbrough et. al. forthcoming) highlights the importance of norms on masculinity that hide the true nature and scope of the sexual abuse of boys in South and South East Asian societies. Despite this, there are considerable gaps in our understanding of how gender and sexuality, as well as other aspects of identity such as disability and ethnicity, influence the recovery and reintegration experiences of those affected. Research that has taken place points to the added layers of vulnerability and discrimination that some children may face as a result of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity or disability (Cody, 2017).

The need for a multi-agency approach for addressing CSE is widely acknowledged. And as a result, organisations in the anti-trafficking field developed an approach known as the 'three Ps' looking at 'prevention, protection and prosecution' which has been implemented alongside a 'three Rs' approach, 'redress, rehabilitation or recovery, and reintegration' (Ezelio, 2014).

2. http://www.voiceofchildren.org.np/reporters

Child sexual exploitation and reintegration in Nepal

There has been no policy or legislative review of child sexual exploitation in Nepal (in particular looking at the situation of boys) and similarly, as Nepal is identified as a country with an on-going problem of the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, the majority of existing research (and practice) focuses on the experiences of women and girls from Nepal who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation (Buet et al. 2012). For example, a report by Terre des Hommes Nepal states that as many as one-third of females working in Kathmandu's Adult Entertainment Services (AES) are under the age of 18 (Frederick, 2010) and in Freedom Fund's 2016 report into sexual exploitation in AES found that two-thirds of their sample group of (87) young women started working in the sector when they were 16 years or younger. (Freedom Fund, 2018).

A 2016 study that undertook retrospective and descriptive analysis of cases of sexual assault of women and girls [3] in Nepal, analysed 55 cases between 2012-2016 and showed that 46% of the victims were aged between 13-15 years old and 20% aged less than 10 years old. Similarly, 87% of perpetrators were acquaintances of the victims with only 13% who were not known to the victims (Hirachan and Limbu 2016). A preparatory study for a situation analysis of the sexual exploitation of children in Nepal (CWIN and ECPAT Luxembourg, 2015) highlights a number of key push factors regarding CSE such as poverty, lack of livelihood options, structural inequalities in society, gender discrimination, lack of educational and employment opportunities and a lack of protective legislation, services and regulations.

The Nepalese Government has endorsed two policy documents relating to reintegration practice, the Guidelines for Rehabilitation Centers (2011) and the National Minimum Standards Operating Procedures for the Rehabilitation of Trafficking Survivors (2011). Moreover, there are also Standards for Operation and Management of Residential Child Care Homes (2012)[4]. However, as all reintegration programs for sexually exploited children are carried out by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who each have their own operating standards there is little standard practice regarding reintegration. According to a 2017 report published by the National Human Rights Commission, a total of 603 individuals,   who had experienced sexual exploitation, were provided with rehabilitation services by eight NGOs. Among them 174 were below eighteen years of age. The same report states that 104 children out of a total of 161 were reintegrated with their families. It is further mentioned that a total of 340 returnees received support from the organisations, including seed money and skilled-based training during reintegration and among them 174 were below eighteen years.

In much of the research on CSE in Nepal, high levels of stigma and a lack of acceptance are highlighted as key difficulties for women and children who are returning to their families after exploitation (Chen and Marcovici 2003, Simkhada, 2008). Research indicates that because returning girls and young women are seen as 'spoiled' it may be hard for them to marry. Although one report highlights a strategy for Nepalese returnees of choosing marriage to reduce the rejection faced by families and communities as well as improve access to livelihoods (Richardson et al. 2009).

3.No figures are given for the sex of the victims so it is assumed victims are all female

4. See: Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (2013) A Report on Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives Led by Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Government of Nepal.

Reintegration practice

Although there is a plethora of legal tools that outline the duty of states to support

children affected by CSE, effective monitoring mechanisms do not appear to exist (Asquith and Turner, 2008). Guidelines on children's reintegration provide important guidance on recovery and reintegration – although they do not specifically focus on children affected by CSE (Interagency Group on Children's Reintegration, 2016). There is a growing interest in the views of reintegrated children themselves to discover what 'successful reintegration' looks like and explore possible indicators of success for reintegration (Veitch, 2013). The RISE Monitoring and Evaluation of Reintegration Toolkit [5] provides guidance on measuring successful outcomes of reintegration of children including children affected by child sexual exploitation. This toolkit is informed by the evidence based learning of 22 organisations engaged through a community of practice. The toolkit highlights the importance of children's participation in their own case management and reintegration planning and follow up. Organisations have emphasised the need to involve and engage children in their own reintegration through similar participatory approaches. However, research in this area is limited. As a result this research project has been informed by a thematic report 'Connecting the Dots: Supporting the Recovery and Reintegration of Children Affected by Sexual Exploitation' (Cody, 2017) which builds on findings from field research carried out in Nepal, Thailand and the Philippines in 2015 with survivors of CSE and their service providers as well as an initial review of literature. The report represented a first attempt to start 'connecting the dots' between primary data and existing literature to help states and service providers better respond to the needs of children affected by CSE.

Nine key areas from the report were identified for reintegration practitioners: 1) case management and the role of professional caregivers, 2) key domains of support, 3) basic needs and shelter, 4) health, 5) education, vocational training and livelihoods, 6) life skills and peer support, 7) access to cultural, religious and recreational activities 8) legal support and 9) family and community strengthening.

5. https://riselearningnetwork.org/resource/monitoring-evaluation-of-reintegration-toolkit/

From the field work and literature review undertaken in 'Connecting the Dots', six key barriers to accessing quality care and assistance during reintegration were identified: 1) discrimination, 2) fear, 3) a lack of child friendly, confidential, consistent, long-term support, 4) survivors' lack of knowledge and awareness about available resources, 5) lack of resources, including funding associated with care, and 6) barriers to accessing identity documents.

Through the initial literature review, two 'promising' and overarching approaches to providing care were identified, trauma-informed approaches, and rights-based approaches, as well as nine cross-cutting principles of practice:

- Establishing trust;
- Committing to the child and building a solid relationship;
- Prioritising safety;
- Promoting agency;
- Taking a non-judgmental approach;
- Promoting acceptance and belonging;
- Encouraging hope;
- Providing access to information;
- Ensuring and maintaining confidentiality and privacy.

Nine key areas from the report were identified for reintegration practitioners: 1) case management and the role of professional caregivers, 2) key domains of support, 3) basic needs and shelter, 4) health, 5) education, vocational training and livelihoods, 6) life skills and peer support, 7) access to cultural, religious and recreational activities 8) legal support and 9) family and community strengthening.

Research Methods

Research Questions

There were two research questions for the study:

1. How do children and young people (affected by child sexual exploitation) experience reintegration in the community?
2. What are the key issues that reintegration services need to consider when enabling the reintegration of children (affected by child sexual exploitation) into communities?

