



Child Rights  
Coalition Asia

# **VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**



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Dear Friends,

We would like to share with you this booklet that contains a collection of facts and figures about violence against children, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia. It contains global, regional, and national information based on the latest publicly available data we could find. We presented the information according to the forms of violence and the groups of children who are in vulnerable situations.

Through this publication, we aim to increase the awareness on the prevalence of violence against children and, consequently, contribute to the improved knowledge on child protection issues. We also hope that this will be a useful tool in advocating for the strengthening of policies and programs that uphold the children's right to protection.

We wish that you find this publication useful and that you will join us in the efforts to end all forms of violence against children.

**Child Rights Coalition Asia**





## WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN?



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty, states that all children have rights, including the right to protection against all forms of violence.

The World Report on Violence against Children (VAC)<sup>a</sup> adopts the following definition of Violence against Children and called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG).

TABLE 1: Definition of Violence against Children<sup>1</sup>

VAC refers to “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse.”

-Article 19 of UN CRC

VAC is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity.

- The World Health Organization in their World Report on Violence and Health (2002)

VAC represents “any act on children which causes harm, injury, abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, and/or exploitation **whether accepted as ‘tradition’ or disguised as ‘discipline,’** including hindering child development.”

-ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children

<sup>a</sup> Pinheiro, Paulo Sergio. “World Report on Violence against Children”. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, 2006.

## WHAT ARE THE FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN?<sup>b</sup>

### Physical Violence

Deliberate use of physical force that can be fatal or non-fatal to children

Examples: smacking, choking, hitting with hand or with an implement, kicking, shaking, pulling hair, spanking, caning, whipping, pulling of ears, forcing to stay in uncomfortable positions, female genital mutilation

### Mental Violence

Psychological maltreatment, mental abuse, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse or neglect

Examples: telling children that they are unwanted or worthless, insulting, name-calling, humiliating, belittling, violating privacy, scaring, threatening, ignoring, practicing favoritism, denying emotional responsiveness, neglecting mental health and medical and emotional needs, exposing to domestic violence, placing in solitary confinement, detaining in degrading conditions

### Sexual Violence

Sexual activity or attempted sexual activity imposed by an adult on a child, including inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful or psychologically harmful sexual activity

Examples: fondling, rape, sexual assault, sale of children for sexual purposes, use of children for pornography, prostitution, sexual slavery, trafficking, grooming, forced/child marriage

### Neglect/Negligent Treatment

Failure to meet children's needs, to protect them from danger, and to obtain services for children when those responsible have the means, knowledge, and access to services to do so

Examples: lack of supervision leading to harm; failure to provide food, shelter, clothing, or basic medical care; lack of emotional support and love; chronic inattention; inability to respond to young children's cues and signals; exposure to intimate partner violence or drug and alcohol abuse; withholding essential medical care; failure to comply with laws requiring caregivers to secure children's education; abandonment

<sup>b</sup> ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Children (ASEAN RPA on EVAC) and General Comment No. 13 on the Right of the Child to Freedom from All Forms of Violence

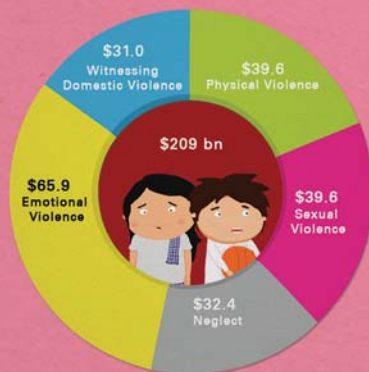


## WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN?

A study on the regional burden of violence in East Asia and the Pacific found that the total cost of violence against children, specifically on health and health risk behavior outcomes costs USD 209 billion or nearly 2% of the regions GDP.

The study states that "experiencing or witnessing violence in childhood may have long-term consequences on the wellbeing of the individual; and given its scale, it significantly undermines the social and economic development of communities and nations."

**Figure 1:** The economic cost of violence against children in East Asia and the Pacific (billion US\$) <sup>2</sup>



Source: Fang et al., 2015a; UNICEF EAPRO, 2014 as mentioned in Fry (2016) Preventing Violence against Children and how this contributes to building stronger economies. Kuala Lumpur: Government of Malaysia and UNICEF

## VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Violence against Children has devastating consequences for children's overall well being. In Southeast Asia, Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have pledged to eliminate violence against children. They have committed to work together to make sure that the children's right to protection are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

**FIGURE 2:** ASEAN Member States

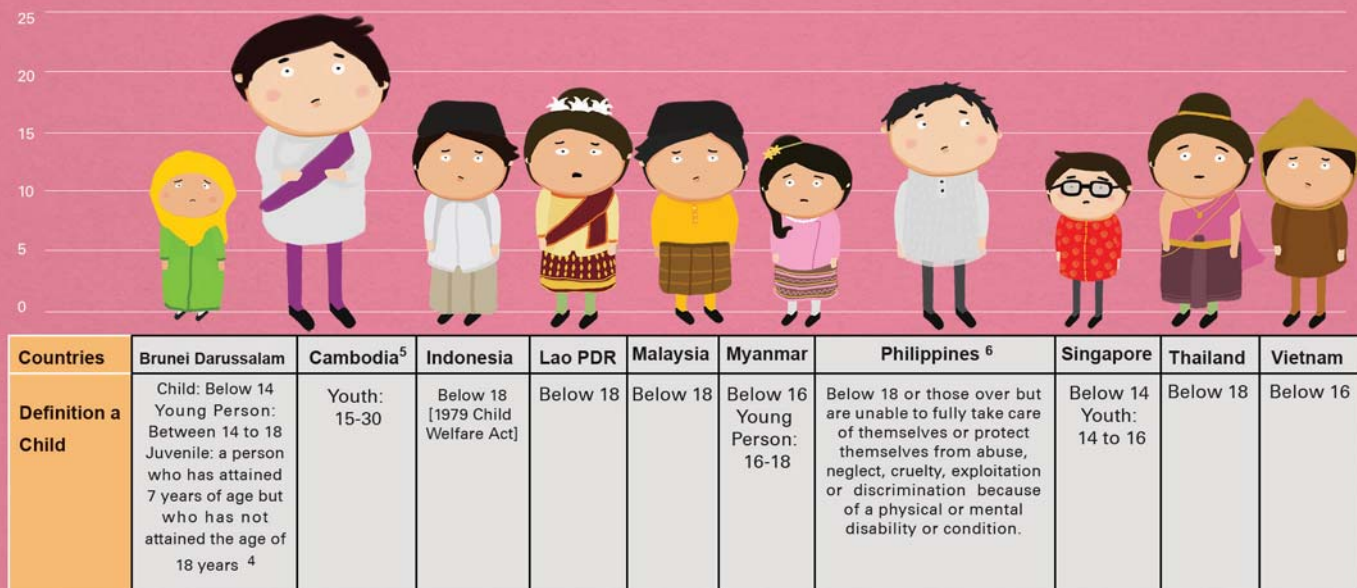


In eliminating VAC, the ASEAN Member States have:

- Ratified the UN CRC
- Adopted the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Elimination of Violence against Children
- Adopted the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children

While there are laws that address the prevalence of Violence against Children in Southeast Asia, most have been difficult to enforce, with prevailing social and cultural norms often used to justify VAC.

**FIGURE 3:** Definition of a child and minimum age in legislations relevant to child rights in ASEAN<sup>3</sup>

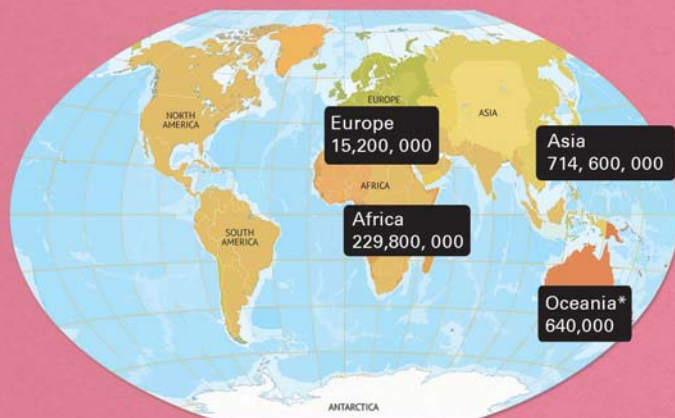


Source: Child Rights Situation Analysis within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Region. Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, commissioned by Save the Children Philippines. [page 36]



## HOW MANY CHILDREN EXPERIENCE SEVERE VIOLENCE?

**FIGURE 4:** Global past-year estimates of numbers of children (2-17 years old) exposed to at least one type of severe violence (sexual, physical or emotional violence, bullying or witnessing violence) <sup>7</sup>



Hillis, S. D., Mercy, J. A., Amobi, A., & Kress, H. (2016). Global prevalence of past-year violence against children: A systematic review and minimum estimates. *Pediatrics*, 137(3): e20154079.

**Source:** Hillis et al., 2016 study included 112 estimates for 96 countries on past-year prevalence of violence against children. Excludes children exposed to moderate physical violence, which is defined as spanked, slapped in the face, hit or shook.

- \* No representative household surveys existed which could be included in the study from Oceania for the 2 to 14 years old age group, thus this number represents an underestimation of violence against children in that region.

## PHYSICAL VIOLENCE



*"Physical violence takes both fatal and non-fatal forms and encompasses physical torture, cruel and inhuman physical punishment, physical bullying and hazing, and corporal punishment."*

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 13

### Global and Regional Data

Physical Violence is a leading cause of death and injury among children.<sup>8</sup>



- Young children are most vulnerable to serious injury from physical violence, with fatal cases often involving infants





- Girls are at heightened risk for infanticide in some contexts



- Children with disabilities are vulnerable to specific forms of violence such as forced sterilization and electroconvulsive therapy as a form of 'treatment'



- Boys are at greater risk of being subjected to harsher forms of physical violence by caregivers



- Adolescents are prone to violence by their peers and dating partners



- Older children have a higher chance of experiencing violent physical interactions with strangers as a result of crime and gang violence



## Physical Violence: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over half of females and males aged 18 to 24 (52.7% and 54.2%, respectively) reported at least 1 experience of physical violence prior to age 18.</li> <li>• Females and males, aged 13 to 17 years reported similar rates of physical violence of at least once in their lifetime (61.1% and 58.2%, respectively).</li> <li>• Among all respondents who reported experiencing physical violence before age 18, more than three quarters experienced multiple incidents.<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 5,066 reported child abuse cases in 2014</li> <li>• 93% of perpetrators of child abuse were close to the victims, with fathers accounting for 28% of the cases.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• 40% of children aged 13-15 years reported having been physically attacked at least once within a year.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in 6 children experienced physical violence during childhood.</li> <li>The most commonly reported perpetrators of physical violence during childhood were parents, guardians, adult caregivers or other adult relatives (10.3%), followed by peers (6.5%), adults in the community (1.4%) and intimate partners (1.4%).</li> <li>25.5% of children witnessed physical violence at home and 27.8% witnessed physical violence in the community.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3,428 child abuse cases were reported by the Ministry of Social Welfare<sup>13</sup> and 3,678 child abuse cases were reported by the Royal Malaysian Police<sup>14</sup> in 2011.</li> <li>44.3% of child abusers were parents, with mothers more likely to be abusers than fathers according to JKM.<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 out of 5 Filipino children have experienced severe physical abuse. 60% of these cases happened in the home; 14.3% experienced any form of physical violence in school; 7.1% of children in the workplace during childhood; about 2% of children with romantic partners during dating.</li> <li>More males (66.6%) experienced physical violence in the home than females (62.5%).</li> <li>Mothers, followed by fathers, brothers and sisters were the most commonly mentioned perpetrators. Fathers were deemed responsible for most severe physical violence.<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>

Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children between the ages of 7 and 16 can be punished by corporal punishment, including beatings and isolation.</li> <li>Children younger than 18 years of age can also be condemned to life in prison.<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than 19,000 children were treated at provincial hospitals due to abuse.</li> <li>About 70% of the 19,000 children were treated for sexual abuse. Most cases occurred at home and inflicted by the children's family members.<sup>18</sup></li> </ul>

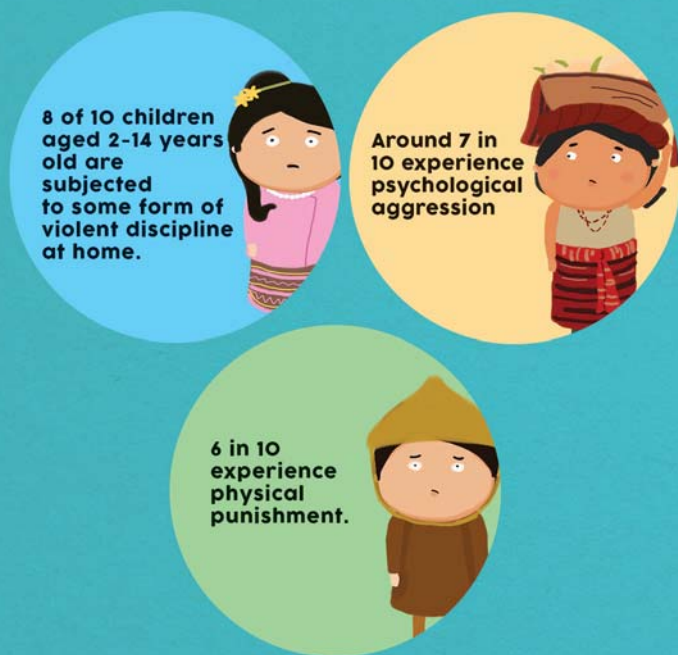
## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT



*"Corporal" or "physical" punishment is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light... In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child."<sup>18</sup>*

*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child  
GENERAL COMMENT No. 8 (2006)*





## Corporal Punishment: Regional Data

**Figure 5:** Violent discipline is the most common form of violence against children in Asia.

Around 888 million children or 80 % of children in Asia are exposed to at least one type of moderate forms of corporal punishment.<sup>21</sup>



No ASEAN member state has yet achieved prohibition in all settings, including the home. Studies in ASEAN show systemic patterns of abuse and violent disciplinary methods, including within schools.<sup>c</sup> Corporal punishment, as is the case in most Southeast Asian countries, is embedded in culture and tradition.

<sup>c</sup> Child Maltreatment: prevalence, incidence and consequences in the East Asia and Pacific region. UNICEF, 2012, Accessible at: [http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Child\\_Maltreatment.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Child_Maltreatment.pdf).

**Table 2: Where Corporal Punishment is not fully prohibited** <sup>22</sup>



Not Fully Prohibited

COUNTRY	HOME	SCHOOL	DAYCARE	ALTERNATIVE CARE	PENAL SYSTEM
Brunei Darussalam					
Cambodia					
Indonesia					
Lao PDR					
Malaysia					
Myanmar					
Philippines					
Singapore					
Thailand					
Vietnam					

Source: Progress towards prohibiting all corporal punishment of children in ASEAN member states October 2015 by Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children & Save the Children



## Corporal Punishment: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26% of children reported having received corporal punishment from parents or caretakers at home. <sup>23</sup></li> </ul>
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75.7% of children aged 2-14 years have experienced 'any violent discipline' method while 70.8% indicated that they have experienced psychology aggression based on a Social Indicator Survey in 2011. <sup>24</sup></li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of 31 sentences of whipping were passed and carried out on male children pursuant to the Child Act and the Criminal Procedure Code 2006 (Act 594) between 2002 and 2012. <sup>25</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in 2 children received corporal punishments in the home.</li> <li>30.3% suffered from more severe forms of abuse.</li> <li>4.6% were physically harmed that required hospitalization. <sup>26</sup></li> </ul>



COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporal punishment is the most common form of violence against children in schools despite government regulations prohibiting it. <sup>27</sup></li> <li>30% of Thai sixth grade students reported physical abuse (despite corporal punishment in schools being banned). <sup>28</sup></li> </ul>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>68.4% of children aged 1-14 years were subjected to some form of violent "discipline" (psychology or physical punishment) by household members In 2013-2014</li> <li>42.7% experienced physical punishment <sup>29</sup></li> <li>2.1% severe physical punishment (hitting the child on the head, bottom, ears or face or hard and repeatedly). <sup>30</sup></li> </ul>

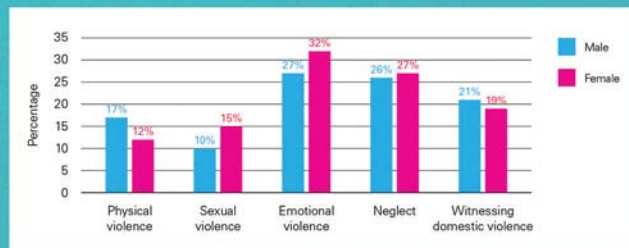
## MENTAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

### Global and Regional Data

- Around 7 in 10 children who are subjected to some form of violent discipline at home experience psychological aggression.
- Emotional violence was reported by nearly 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 4 boys in 6 countries in the Asia-Pacific (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) <sup>31</sup>



Prevalence of violence against children from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region <sup>32</sup>



Source: Fry, D. (2016). Preventing Violence against Children and how this contributes to building stronger economies. Thematic Research Paper for the 3rd High-Level Meeting on Cooperation for Child Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region, 7-9 November, 2016. Kuala Lumpur: Government of Malaysia and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



## Mental and Psychological Violence: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 out of 10 children aged 13 to 17 years old experienced emotional violence perpetrated by a parent or caregiver.<sup>33</sup></li> </ul>
Laos PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in 5 children experienced emotional violence by a parent, guardian, adult caregiver or other adult relative during childhood.</li> <li>Emotional violence during childhood was reported to be higher in females (1 in 4) than in males (1 in 6)<sup>34</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 out of 5 children experience psychological violence.</li> <li>The most common forms of psychological violence are verbal abuse and threats of abandonment.</li> <li>Most children experience psychological violence in their own home and school.</li> <li>Boys and girls experience similar rates of psychological violence in all settings. However, 'during dating,' boys are twice more likely to experience psychological violence than girls.<sup>35</sup></li> </ul>

## BULLYING

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. It occurs across all geographic, racial and socioeconomic boundaries. It is distinguished from other forms of violence because it represents a behavioral pattern rather than an isolated event.<sup>d</sup>

Figure 6: Forms of Bullying<sup>36</sup>



<sup>d</sup> Pinheiro, Paulo Sergio. "World Report on Violence Against Children." United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, 2006. Geneva.