Refinement of research themes

The findings from the 'Connecting the Dots' research were used as a basis to develop this research. Consequently, the 'Connecting the Dots' report author, Claire Cody, and the Learning Project Advisor for the RISE Project, Helen Veitch, identified four themes (as follows) that were presented to Youth Researchers for the RISE project in November 2017 for refinement and adaptation to the context of their peers:

1. Safety
2. Identity and Stigma
3. Belonging and Acceptance
4. Normality

Youth Researchers adapted these four themes to their context in Nepal, refined and re-arranged the themes for the research, developing five research questions as a basis for focus group discussions with their peers.

FGD 1: Getting to Know You: What are children and young people's experiences of (re)integration?

FGD 2: Theme on Identity: How do (re)integrated children and young people see themselves?

FGD 3: Theme on Stigma and Discrimination: How do (re)integrated children and young people understand and experience stigma and discrimination?

FGD 4: Theme on Acceptance: How do (re)integrated children and young people understand and experience acceptance?

FGD 5: Theme on Independence: How do (re)integrated children and young people understand and experience independence?
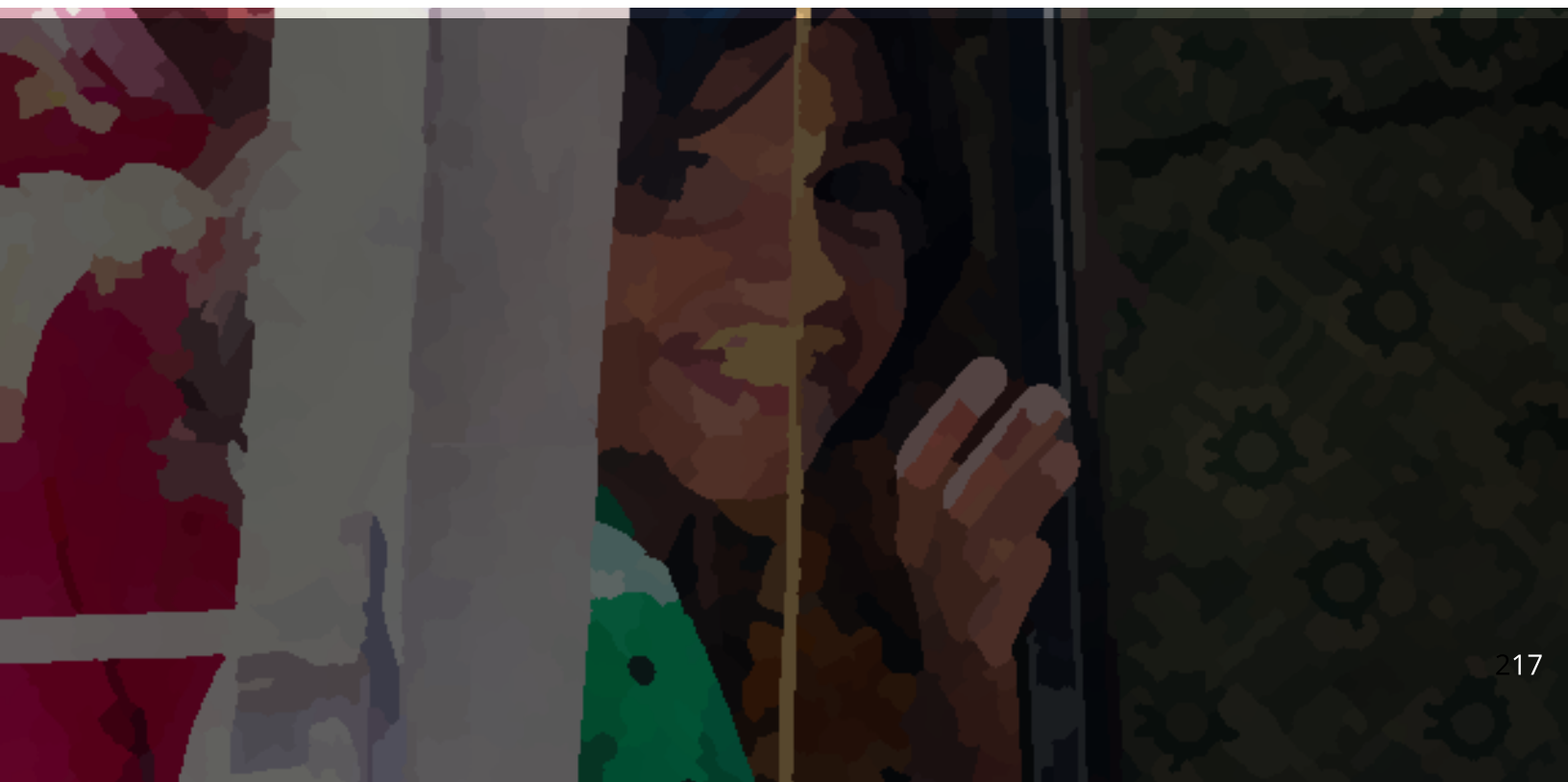
In an additional workshop to develop recommendations research participants answered the following question:

What recommendations do (re)integrated children and young people have for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration?

In addition, the research team started using the term 'integration' instead of 're-integration' as, in discussions with Youth Researchers, it became apparent that they and their peers were not 'reintegrated' with their families, instead they were all living independently from their parents (either with friends or siblings) - although most Youth Researchers had good relationships with their parents, they no longer lived in the same community.

Research Sites: Research was carried out in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. Kathmandu incorporates the three districts of Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, known collectively as Kathmandu Valley. The latest census report (2012) indicates that Kathmandu Valley is a highly urbanised and populated place. It is the district with the highest population density (4,416 people per square km); the fastest population growth rate (61.23%); and also with the highest literacy rate (86.3%). Freedom Fund research of 2019 [6] has found that the current population of minors working in adult entertainment venues in the Kathmandu Valley is approximately 1650. It has also been found that the proportion of minors working across the adult entertainment sector as a whole is 17 percent. While the majority of workers - 62 percent - began working in the sector when they were under 18. This study also found that the adult entertainment sector is a highly sexually exploitative place for children to work, with 60% working in environments of sexual exploitation.

6. https://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Prevalence-of-minors-in-Kathmandus-adult-entertainment-sector-FINAL-print.pdf

Research Teams

Adult Researchers: The two research teams were made up of a Research Co-ordinator (adult) for each project, appointed by partner NGOs to co-ordinate and lead research activities. Research Co-ordinators acted as the point of contact for the project and undertook data collection and analysis and were primary authors of the respective research reports. Adult Researchers supported Research Co-ordinators in co-ordination of the project and in data collection (as co-facilitator and/or note-taker of FGDs) and analysis; and in some cases were involved in write-up of the key findings.

Youth Researchers: Youth Researchers were carefully selected for this project by research partners (SathSath and Kumudini) and had similar backgrounds to the research participants (i.e. who had lived experience of sexual abuse and had successfully (re)integrated). Youth Researchers were aged between 18 and 26 (approximately two years older, on average, than research participants). Individual risk assessments were made of all Youth Researchers before and after short-listing to   ensure their welfare would not be jeopardized by undertaking the role. Youth Researchers were involved in refinement of research questions for FGDs, data collection (co-facilitation of FGDs) and 'sense checking' of data analysis.

Sath Sath:

Research Co-ordinator: Ms Kabita Shah

Adult Researcher: Mr Aman Bir Malakar

Youth Researchers: Mr Soben Tamang, Mr Sameep Thapa and Mr Sushil Sunwar

Kumudini:

Research Co-ordinator: Ms Anuradha Acharya

Adult Researcher: Ms Sabina Darshandhari

Youth Researchers: Ms Risu Thapa, Ms Laxmi Bhatta and Ms Laxmi Tamang. The fourth Youth Researcher was not available to give consent for publishing the name in this report.

Training of Researchers: Youth and Adult Researchers undertook three days in-country training on data analysis and research ethics in November 2017. In addition, at this training, Youth Researchers refined and adapted the research questions for FGDs to the Nepalese context. Adult Researchers attended 3 days in-country training on data analysis in September 2018.

Sampling: The research made use of purposive sampling (Marshall, 1996) where researchers actively selected the most productive sample to answer the research questions, utilizing a criterion sampling system (Given, 2008). The main criteria for children and young people in the sample were:

they have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation;

they are former or current beneficiaries of a reintegration program;

they are aged between 12 and 25 years old;

they voluntarily consent and agree to take part in the study;

they are male/female depending on the research site.

Identification of research participants was made through partner NGO databases or contact books of current and/or former beneficiaries who fitted the profile above. Kumudini collaborated with two partner NGOs, Asha Nepal and Biswas Nepal, who worked directly with the sample group. Consent meetings were then organised by Adult Researchers where the research project was explained in full to potential research participants and consent forms signed. Consent meetings took place at least a week prior to the first focus group discussion and consent was re-visited at the beginning of each focus group discussion.

Research Participants: A total of 21 children and young people made up the research participants. In total of 10 participants were male and 11 were female ranging in age from 16 to 26 years old.

	No.	Sex	Ages	Living situation	Employment/Study
Kumudini	11	female	16-26	6 living with family, 5 living independent from family	10 employed as security guards, NGO staff, beauticians, temporary police, domestic workers, waitresses, cooks and trekking guides.1 unemployed
Sath Sath	10	male	17-21	2 living with mothers, 1 living with relatives, 7 living with friends	4 students and 6 employed in cafes, restaurants and shopping malls.

Undertaking Participatory Research: Participatory research methods are a relatively new concept, promoted in research on and with children as a tool to explain the culture of childhood and children's social relationships (Prout & James, 1997) (Mayall, 2004). Participatory research involves a degree of collaboration between those who are normally solely the 'subjects' of research and those undertaking research. Participatory research is defined as research where the people whose lives are being studied are involved in collecting and analysing the data (Beazley & Ennew, 2006).

In this research project seven Youth Researchers were recruited to undertake data collection and analysis with their peers. Youth Researchers were similar to the sample group in that they had experienced sexual exploitation and had been through a reintegration program – many of the Youth Researchers were former beneficiaries of the NGO running the research. Youth Researchers were involved in all stages of the research project: identifying and refining the 'themes' for the focus group discussions (FGDs), co-facilitating all themed FGDs, co-facilitating a workshop to identify recommendations from research participants and undertaking 'sense-checking' of initial analysis. They will also be involved in dissemination activities, wherever possible.

Data Collection Methods

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Focus group discussions are known to be useful for exploring information about which people have a common understanding, for this study the key common denominators were that all the research participants had been beneficiaries of a reintegration program (after having experienced sexual abuse or exploitation), were of the same sex and were aged between 16 and 27 years old. Consequently, two sets of five FGDs were held with research participants in the two sites.

Each focus group discussion lasted approximately two hours and was held in community/NGO building. All FGDs were digitally recorded and facilitated by a Youth Researcher and an Adult Researcher with another Adult Researcher acting as Note Taker for the discussion.

The first FGD was a 'getting to know you' discussion to create trust and understanding between research participants and researchers as well as provide background data on the research participants (their stories of reintegration). The subsequent FGDs focused on different themes of reintegration: identity, stigma and discrimination, acceptance and independence. In addition, a workshop was organised with research participants on 'Recommendations for Practice' where research participants developed recommendations on how to improve services for other reintegrated children and young people.

Using Creative Methods: Working with children requires methodologies that facilitate trust and an atmosphere where children feel relaxed and comfortable. In this research creative and participatory techniques, such as drawing, dance and movement were used in data collection and in workshops to identify recommendations with research participants. Techniques used in Dance Movement Therapy were adapted to the research context and used with research participants in the first 'getting to know you' FGD to build trust between research participants and researchers. Throughout the themed FGDs dance and movement were   used to help energise research participants, to explore some of the more complex concepts tackled in the discussions and to end FGDs in order to   give a sense of 'closure' to research participants. The research team worked with Kolkata Sanved to adapt Dance Movement Therapy to the research context.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was undertaken in three stages for the themed FGDs, consequently analysis of each FGD was undertaken separately:

1. Coding of transcripts or note taking from each themed FGD where the large volume of data from a transcript were turned into descriptive codes   ;
2. Categorisation of codes into groups for each themed FGD;
3. Developing of key findings – for each FGD, this was also called 'theme development' as it involved identifying themes that connected the categories for each FGD.

Coding, categorisation and development of initial key findings was undertaken by Adult Researchers. Youth Researchers were involved in analysis through a specific workshop where Adult Researchers presented the initial analysis (codes, categories and any themes or key findings that were emerging from the data) and Youth Researchers undertook 'sense-checking' of these. Sense checking involved reviewing the findings with Adult Researchers to check on the meanings of key concepts, phrases or words in the specific context of their peers (children and young people who are re/integrated after sexual exploitation).

Testing: Facilitation plans for FGDs were tested by Youth Researchers.

Synthesised Findings and Recommendations: The synthesised findings for this report were made by comparing the key findings and conclusions from the two research projects, undertaken by Sath Sath and Kumudini, in reference to the research questions for the project. Similarly, recommendations for this synthesised report were developed by merging recommendations from the two research projects, in reference to the synthesised findings.