## Global and Regional Data <sup>37</sup>

- Almost all bullying is sexual and gender-based.
- Bullying affects 1 in 3 children in the Asia-Pacific region.
- 33% of children reported experiencing bullying. <sup>38</sup>



### Bullying: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87.6% of the 1,026 participants reported they had been bullied either physically or verbally in school, according to a 2012 survey released by the National Child. <sup>39</sup></li> </ul>
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% of girls and 100% of boys said they had witnessed bullying in schools.</li> <li>• The children reported that victims were mainly girls or children from ethnic minorities. <sup>40</sup></li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of primary school students have been bullied, and the majority happen in the classroom. <sup>41</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 6 in 10 children experience bullying or peer violence (physical and psychological) with an overall prevalence of 63%.</li> <li>• Girls suffer from bullying at 1.7 times the rate of boys.</li> <li>• 40% of children report to be perpetrators of bullying. <sup>42</sup></li> </ul>
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 5 students in primary school and 1 in 4 students in secondary school have been bullied. <sup>43</sup></li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 30.9% of students who considered themselves LGBT were being physically bullied.</li> <li>• 29.3% were verbally bullied based on a study done by UNESCO and Mahidol University. <sup>44</sup></li> </ul>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16.7% of the students were forced to do the schoolwork of the bullies based on a survey done by the Institute of Development Studies in Ho Chi Minh City in 2008. <sup>45</sup></li> </ul>

## CYBER BULLYING



- **Singapore** is one of only two countries where bullying is greater online than offline. 83% of children report being bullied online and/or offline. 46% admit to bullying someone else online. 58% of children age 8-17 who responded to a survey on Online Bullying say they have been subjected to a range of online activities that some may consider to be online bullying or to have adverse effects: 36% of the children experienced mean or unfriendly treatment; 30% were made fun of or teased; 30% were called mean names. <sup>e</sup>
- In **Malaysia**, 1 in 4 school children reported they had been bullied online. 26% have been bullied online, mostly those aged 13-15. <sup>f</sup>
- In the **Philippines**, nearly half of Filipino children experience violence on the Internet, including bullying. <sup>g</sup>

<sup>e</sup> WW Online Bullying Survey - Executive Summary - Singapore. Cross-Tab Marketing Service & Telecommunications Research Group for Microsoft Corporation. 2012.

<sup>f</sup> A parent's guide on How to Talk to your children about the Internet. Telenor Group, Digi, UNICEF. October 2015.

<sup>g</sup> Violence Against Children Factsheet, UNICEF Philippines, 2015

<sup>h</sup> *World Report on Violence and Health. World Health Organization. Sexual Violence, Chapter 6. 2002*

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE



A wide range of sexually violent acts can take place in different circumstances and settings. These can include rape within dating relationships; rape by strangers; systematic rape during armed conflict; incest; unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favors; sexual abuse of persons with disabilities; sexual abuse of children; forced marriage or cohabitation, including child marriage; denial of access to reproductive health care or other protection measures against sexually transmitted diseases; forced abortion; violent acts against the sexual integrity, including female genital mutilation and obligatory inspections for virginity; and forced prostitution and trafficking of people for the purpose of sexual exploitation. <sup>h</sup>



## Global Data



- About 2 million children are exploited every year in the global commercial sex trade. <sup>46</sup>



- Globally, an estimate of at least 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 years had experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact. <sup>47</sup>



- Between 14% and 56% of the sexual abuse of girls, and up to 25% of the sexual abuse of boys, were perpetrated by relatives or step parents. <sup>49</sup>



- 7% up to 36% of females and 3% up to 29% of males reported sexual victimization during childhood. <sup>48</sup>

## Regional Data

According to a 2016 UNICEF Study on Child Protection in the Digital Age, a regional review of violence against children in educational settings in South Asian Countries, sexual harassment was prevalent throughout the region by both educators and peers.<sup>50</sup> Recent studies also showed that sexual violence against boys is also prevalent in the region. Studies in Cambodia (2014), Philippines (2016) and Lao PDR (2016) show significantly higher sexual violence prevalence amongst boys than girls. <sup>51</sup>



## Sexual Violence: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
<b>Cambodia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>64% of children said they knew children who had been sexually abused in a survey made in 2013.</li> <li>More than 6% of females and 5% of males aged 13 to 17 reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual abuse.</li> <li>1 in 10 children experienced non-contact sexual violence.<sup>52</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Indonesia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Around 58% of the cases of violence against children were sexual violence.<sup>53</sup></li> <li>40,000-70,000 children are estimated to be victims of sexual exploitation.<sup>54</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Laos PDR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Around 1 in 10 children experienced some form of sexual abuse.<sup>55</sup></li> <li>Unwanted sexual touching (7.5%), physically forced or pressured sex (1.9%) and unwanted attempted sex (1.8%) are the most common type of child sexual abuse experienced during childhood.<sup>56</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Malaysia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>44.5% of all committed sexual crimes involve children aged below 16.<sup>57</sup></li> </ul>

<b>Philippines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in 4 children experience some form of sexual violence.<sup>58</sup></li> <li>Children aged 13-17 experience the most sexual violence, including forced sex.<sup>59</sup></li> <li>Younger boys in 13-18 age group are at higher risk of sexual violence in every setting: the home, school, workplace, the community and during dating.<sup>60</sup></li> <li>Prevalence of overall sexual violence was 13.7% in homes, 5.3% in schools, 14.1% during dating, 7.1% in the workplace, and 7.8% in the community.<sup>61</sup></li> <li>Unwanted sexual touching and sudden attacks, as when walking in the mall or riding in public vehicles, are the most common sexual violence in the community.<sup>62</sup></li> <li>7 in 10 perpetrators of sexual violence are males.<sup>63</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Thailand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.9% of children reported having experienced child sexual abuse.<sup>64</sup></li> <li>5.8% of respondents (4.9% of young women and 6.5% of young men) reported experiencing sexual abuse before the age of 16.<sup>65</sup></li> <li>At least 1 school teacher sexually abuses a student every week based on a study by the Children and Family Protection Centre of the Ministry of Education.<sup>66</sup></li> <li>24.4% of the interviewed children said that they were being sexually harassed based on a study done by UNESCO and Mahidol University.<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>



**Vietnam**

- 1.1% reported ever having been sexually abused based on a research conducted among 2,394 youth.<sup>68</sup>
- The lifetime prevalence of sexual abuse is 19.7%, based on the survey of 2,591 secondary school students in urban Hanoi and rural Hai Duong province in Vietnam.<sup>69</sup>

## COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

*Commercial sexual exploitation of children is the exploitation by an adult with respect to a child or an adolescent – female or male – under 18 years old; accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the child or adolescent (male or female) or to one or more third parties. It is a form of economic exploitation similar to slavery and forced labour, which also implies a crime on the part of those who use girls and boys and adolescents in the sex trade.*<sup>70</sup>

### International Labor Organization

*Commercial sexual exploitation in children includes all of the following:*

- The use of girls and boys in sexual activities remunerated in cash or in kind (commonly known as child prostitution) in the streets or indoors, in such places as brothels, discotheques, massage parlours, bars, hotels, restaurants, etc.
- The trafficking of girls and boys and adolescents for the sex trade.
- Child sex tourism.
- The production, promotion and distribution of pornography involving children.
- The use of children in sex shows (public or private.)