Limitations: Due to the small sample size for this research, findings cannot be generalised. Delays in the schedule for the research resulted in a number of Youth Researchers dropping out and new youth researchers were recruited. In addition, it was found that due to poor internet connection, virtual training on data analysis was not possible. Instead, Adult Researchers participated in a two-day training workshop on data analysis, held in Kathmandu in September 2018 and findings were refined during the write-up process - for the two research reports written by Sath Sath and Kumudini. Originally, it had been planned that Youth Researchers would be involved in categorisation of analysis and identification of key findings, however, as analysis became an iterative process it was Adult Researchers who undertook all levels of analysis and Youth Researchers were involved in 'sense-checking' of the key findings for each research project.

Research Ethics: Research ethics are concerned with respecting research participants throughout the project, partly by using agreed standards. Ethics standards are also designed to protect researchers and their institutions as well as the good name of research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). The ethics strategy for this study detailed the ethical issues that the research team were expecting to face during the course of the research project, outlining the key ethical issues and the research team's agreed response. Training on research ethics was undertaken with all researchers and included some testing of the ethical tools, consequently some new tools were developed (such as a Code of Conduct for researchers) and the ethical strategy and tools were adapted accordingly. The ethics strategy was used systematically throughout the study – particularly in data collection where a trained counsellor was on-hand should research participants want support.

Learning on Ethics [7]

Some of the key learnings on ethics of the research are outlined below:

Identifying hidden risks: by involving Youth Researchers in assessing the risks of their role as researchers with their peers, risks that adult researchers had not discussed were identified. The first, focused on male researchers (some of whom identified as gay) who were concerned that some of the research participants, their peers, might be sexually attracted to them. The second, was that Youth Researchers feared they would not be taken seriously by the research participants because they were the same age. As a result, researchers (adults and young people) developed a code of conduct for researchers that addressed these risks, as below:

7. This learning on ethics has been included as case studies in The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook (Second Edition) by Priscilla Alderson and Virginia Morrow (forthcoming)

Do not develop (romantic/intimate) relationships with research participants for the duration of the project. If you have had a relationship in the past with one of the research participants please let the Research Coordinator know and together you can develop a plan for how to manage this during the course of the research.   In general, please try not to interact with research participants during the course of the research project as this will influence the data you are collecting from them.

Dress formally when facilitating a focus group remember you have been hired as a 'researcher' so act professionally at all times during the research process.

Confidentiality in research with peers: Although the project focused on children's experiences of reintegration not sexual exploitation, it was recognised that children may share information of a sensitive nature in a setting where researchers and participants were peers. As confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a focus group, researchers used the 'toothpaste' activity [8] with participants to reinforce the point in each discussion.

Toothpaste Activity

Squeeze a large amount of toothpaste out of a tube of toothpaste and ask for a volunteer to put it back in. When they struggle to do this, discuss how it is the same for sharing information in a group – it is very hard to take it back! This activity, combined with 'Chatham House Rules' – you can talk about the issues we discussed but don't mention any names - helped remind researchers and participants about confidentiality.

Learning on the methodology

During the course of this 18 month project key learning was generated focusing on the implementation of this innovative, participatory methodology:

Development of research recommendations: initially, the recommendations developed as part of this research project did not connect to the findings. This was because workshops to develop recommendations were held before analysis had been undertaken (soon after FGDs had been held). This meant that the recommendations were based on the personal opinions or experiences of researchers rather than being derived out of the findings. Consequently, there was a disconnect between the findings and the recommendations. This was rectified by discussions with Adult Researchers during the write-up of the findings where they re-formulated and re-connected the recommendations to reflect the findings.

8. The toothpaste activity has been used by researchers from the International Centre: researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking based at Bedfordshire University – we are not sure where it originates from.

Data analysis and sense checking: data analysis was a less familiar process than data collection for all the researchers and the analysis methods (coding of transcripts from FGDs, categorisation of codes and theme development) were over complex; better suited to extended interviews than focus groups. Consequently, much analysis took place in the write-up of findings where, in an iterative question and answer process, the analysis was refined collectively by Adult Researchers, and the Learning Project Advisor and Coordinator. Logistically, it was too difficult to involve Youth Researchers in this process so, instead, they undertook 'sense-checking' of the analysis; clarifying terms and double-checking assumptions or reasoning behind the findings.

Evaluation feedback: an evaluation of the RISE Learning Project highlighted a deeper understanding of the reintegration process for practitioners and a stronger sense of solidarity and empowerment for reintegrated children and young people - as can be seen by these two quotes from project participants:

> *We have gained such a good understanding of reintegration, from the girls' perspectives. We have been working in this field for a long time, but we did not know whether what we are doing was good or bad, we did not have in-depth understanding about the girls' reintegration process.*

> *Since the research methodology emphasises the participation of young people it creates feelings of acceptance, self-esteem and belonging among the youth researchers and research participants. They no longer feel marginalised; they feel fulfilled and are given respect and consideration.*

Synthesised Findings

Identification of the synthesised findings for this report were made by comparing the key findings and conclusions from the two research projects in reference to the research questions for the project.

Findings from the Two Research Projects

Themes for the synthesis analysis have been developed by comparing the key findings and conclusions from the two research projects which focused on boys and young men (Sath Sath) and girls and young women (Kumudini).

Research with boys and young men: Four key findings were identified from the FGDs with boys and young men that explore issues of victimhood, identity and masculinity. But a key theme running throughout the findings is that Nepali society does not appear to accept that the sexual abuse or exploitation of boys takes place.

1. **"Boys too are sexually abused and exploited"** Young men in the focus groups reported that Nepalese society is unaware that boys as well as girls can be sexually abused or exploited and that this means boys tend to keep silent about their exploitation. When boys are exploited there is no support or concern for them as victims. Furthermore, perpetrators use the boys' fear of exposure (as a victim of sexual exploitation and the subsequent discrimination they would face) to control them and continue to exploit them.

2. **Identity crisis:** "I questioned myself many times, who am I?" Due to a lack of awareness that "boys too are sexually abused and exploited" the young men talked about being confused by their own experience of exploitation and questioned whether they were to blame. They felt unable to discuss their exploitation with family so moved online where they felt more comfortable talking about these issues and found friends who had similar experiences. However, they also recognised the grooming behaviour of perpetrators actively looking online for boys to exploit.

3. **"Acceptance means, first accept yourself, as who you are"** Young men stated they experienced discrimination as being excluded and isolated – particularly by community members who did not understand that the changes in their behaviour were caused by the trauma they were experiencing as victims of sexual exploitation. Young men and boys reported that boys are expected to be strong – physically, emotionally and financially – but the boys feel that they don't necessarily fit into that mould. Ultimately, they stated that accepting themselves as survivors who have experienced trauma was the first step in being accepted by others.

4. **Independent yet Responsible Sons:** Boys in Nepal are expected to be bold, strong and provide for their families. Young men reported that although it took them a long time to recover from their exploitation, when their families accepted them as a 'survivor', this was a strong motivating factor for them to study or work hard. They stated that their mothers were much more accepting than their fathers but also that, in some cases, their families accepted them more readily when they became   financially independent.

Research with girls and young women: Four key findings were identified from the FGDs with girls and young women that explored issues of acceptance and understanding, with a cross-cutting theme of independence.

1. **The experience of stigma and discrimination:** Girls and young women appeared to experience stigma by being labelled as 'promiscuous' or from their association with an NGO that supports sexually abused children. All the girls and young women reported facing discriminatory behaviour from family, neighbours and friends including verbal abuse, unequal treatment, belittling, ignoring, not being invited to social functions and, in particular, 'backbiting' (being criticized publicly but behind their backs).

2. **Mothers and the importance of acceptance and understanding:** Girls and young women stated that support from their family was vital and they defined support as understanding their situation, accepting them as they are and providing protection. Their mothers appeared to display the most open acceptance of them as 'survivors' of sexual exploitation; girls and young women spoke of their mothers' acceptance as "the one who listens, encourages and supports without conditions". Acceptance and respect from the wider family appeared to emerge when the girls and young women started to earn an income.

3. **The 'good' daughter** - financial independence leads to freedom and more responsibility: Girls and young women talked about and experienced independence in two key ways: economically and emotionally. Economic independence was described as being able to earn an income or run a small business and it was found that when girls and young women were financially independent their families and communities appeared to accept them more readily. Emotional independence was described as 'standing on their two feet' and equated with successful recovery from traumatic experiences particularly for girls who were able to draw learning from their traumatic experiences. However, it was financial independence (and stability) that appeared to dominate the findings – giving girls and young women personal confidence and freedom as well as enabling them to fulfil the role of a 'good' and responsible daughter by providing for their family.

4. **Looking inward to move forward - building self-esteem and self-reliance**: Girls and young women received a range of support but interventions that took a holistic approach (looking at wellbeing as well as economic factors) had the most impact on their reintegration. A holistic approach incorporated life-skills and psycho-social counselling which appeared to boost self-esteem, socializing with girls who have similar experiences increased the girls' self-confidence which was further increased by educational support and vocational training. This support helped the girls to put the past behind them, attain emotional independence and realise the importance of 'speaking up'. In addition, through developing a 'can do' attitude and the use of positive thinking, they were able to confront those who discriminated against them and live independently.

Identification of themes for this synthesis report was made by comparing the key findings and conclusions from the two research projects in reference to the research questions for the project.

Please note all names of research participants in this report are pseudonyms to protect their identity.

1. Stigma and Discrimination - A Gendered Story of Exclusion

Stigma and the importance of gendered narratives

Stigma (defined as a negative stereotype) is experienced by boys and girls in the two studies through gendered narratives, the trope of the 'fallen woman' for girls and the 'strong man' for boys. The stigma of being sexually exploited is experienced by girls and young women in this study as being labelled 'promiscuous'. However, girls do not speak directly about this 'promiscuity' label, for example, one young woman, Shila [9] , explains that her neighbours 'back-bite' or gossip about her:

'Neighbours also say bad things about me, like, 'she has done this thing, she has become like this, working like this, and she should not be allowed to come home'.

Shila, 16 years old

In addition, a number of girls and young women appear to experience stigma 'by association' because of their connection to NGOs that are known by the community to support sexually exploited children:

'I was exploited but they would not say that I was exploited but they would directly say that I stayed in 'Maiti Nepal' [name of an NGO].'

Rita, 25 years old

Women and girls' preference to speak indirectly about stigma reflects cultural taboos that forbid discussion of sexuality or sexual exploitation. In addition, the label of promiscuity attached to girls and young women who have been sexually exploited simultaneously denies their victimhood and reinforces the trope or narrative of the 'fallen woman' who has lost her innocence or virginity.

In general, children and young people appear to find it easier to talk about discrimination (behaviour based on a negative stereotype) than stigma due to the taboos around discussing sexual activity.

For boys and young men, stigma appears to be a more complex situation that is closely related to conceptions of masculinity. Boys and young men experience stigma as a 'lack of acceptance' in two ways. Firstly, they talk about a lack of acceptance from society in general that boys could be victims of sexual abuse or exploitation:

'When will our society realise this? They think boys can never be sexually abused. Even if abused, it's OK 'boys are boys'. They forget that the trauma and pain of sexual abuse are the same for girls and boys?'

Arnav, 20 years old

9. All names for research participants are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the children and young people involved

Secondly, due to dominant notions of masculinity in Nepal that do not accept homosexuality, boys are labelled as homosexual simply because they are sexually exploited by men. This appears to have been internalised by many of the boys and young men in this study who express 'confusion' about their sexuality.

Children and young people in this study appear to stigmatise themselves or blame themselves for their own exploitation, talking about their exploitation in terms of their own 'bad qualities' or 'bad behaviour'.

For boys and young men, the layers of stigma attached to victimhood and homosexuality are experienced as a palpable fear of exposure (of being a victim and therefore of being 'unmanly') – this fear is used by both perpetrators and family members to control the boys:

"My father then threatened me that if I take legal action then he will disclose my past history to all. I don't disagree and deny that my past was not good. My father said that I cannot claim rights on his property. Although we lived in the same house, we never talked with each other. He never considered me as his son."

Sohil, 20 years old

Discrimination - isolation and exclusion

Discrimination is typically experienced by both boys and girls as exclusion and isolation by friends, family and the community. For girls, this is experienced as gossip and public criticism of their past behaviour which is presumed to be promiscuous. For boys, it is their emotional and 'unmanly' experience of trauma that appears to be the primary cause of their exclusion and isolation.

Reintegrated children express feelings of rejection, isolation and exclusion from family members, friends and the community who stopped talking to them and stopped inviting them to family or community events:

'But my relatives such as my uncles do not treat me well, as at times they even feign knowing me; they behave as if they do not know me.'

Shila, 16 years old

'In terms of friends, they were good at the beginning when they did not know about my profession [in the entertainment industry] but later on when they came to know about my work they...I mean, the close friends of mine, stopped talking to me. They just changed.'

Sheetal, 18 years old

For girls and young women their exclusion is often pre-empted by what they call 'back-biting' (public criticism of them behind their back). Boys and young men feel that their exclusion and isolation is because of a lack of understanding by society of their experience of trauma. They describe trauma as changes in their behaviour where they become more emotional – this behaviour does not correlate with the concept of masculinity in Nepal which is essentially about being strong and bold – physically, emotionally and financially.

Although many children and young people describe existing discrimination of their families based on caste and poverty, it appears that the discrimination both boys and girls face individually from their experience of sexual exploitation is often extended to their families and results in a subsequent lowering of the status of their family in the community.

2. Acceptance – a key indicator of reintegration

The flip-side of exclusion and isolation is acceptance; for the children and young people in these studies the idea of acceptance is a key indicator of their success in their reintegration journey and starts with themselves.   Firstly, accepting that they are not to blame for their exploitation - they are a victim. Secondly, accepting that they are a 'survivor' - someone who has survived a traumatic experience and thirdly, the acceptance of family members, in particular parents accepting that their daughter or son is both a victim and a survivor of sexual exploitation.