## Global Data

The International Labor Organization global child labor figures for the year 2000 estimate that there are as many as 1.8 million children exploited in commercial sex or pornography worldwide,<sup>71</sup> while UNICEF's report 'State of the World's Children' for 2006 give an estimate of 2 million children currently enslaved in the global commercial sex trade.<sup>72</sup>

## Regional Data

According to the study done by ECPAT International, Southeast Asian countries have emerged as primary targets for travelling sex offenders. Thailand and the Philippines are traditional destinations for sexual exploitation of children. Cambodia is currently one of the major destinations for travelling sex offenders in the Mekong sub-region.<sup>i</sup> Vietnam has seen an increase in the presence of child sex tourists.<sup>j</sup> Due to the rise in tourism in Lao PDR and in Myanmar, sexual exploitation of children in tourism in these countries was estimated to grow.<sup>k</sup> In Indonesia, child sexual exploitation in tourism is prevalent in the Riau Islands bordering Singapore, and Bali is reported to be a destination for Indonesian child sex tourists.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>i</sup> The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in East and Southeast Asia: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society. ECPAT International, Bangkok, November 2014

<sup>j</sup> An analysis of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in selected provinces and cities of Vietnam. UNICEF Vietnam (2011). Accessed 15 September 2014 from: [http://www.unicef.org/vietnam/bao\\_cao\\_CSEC\\_tiang\\_anh\\_04-12.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/vietnam/bao_cao_CSEC_tiang_anh_04-12.pdf)

<sup>k</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report 2009: Laos. U.S. Department of State (2009). Accessed 13 January 2014 from: <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123137.html>

<sup>l</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report 2014: Indonesia. U.S. Department of State (2014). Accessed 13 September 2014 from <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2014/226741.htm>

## Exploitation of Children for Prostitution: Country Fast Facts

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children comprise one-thirds or around 30,000 of the total number of people forced into prostitution.<sup>73</sup></li> </ul>
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% of females exploited in prostitution is below 18 years old. Some are as young as 10 years.<sup>74</sup></li> </ul>
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of about 800 street children in Vientiane, 35% of the girls, aged between 12 and 18 years, were forced into prostitution.<sup>75</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60,000 and 75,000 children exploited in the commercial sex industry.<sup>76</sup></li> <li>1,904 or 25% of sexually exploited individuals in the streets of Cebu City alone are children.<sup>77</sup></li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the children exploited in prostitution are between 15 to 17 years old.<sup>78</sup></li> </ul>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28 of 37 child victims interviewed reported that the perpetrators are foreigners.<sup>79</sup></li> </ul>

## ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN



The Internet has increasingly facilitated the sexual exploitation of children in tourist in the region.<sup>80</sup> As access to and use of the Internet and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) by children and youth in ASEAN increase, scope and extent of opportunities to sexually abuse and exploit children also grow.

According to an ECPAT study, there is evidence that some children maybe involved in the sexual exploitation of their peers by soliciting other children for sex, often through the Internet and other ICTs. Travelling child-sex offenders are now able to anonymously gain access to networks that provide information on local children and the services available at destinations. They can also groom children online before reaching their destination and sexually exploiting them.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>m</sup> The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in East and Southeast Asia: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society. ECPAT International, Bangkok, November 2014



## Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children:

COUNTRY	FAST FACTS
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An average of 500 child sexual abuse materials are possessed by each sexual offender.<sup>81</sup></li> </ul>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 in every 4 children say that they experienced online harassment.</li> <li>Children faced various forms of online harassment, such as name-calling and posting of improper messages and inappropriate photos.<sup>82</sup></li> </ul>
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philippines is one of the top ten countries producing online child pornography according to the Virtual Global Taskforce.<sup>83</sup></li> <li>8 out of 10 Filipino children are at risk of being victims of sexual abuse or bullying online, according to a recent study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).<sup>84</sup></li> <li>57 criminal cases in 2013, 89 in 2014 and 167 in 2015 involved livestream child abuse.<sup>85</sup></li> <li>Child online exploitation involves mostly boys and girls aged 10 to 14 years old.<sup>86</sup></li> <li>Approximately, 1 in 4 of those who experienced cyber-violence had been exposed to sexually explicit content.<sup>87</sup></li> <li>Foreign sex tourists operate in the country with the assistance of Filipino nationals who exploit local children for the purpose of pornography.<sup>88</sup></li> </ul>

### Thailand

- 45% percent of teenagers have met 'virtual friends', 92% had been persuaded to talk about sex with these friends and 13% have gone on to have sexual intercourse with these friends.<sup>89</sup>

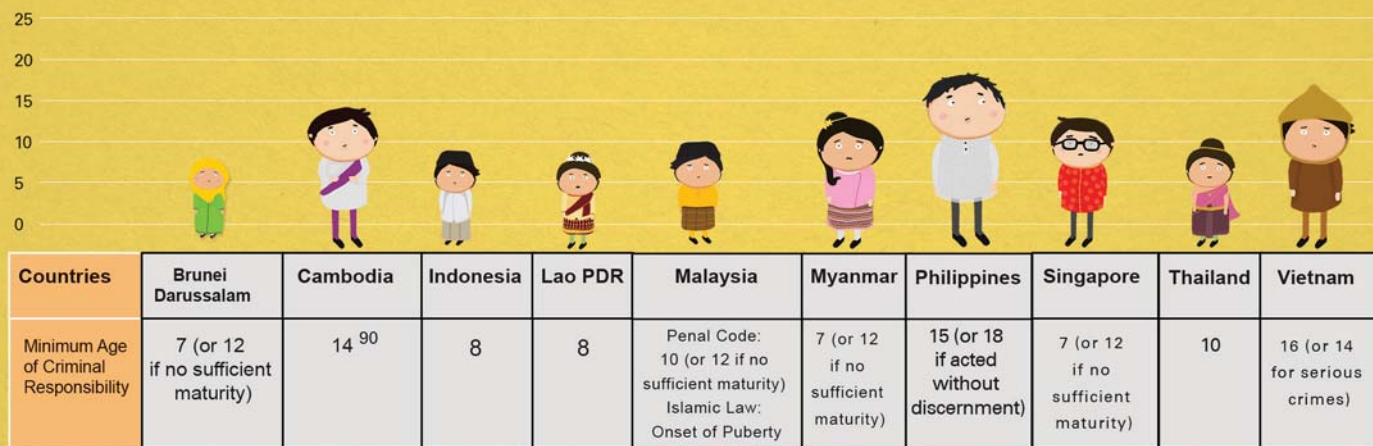
## CHILDREN VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW



In at least 40 countries around the world, children in conflict with the law are legally subject to inhuman, violent sentencing, including whipping, flogging, caning, or amputation for offenses. In some states, children can lawfully be sentenced to death by lethal injection, hanging, shooting, or stoning, or can be sentenced to spend the rest of their lives in prison.<sup>n</sup> Many countries also allow both life sentences and corporal punishment, even when the age of criminal responsibility is as low as 10 years.

<sup>n</sup> Five Years On: A Global Update on Violence Against Children: A report from the NGO Advisory Council for follow-up to the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children. October 2011  
Source: <http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/08/MGO-Advisory-Council-2011Five-Years-on-A-Global-Update-on-Violence-Against-Children.pdf> page 8, VIOLENT SENTENCING, 1st paragraph

FIGURE 6: Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in the ASEAN



Source: Child Rights Situation Analysis within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Region. Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, commissioned by Save the Children Philippines. [page 36]

## Children in Conflict with the Law: Fast Facts

- At least 9 countries allow corporal punishment, life sentence, and death penalty to children in conflict with the law: **Bangladesh, Iran, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Tonga**.<sup>91</sup>
- In **Brunei Darussalam**, whipping of children in government centers is still common practice.<sup>92</sup>
- Treatment in detention centers in **Cambodia**, which houses children under 15 years, include being shocked with electric batons, whipped with twisted electrical wire, and forced to donate blood. Some children reported rape.<sup>93</sup>
- There is dramatic decrease (80%) in the number of children detained in the **Philippines** between 2004 and 2014.<sup>94</sup>
- In **Thailand**, there were about 3,600 children being held in Juvenile Observation and Protection Centres, and 6,900 children in Juvenile Training Centres in 2011.<sup>95</sup>



## CHILD LABOR

*"The term "child labour" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development... In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age."*

*-International Labour Organization*



**Table 4:** Minimum Age Convention and the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour

	20									
	15									
	10									
	5									
	0									
Countries	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam
Minimum Age of Employment	14	15 15-18 years old no employment hazardous to health, safety or morality determined by Prakas of Ministry of Labor	18 13-15 years old may be employed in light work only if does not stunt physical, mental and social developments with maximum working time of 3 hours	14 At least 14-18 years old provided that; not more than 8 hours and are not in sectors involving heavy work or are dangerous to health (mining, chemical explosives or toxic, handling of human corpses or in places serving alcohol or with gambling or environment with excessive noise or work at night); No work from 10 pm to 5 am	16 In light work suitable to capacity carried on by his or her family. 14-16 years old can be employed as domestic helpers, in an office, shop, godown, factory, workshop, store, boarding house, theater, cinema, club or association.	Not specified	15 except he or she works directly under the sole responsibility of parents/guardians and that the employment does not interfere with schooling.	14	15 Under 18 are restricted to perform the following work involving: 1) metals melting. Blowing, casting, rolling; 2) metal pressing; 3) heat, cold, vibration, noise and light of an abnormal level; 4) hazardous chemical substances; 5) poisonous micro-organisms	15

Source: Comparative Labour Laws and Practices in ASEAN Volume 2: A Comparative Study on Gender Equality, Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Youth Employment and Social Dialogue, Volume 2. 2013 ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council. Indonesia.

## Child Labor: Fast Facts

- The number of working children in the Asia and the Pacific is by far the largest in the world.<sup>96</sup> 18.8% or 122 million of the 650 million children age 5 to 14 in the region are forced to work for their survival. 115 million or over 7% of all children aged 5-17 in 2008 are in hazardous work.<sup>97</sup>
- In **Cambodia**, more than half of the 755,245 economically active children in 2012 are engaged in child labor, among which, 5 in every 9 children were engaged in hazardous labor.<sup>98</sup>
- Child labor in **Indonesia** is predominantly found in rural areas, with 12.5% of children working compared to 5.9% in urban areas.<sup>99</sup>
- 96,000 girls and 81,000 boys in **Lao PDR** are engaged in child labor. 2 out of 3 child laborers are in hazardous work.<sup>100</sup>
- Over 1.1 million or 9% of the total population of children in **Myanmar**, are engaged in child labor – 600,000 boys and 500,000 girls.<sup>101</sup>
- In the **Philippines**, 2.1 million children between 5 and 17 years old are engaged in child labor in 2011, with a number of them performing physically demanding hazardous work. Most of them work in the agriculture, service, and mining industries.<sup>102</sup>
- 9.6% of children in **Vietnam** aged 5-17 are engaged in child labor.<sup>103</sup>

## TRAFFICKED CHILDREN



*Child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. It is a violation of their rights, their well-being and denies them the opportunity to reach their full potential.*

-Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)<sup>104</sup>



## REFUGEE AND STATELESS CHILDREN



Refugee and stateless children face multiple forms of discrimination that stem largely from their uncertain or lack of legal status. Many spend their entire childhoods away from home, sometimes separated from their families. They have very limited access to health care and education and are vulnerable to witness or experience violence.

### Child Trafficking: Country Fast Facts

- **25%-30%** of the **63,251** victims detected in 106 countries and territories between 2012 and 2014 were children. <sup>105</sup>
- 1/3 of the global trafficking in women and children occurs within or from Southeast Asia. <sup>106</sup>
- 1.2 million children are estimated trafficked every year in **Cambodia**. <sup>107</sup>
- Out of 3,735 identified victims of trafficking in persons in **Indonesia**, 25% are children, with 741 girls and 149 boys. <sup>108</sup>
- Many child trafficking victims from **Lao PDR**, particularly girls, are exploited in the commercial sex industry in **Thailand** and forced labor in domestic service, factories, or agriculture. <sup>109</sup>
- Out of 977 rescued survivors in **Malaysia** from 2008 to 2012, 122 were children. <sup>110</sup>
- 42 traffickers, including 5 for online child sex trafficking and 2 for forced labor were convicted from 2015 to 2016 in the **Philippines**. <sup>111</sup>

## Refugee and Stateless Children: Country Fast Facts

- Globally, there are nearly 21.3 million refugees.<sup>112</sup> Over half of them are children.<sup>113</sup>
- Asia hosts some of the largest numbers of child migrants under the age of 18, who migrate internally and across national borders, with or without their parents.<sup>114</sup>
- **Cambodia** and the **Philippines** are two ASEAN Member States that have ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.<sup>115</sup>
- As of March 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in **Malaysia** has registered 150,845 refugees and asylum-seekers, with majority coming from Myanmar. Almost 25% of them are below 18 years old.<sup>116</sup>
- Around 94,000 people, many of which are Rohingya, including women and children departed irregularly from the **Bangladesh-Myanmar** border over the course of 2014 and 2015.<sup>117</sup>
- In **Lao PDR**, a quarter of children born did not have their birth registered based on a survey in 2012.<sup>118</sup>
- The government of **Vietnam** acknowledges the fact that not all children in remote areas and belonging to ethnic minorities are registered.<sup>119</sup>

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES : Fast Facts



- Children with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be victims of violence.<sup>120</sup>
- There are 93 million children living with disabilities globally or approximately 1 in every 20 children has a disability.<sup>121</sup>
- Worldwide, 51% of boys with a disability complete primary school, compared to 61% of boys without a disability. 42% of girls with a disability complete primary school, compared to 53% of girls without a disability completing primary school.<sup>122</sup>
- 26.7 % of children with disabilities have experienced more than one type of violence in their lifetime. Over 20% experience physical violence and nearly 14% experience sexual violence.<sup>123</sup>
- All ASEAN Member States have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).<sup>124</sup>
- In the **Philippines**, for every 5 persons with disability (PWD), 1 is a child under 15 years old.<sup>125</sup>



## CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS



### Country Fast Facts

- Globally, 1.8 million children under the age of 15 years old are estimated to be living with HIV with only half of them have access to life-saving medicines. 400 children become infected with HIV everyday. <sup>126</sup>
- According to the **Malaysian** AIDS Foundation, 50 new HIV cases among children were recorded in 2013. <sup>127</sup>
- In **Myanmar**, 4,650 children younger than 15 years were recorded to be HIV positive in 2009, with half under five years of age. <sup>128</sup>
- From 1984 to 2014, the **Philippine** Department of Health has recorded 65 HIV cases among Filipino children under 15 years old, with 15 deaths among children in total <sup>129</sup>
- In **Vietnam**, there are 6,800 children living with HIV/AIDS. <sup>130</sup>

## CHILDREN IN EARLY PREGNANCY

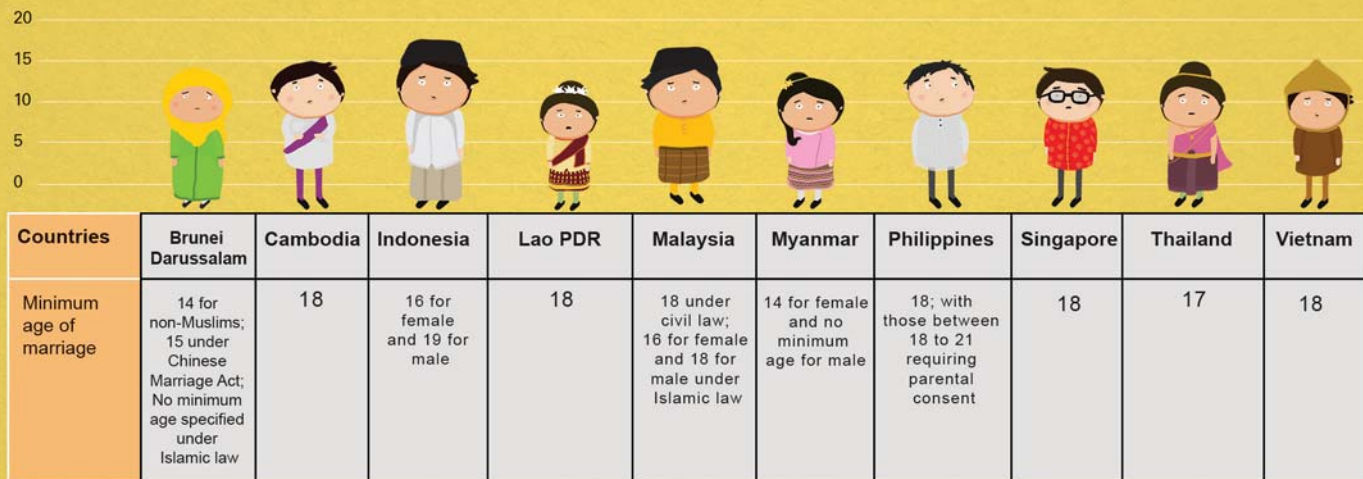


### Country Fast Facts

- Pregnancy rate among **Cambodian** girls aged 15-19 has increased from 8% in 2010 to 12% in 2014. Approximately 1 in 8 Cambodian women aged 15-19 have become mothers or are currently pregnant with their first child <sup>131</sup>
- In **Lao PDR**, 17.8% of females aged 15-19 already had a child and 18.2% of females aged 20-24 years reported that they gave birth before age 18. <sup>132</sup>
- 1 in every 10 **Filipino** women aged 15 to 19 is already a mother or pregnant with her first child. More than 80% of Filipino high school students did not use protection when they first had sex. <sup>133</sup>

## Children in Early/Forced Marriage

**Table 5:** Minimum Age of for Marriage in ASEAN countries



Source: Child Rights Situation Analysis within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Region. Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, commissioned by Save the Children Philippines. [page 36]

There are harmful traditional practices in Southeast Asia like son preference, dowry system, forced marriages, including child marriage, mail-order brides and bride kidnapping that affect children in the region. Child sex exploitation can also be disguised by under-age 'marriages'. Child marriages are associated with trafficking for subsequent exploitation, prostitution, domestic and sexual violence, abandonment, widowhood and divorce, and perpetuate the poverty/gender-based violence cycle.<sup>o</sup>

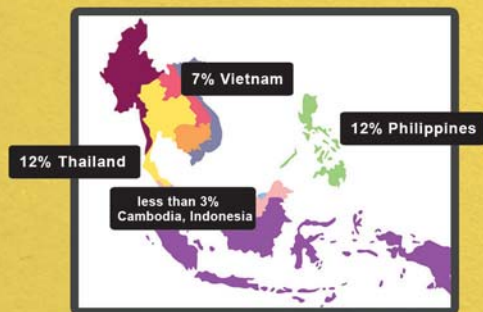
<sup>o</sup> *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in East and Southeast Asia: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society*. ECPAT International, Bangkok, November 2014



## Global and Regional Data

<b>14.2 million</b>	Estimated number of girls worldwide that marry before the age of 18 each year. <sup>134</sup>
<b>700 million</b>	Number of women alive today that were once child brides, and 1 in 3 of these girls married before the age of 15. <sup>135</sup>
<b>18%</b>	Percentage of prevalence of child marriage in East Asia and Pacific
<b>9.2 million</b>	Number of women aged 20-24 married as children in 2010 in East Asia and the Pacific. <sup>136</sup>
<b>10-24%</b>	Percentage of women aged 20-24 in Southeast Asia married by the time they reach 18. <sup>137</sup>

Figure 7: Prevalence of Marriage of Children under the age of 15 in Southeast Asia.



Source: *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in East and Southeast Asia: Developments, progress, challenges and recommended strategies for civil society*. ECPAT International, Bangkok, November 2014

## CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES, DISASTER ZONES, AND ARMED CONFLICTS



Emergencies and disasters have resulted to many children left orphans and vulnerable to diseases. It increases exposure of children into hazardous environments and forces them to enter into hazardous work instead of attending school. It also further increases the vulnerability of children to trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Children whose families are affected by conflict are forced to endure the lack of basic human necessities including shelter, proper nutrition, medical care and security. Other children suffer the effects of sexual violence and are made vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking.

## Fast Facts

- East Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster stricken region in the world, sustaining 61% of global losses from disasters in the past 20 years.<sup>138</sup>
- In **Indonesia**, thousands of children were severely affected by the 2004 tsunamis and high magnitude earthquakes in 2005, 2006, and 2009.<sup>139</sup> In **Myanmar**, many women and children were trafficked to different cities and neighboring countries in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in 2008.<sup>140</sup> In the **Philippines**, after the Typhoon Haiyan devastation in 2013, there was an increase in incidents of child trafficking.<sup>141</sup>
- Globally, around 2 million children have been killed in armed conflict, three times as many have been seriously injured or permanently disabled, and countless others have been forced to witness or take part in horrifying acts of violence.<sup>142</sup>
- **Myanmar** still has the highest number of child soldiers.<sup>143</sup> Armed groups operating in Southern **Thailand** have recruited children as young as 14 years old and used them in active fighting or as lookouts and informers.<sup>144</sup> In the **Philippines**, 2 out of 30 children admitted that they were combatants in a war or community violence, or assisted older warriors.<sup>145</sup>
- Despite the end of civil wars in **Cambodia** and **Vietnam**, children are still endangered with landmines and explosive devices.<sup>146</sup> In Cambodia, around 20% of all children injured by such devices died from their injuries.<sup>147</sup>

## INDIGENOUS CHILDREN



Children belonging to indigenous groups or ethnic minorities face additional vulnerabilities to victimisation due to their marginal position in society.

- The northern 'hilltribes' of Thailand account for around 50,000 children of the country's yearly births but do not hold legal citizenship. In **Cambodia**, although ethnic Vietnamese constitute around 13% of the Cambodian population, they reportedly make up 32% of children exploited for prostitution in the country.<sup>148</sup> In the **Philippines**, 9 out of 10 Lumad children have no access to education.<sup>149</sup>



## LGBT CHILDREN



Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), perceived to have different sexualities or gender identities than the norm, or have LGBT parents often suffer discrimination and violence. They are vulnerable to abandonment and rejection, harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, hate motivated violence, and increased health risks owing to lack of access to appropriate life-skills education and health services.

- Around 80 countries have laws that subject their citizens to criminal penalties linked to homosexuality. Such laws undermine human rights and also fuel discrimination, stigma, and even violence. These laws can be even more harmful for children and adolescents, who are especially vulnerable to bullying, violence, and stigma. <sup>150</sup>
- In the Philippines, 8 of 10 LGBT respondents reported physical or psychological abuse during their childhood, and more than 1/3 reported that they were sexually violated. <sup>151</sup>

## CHILDREN EXPOSED TO SUBSTANCE USE AND ADDICTION



Exposure to substance use and addiction increases the risk of children to experiencing or witnessing violence. Children, particularly the adolescents who are at a critical period of transition to adulthood, may start using drugs, tobacco, and alcohol that can lead to substance-related violence, including self-harm. Additionally, children may witness violence perpetuated by their peers and family members as a result of substance misuse and addiction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

### **Fully implement the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children in cooperation with different stakeholders**

Involve the civil society, national human rights institutions, children, and other stakeholders in implementing and monitoring the plan of action. The collaboration must be gender-sensitive and inclusive of sectors that are in vulnerable situations.

### **Ensure child protection through public budgeting**

Fulfill the budgetary obligations stipulated in the UN CRC to protect children from violence. Apply the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, transparency and sustainability in all stages of the public budgeting process for the realization of children's rights, including the right to protection.

### **Involve children in the efforts to eliminate VAC**

Respect, protect, and fulfill the children's right to be heard in the efforts to eliminate all forms of VAC. Create and ensure space for effective and meaningful child participation in different settings and situations crucial to child protection.



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Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) is a regional network of coalitions and organizations that aims to be a strong voice for child rights by leading in the strengthening of child rights movements, promotion of innovative programs, and advocacy for better policies for and with children in the region.

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