Boys talk of feeling confused about their experience of sexual abuse, about their sexual orientation and whether they are to blame for their abuse.

"I actually wanted to know more about the changes I was going through like physical, mental and emotional. I was totally confused and I started to surf the internet. I wanted to make as many new friends as possible… I started to find similar people with similar interests and problems. I was dying to share my feelings and the internet became the obvious platform. I was very comfortable chatting and talking about myself with my online friends."

Bishrut, aged 18

Because of this confusion, both boys and girls stress the importance of understanding and accepting themselves as a first step in the reintegration process, in particular, accepting that they are not to blame for their exploitation, that they are a victim (i.e. that wrong has been done to them - they have not brought this on themselves).   For boys and young men this is expressed as having a new identity.

Another step in the reintegration process appears to be the acceptance of family members, in particular parents accepting that their daughter or son is both a victim and a survivor of sexual exploitation. According to the children and young people, mothers appeared to be more accepting than fathers often due to a closer relationship between mothers and their children, than fathers. And for many of the girls, the acceptance of their mothers appears to be a crucial step in helping them to accept themselves, as Sushila poignantly describes:

'When I went to my family home after 2 -3 years, it is a courtesy to inquire where I had been all those years and what I was doing. They keep questioning you endlessly. But my mother did not ask me any such questions. She did not ask what I was doing all this while and how I survived. At that time I was very thin. My mother touched my body and she touched me everywhere. She said what had become of me. That's why I think my mother loves me. This is all I have to say. The things that we do not want to share and say, she understands it and that is a great thing. That's why my mother loves me. '

Sushila, 25 years old

For girls and young women, 'acceptance' is equated with 'support' - when someone accepts them (as a victim/survivor) and shows an understanding of their situation - they feel supported and protected by them, and see this person as a 'protector'. In some cases, girls talk about their parents defending them against discrimination (gossip and 'back-biting') from extended family or neighbours.

Acceptance by friends is also important, for boys in particular, many of whom feel they can't discuss their experiences of exploitation with their parents. But these friends are not necessarily their 'old' friends who knew them before their exploitation; both boys and girls talked about acceptance from friends who are in a similar situation to themselves (having experienced sexual exploitation). Boys and young men explained that they have found this group of friends online, whereas girls and young women have found them at NGOs offering support.

The Importance of Independence

Two types of independence were explored by girls and young women: emotional and financial independence. Many of the characteristics described by girls as emotional independence appear to correlate with well-known resilience factors and they equate emotional independence with a successful recovery from traumatic experiences. When boys and young men speak of independence they focus on financial independence; earning an income of their own and being financially independent from their family. Both boys and girls talk with pride about being a 'provider' to their families, contributing to their family's income and consequently being a good daughter or son; responsible and loyal.

Independence and integration: In many cases, both boys and girls had moved away from their family home (in the rural area) and were, at the time of the study, living in the city independently from their families, often living with friends. It was clear from Youth Researchers, when they identified the theme of 'independence' for discussion by research participants that most of them were integrated into an urban community of friends and work colleagues rather than reintegrated with their family of origin in rural communities. For many Youth Researchers, they had not reintegrated with their families because they had found employment or education in Kathmandu and, particularly for the male researchers, these opportunities were not available in rural communities. This living situation appears to be reflected in the research participants' exploration of 'independence' as a concept, which is defined in two ways by girls and young women: emotional and financial.

Emotional Independence is described as 'standing on your own two feet', being able to make decisions on your own or being able to make 'good decisions', having moral integrity (knowing right from wrong) and is equated with a successful recovery from traumatic experiences. In addition, girls and young women talk about emotional independence as being able to learn from their 'bad experiences'. Many of the characteristics described by girls as emotional independence appear to correlate with well-known resilience factors such as self-efficacy and the ability to re-frame and learn from the past [10].

Emotional independence appears to have been fostered in girls and young women through the provision of services by NGOs. Girls and young women report that life-skills training and psycho-social counselling boosts their self-esteem and that socializing with girls who have similar experiences increases their self-confidence. This support helps the girls to put the past behind them and attain emotional independence. The ability to look back on their experience of sexual exploitation and learn from it appears to motivate some of the girls and young women to become independent, instilling the importance of positive thinking, developing a 'can do' attitude and 'speaking up' for themselves:

'My ability to look at the past positively allows me to stand on my own feet and take responsibility for myself.'

Rina, 19 years old

Girls and young women also mention an increase in self-confidence that comes from educational support and vocational training which enables them to earn an income of their own; connecting emotional independence with financial independence.

10. See Bandura in Turner et. al. (1993), Spaccarelli (1994) and Veitch et. al. (2014)

Financial Independence: When boys and young men speak of independence they focus on financial independence; earning an income of their own and being financially independent from their family. Financial independence is often associated with an increase in self-confidence or dignity for the children and young people in this study, and it appears to be connected to feeling a greater sense of acceptance and respect from others towards them.

Both boys and girls talk with pride about being a 'provider' to their families and contributing to their family's income which, in turn, contributes to an increase in the status of the family as a whole. This role of provider is connected to the concept of 'acceptance' by family members. Twenty-year-old Girish explains that it was only when he was financially independent that his family accepted him:

"I felt my family accepted me when I was able to stand on my own feet and was able to do something on my own. I kept the family name intact and also created an identity for myself."

Whereas, for 22 year old Rasmi, she noticed that her family's attitude towards her became more favourable:

"Though I am not educated I was able to earn some money. If you earn some money then the perception of people towards you will be changed."

Both girls and boys connect their role as a provider to the family income with being a good daughter or son; responsible and loyal. The role of 'provider' in Nepalese culture is usually associated with the eldest son but is becoming more commonly associated with both sons and daughters – as appears to be reflected in the findings from this study. Girls and young women report feeling an increase in self-confidence and a greater respect shown to them from their parents as a result of their contribution to the family income. For boys and young men, the acceptance and respect they receive from their parents increases their motivation to work hard in their chosen career:

"I aim to achieve certain goals and have a proper career, which is very important for me to show my relatives and society - so that they will not dare to stigmatize me."

Nimesh, aged 19

Girls and young women talk about enjoying the freedom that they experience from being financially independent, being able to choose how to spend their income. In addition, when they compare their current lives to the lives of other young women in their community, they feel they have more freedom than the other young women:

"I can go wherever I like. When we earn on our own, we do not have to ask others while spending it. If it is others we are dependent on, we have to ask before spending the money. Sometimes they may not allow you to buy something you need."

Sushma, 21 years old

Conclusions

 The themes identified for girls and young women in Kumudini's research, focus more closely on their experiences of stigma and discrimination than the themes identified by Sath Sath for boys and young men. Stigma, for girls, is being labelled as 'promiscuous' and discrimination is experienced primarily as social isolation or 'back-biting' (how girls describe public criticism of them behind their backs). The stigma and discrimination of girls and young women by community members is often extended to their parents and is exacerbated if the family is living in poverty. A societal lack of acceptance that boys can be sexually abused or exploited results in a deep fear, for boys and young men, of discrimination (in the form of ostracization) if their status as a victim of sexual exploitation is exposed. This leads to boys and young men searching for understanding and support from online friends rather than their family members. The fear of exposure, in particular, appears to be used by some people to control boys, either by threatening to expose them or, for perpetrators, using the online space where they feel most comfortable, to target and victimise them further.

 The narrative identified for boys and young men revolves around the lack of acceptance, in Nepali society, that boys can be sexually abused or exploited and gives rise to an identity crisis and self-blame among boys. This crisis is exacerbated by boys' experience of trauma – manifested as emotional breakdown and a lack of self-confidence - traits that are not considered, by Nepali society, to be 'manly'. Consequently, the boys and young men in this study appeared to take longer (than girls) to understand and accept that their 'unmanly' changes in behaviour, are in fact, traumatic responses to sexual exploitation. Acceptance is, however, an important issue for both boys and girls who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. The first step in the reintegration process appears to be accepting that they were a victim of sexual exploitation and are consequently not to blame for their own abuse. The second step seems to be accepting that they are now a 'survivor' of sexual abuse or exploitation; that they are resilient and have survived a traumatic experience. And the third step is the acceptance of their parents, particularly mothers, who subsequently motivate and support their daughters and sons to work harder in their studies or in employment.

 It is the concept of independence that dominates the findings for girls and young women who talk of emotional independence or self-reliance, which is facilitated by building self-esteem, positive thinking and socializing with other 'survivors' who can understand them. Both boys and girls talk of the importance of financial independence, when they are earning their own income which, in turn, gives them more freedom and confidence. Financial independence is particularly highly valued by parents (notably fathers) of reintegrated children, who appear to accept their sons and daughters more readily when they are able to contribute to the family income. This contribution is seen by both boys and girls as a clear indicator that they are a good 'son' or 'daughter' and results in a rise in status for the whole family, and additionally, helps to counter any stigma previously experienced by the family.

 The girls and boys, young men and women in this study displayed fortitude and resilience when faced with the stigma and discrimination by wider society as well as those closest to them. Their ability to understand and articulate these experiences has been complimented and enriched by reflection and analysis of this data by their peers, Youth Researchers – young men and women who have followed similar paths of integration, acceptance and independence.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on themes and conclusions of the synthesised data from the two research projects in Nepal.

Recommendations for prevention

- Develop public awareness programs that highlight the fact that boys as well as girls can be sexually abused and exploited and that address the stigma associated with sexual abuse.
- Develop community based peer-to-peer education programs for girls and boys (separately) on sexual abuse - that address local concepts of masculinity and feminity and highlight the fact that boys as well as girls can be sexually abused and exploited.
- Provide safe (non-judgemental and confidential) spaces for all boys and girls (boys in particular) to discuss sexuality – some of these safe spaces should be online.
- Develop activities that can intercept potential perpetrators operating online who are targeting boys to sexually exploit them.

## Recommendations on reintegration practice

Provide interventions that take a holistic approach to reintegration, incorporating the following approaches to ensure that all aspects of children's wellbeing are covered:

- Provide individual and group counselling, that makes use of creative processes (such as Dance Movement Therapy), and enables children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation:
  - to understand that they are not to blame for their exploitation and to accept that they were a victim;
  - boys should, in addition, have opportunities to explore their sexual orientation and the particularly corrosive stigma associated with homosexual abuse;
  - to explore the trauma they are experiencing as a result of this exploitation and help them to acknowledge the connections between their behaviour and recovering from a traumatic experience and;
  - to explore how they are a 'survivor' of sexual abuse, looking at their resilience in overcoming difficulties and what they have learning from the experience.
- Counsellors should focus on creating a safe, non-judgemental environment.
- Provide activities and spaces for girls and boys who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation to make friends with each other, this could be through peer support groups or organising social events.

- Provide activities and spaces for parents of girls and boys who have experienced sexual exploitation to learn about the exploitation process (so that they can accept that their son or daughter is a victim) and the indicators of trauma, so that they can offer emotional support. Activities could also take the form of peer support groups for parents.
- Explore further the possibility of supporting young people to live with their peers and setting up integration programs in urban communities rather than re-integration programs with their families in rural communities.
- To encourage acceptance of children by the communities in which they are reintegrated, provide activities for the communities surrounding children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation to come together to celebrate events, such as festivals, or to work together, for example, on a community project.
- Enable boys and girls who have experienced sexual exploitation to become financially independent by supporting further study, vocational and life-skills training or employment opportunities.

Gaps identified:

- This study identified a general but urgent need for provision of more reintegration programs for children who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation – both boys and girls - and a co-ordinated approach between NGO and state-run services.
- A number of research gaps were also identified – in particular on the root causes of child sexual exploitation in order to inform prevention activities. In addition, a policy and legislative review on child sexual abuse is needed in Nepal with a particular focus on the situation of the sexual exploitation of boys.
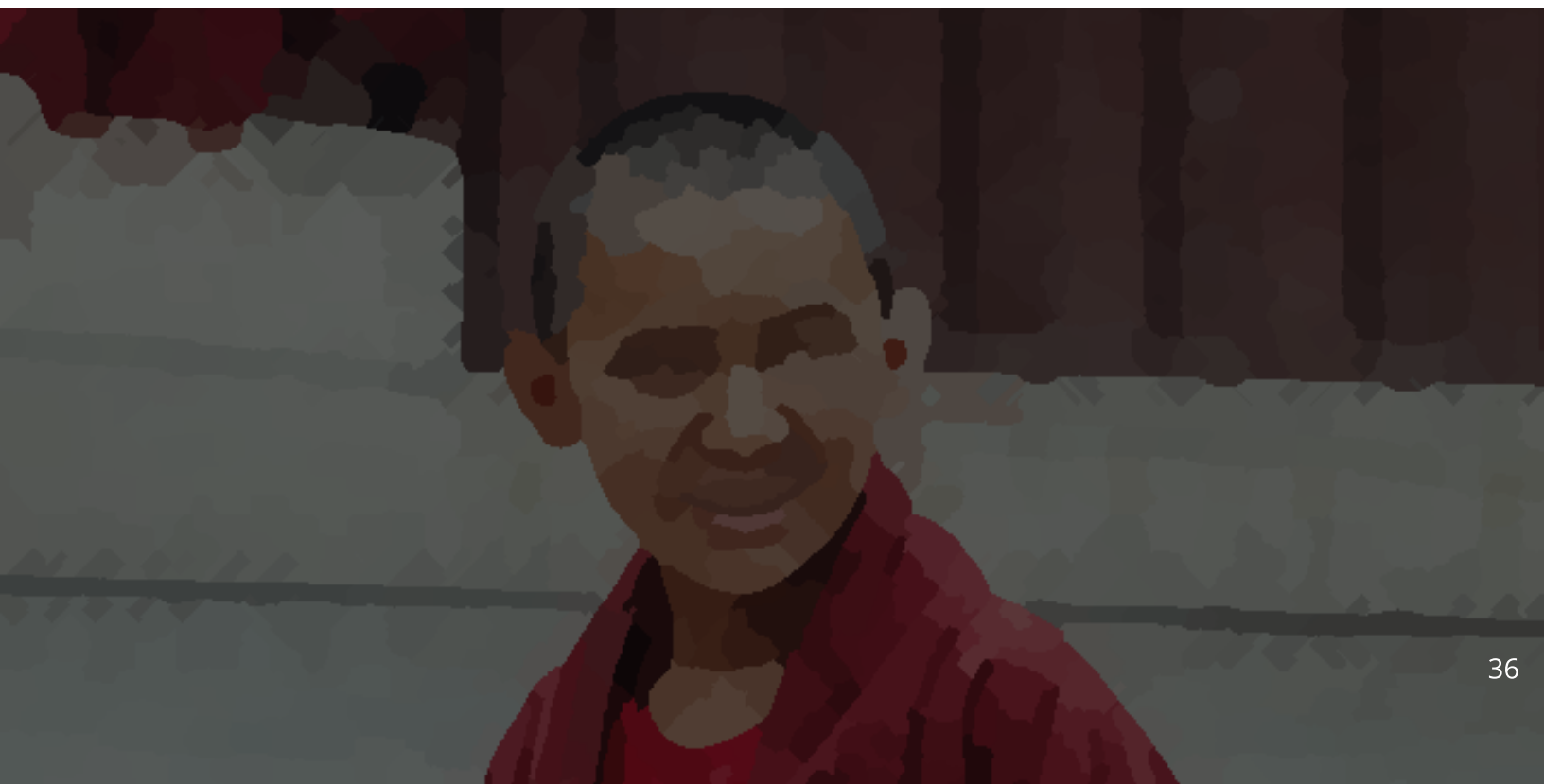
Bibliography

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) The ethics of research with children and young people. A practical handbook. London: Sage.

Asquith, S. and Turner, E. (2008) Recovery and reintegration of children from the effects of sexual exploitation and related trafficking. Geneva: Oak Foundation.

Beazley, H. and Ennew, J. (2006) Participatory methods and approaches: tackling the two tyrannies. Doing Development Research. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage p.189-199

Blagbrough, J., Engelbrecht, L. and Veitch, H. (forthcoming) Freedom at a Price: Caring for boys affected by sexual violence. A synthesis of primary research in Cambodia, India, Nepal and the Philippines. Family for Every Child.

Buet, L. Bashford, P. and Basnya, M. (2012) Looking towards tomorrow: A study on the reintegration of trafficking survivors. Nepal: Asha Nepal, Shakti Samuha and Terre des hommes Foundation.

Chen, C. and Marcovici, K. (2003) Exploring the status of reintegrated girls: A participatory study. Nepal: Save the Children US.

CWIN and ECPAT Luxembourg (2015), Preparatory Study for Situational Analysis of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Nepal. CWIN and ECPAT Luxembourg.

Cody, C. (2017). Connecting the dots: supporting the recovery and reintegration of children affected by sexual exploitation, Thematic report. Bangkok: ECPAT International, International Centre: researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking, University of Bedfordshire.

Interagency Group on Children's Reintegration (2016), Guidelines on children's reintegration. Family for Every Child.

Family for Every Child (2018), Caring for boys affected by sexual violence. Family for Every Child.

Frederick, J. (2002) Immaterial boys? A large-scale exploration of gender-based differences in child sexual exploitation service users. Sexual abuse: a journal of research and treatment p.1–27.

Frederick, J. (2010). Trafficking and Exploitation in the Entertainment and Sex Industries in Nepal: A Handbook For Decision Makers. Kathmandu, Nepal: Terre des Hommes Foundation.

Freedom Fund (2019). Prevalence of minors in Kathmandu's adult entertainment sector. Freedom Fund.

Freedom Fund (2018) Pathways for Children to Exit Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Kathmandu, Evidence in Practice Issue 3. Freedom Fund.

Given, L. M. (2008). The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research (Vol. 2). CA: Sage.

Greijer, S. and Doek, J. (2016) Terminology guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. ECPAT International and ECPAT Luxembourg.

Hirachan, N. and Limbu, D. (2016) An overview of sexual assault cases Nepal. Journal of Gandaki Medical

Ligiero, D., Hart, C., Fulu, E., Thomas, A., & Radford, L. (2019). What Works to Prevent Sexual Violence. Executive Summary. Together for Girls.

Marshall, M. (1996) Sampling for Qualitative Research. Family Practice – an International Journal. (13) p.522-525.

Mayall, B. (2004). Sociologies of Childhood. (M. Holborn, Ed.) Developments in sociology. An annual review. (20) 43.

Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (2013) A Report on Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives Led by Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Government of Nepal.

Prout, J. and James, A. (1997) Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood. London: Routledge

Richardson, D., Poudel, M., Laurie, N. (2009) Sexual trafficking in Nepal: constructing citizenship and livelihoods. Gender, place and culture, Vol. 16, Number. 3, p.259-278.

Simkhada, P. (2008) Life histories and survival strategies amongst sexually trafficked girls in Nepal, Children and Society, Vol 22, pp. 235-248.

Spaccarelli, S. (1994). Stress, appraisal, and coping in child sexual abuse: A theoretical and Empirical review. Psychological Bulletin, pp. 340-362.

Turner, et. al. (1993). From Risk to Resilience, A Paradigm Shift: A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography.

UNICEF (2014), Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children, New York: UNICEF.

Veitch, H. (2013). Feeling and being a part of something better: Children and young people's perspectives on reintegration. Perth: Home - The Child Recovery and Reintegration Network.

Veitch, H., Dharel, M., Ojha R., (2014), Learning from Children Exposed to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation: The Bamboo Project Study on Child Resilience – Resilience in Child Domestic Workers, Nepal, Children Unite, London, UK.

Voice of Children (2019). Exploring and Addressing Sexual Violence of Boys in Nepal, Kathmandu, Voice of Children

Internet Resources

Ezeilo, J. N. (2014). Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo," accessed 25 March 2019.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/.../A_HRC_29_38_Add_2_ENG.DOCX

UNDP (n.d), International Human Development Indicators, accessed 25 March 2019. http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries