



***What research is(n't) telling us about vulnerability  
of boys who are sexually abused and exploited.  
Glenn Miles PhD***

Each culture has similar stereotypes for **masculinity**, which influence behaviors, **attitudes, beliefs, and values** surrounding male vulnerability



# Gender roles





“A **girl** is like a piece of **fine linen**; if it is stained then it is spoiled forever, but a **boy** is like a piece of **pure gold**; if it is dropped in the mud then it can easily be washed clean again.”

— Cambodian Proverb —





Stories in every culture of the story of **Vulnerability vs. Resilience** e.g. **Sleeping Beauty** verses **Aladdin**



# Comparing Genders

Boys are seen as strong, **resilient**, able to survive in difficult circumstances thrown at them.

Girls are seen as fragile, **vulnerable**, in need of protection and with little agency.



# Comparing girls and boys

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- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Women in 1996 in Beijing
- ❖ “Girls are more vulnerable than boys to all kinds of violence, including rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking and forced labor”
- ❖ Stop Violence Against Us!’ (2005-6)
- ❖ In a national survey I conducted in Cambodia boys reported more violence than girls in every category including sexual abuse, rape, witness of rape and child sale.

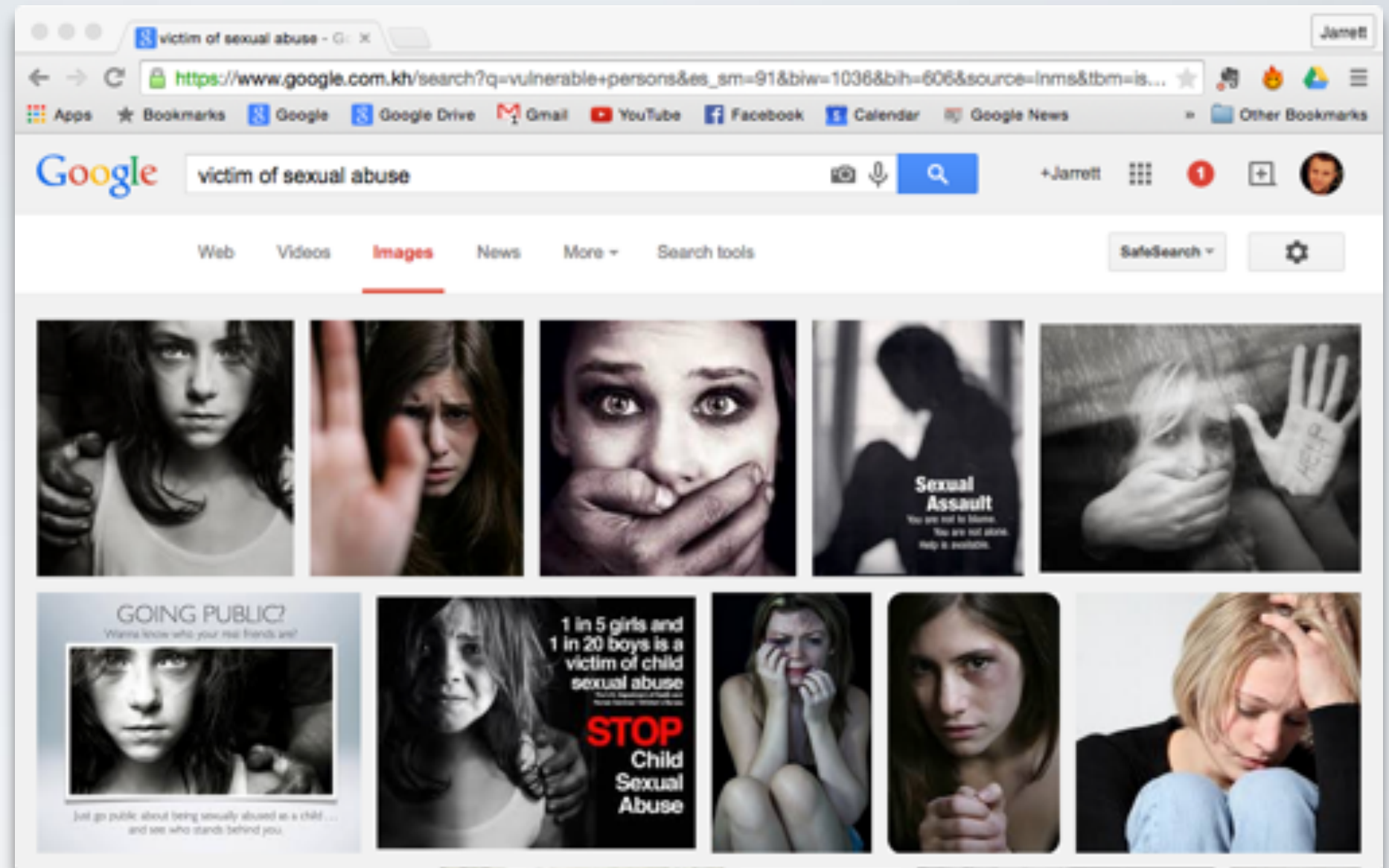
WE SEE WHAT WE  
**EXPECT** TO  
SEE



WHY

THE

GAP?



WE SEE WHAT WE  
**EXPECT** TO SEE

So what are we looking for?

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In a review of 166 scholarly articles on the global sex industry, 84% exclusively discussed female sex workers and made no mention of males. 79% simply assumed that sex workers are always female. (Dennis, 2008)

When males were mentioned:

**Males —**

“Sex worker”

Chief Danger: HIV

**Females —**

“Prostituted”

Chief Danger: Violence

(Dennis, 2008 — “Women are Victims and Men Make Choices”)

# In research in Cambodia violence experienced by boys more than girls in every category

**Table 1.** Children's experiences of violence (Tearfund, 2005)

Experiences of violence (lifetime prevalence)	Response		By gender			
	Number (total)	%	Boy %	Girl %	$\chi^2$	$p <$
Direct experience of peer bullying	475 (1271)	37.4	40.6	34.5	4.95	0.03
Direct experience of physical punishment by parent	552 (1277)	43.2	50.5	36.4	25.83	0.001
Direct experience of physical punishment by teacher	369 (1294)	29.2	34.7	24.1	17.175	0.001
Direct experience of genital touching by an adult (after age nine)	177 (1099)	16.1	18.9	13.5	5.81	0.02
Direct experience of child rape by an adult	15 (1289)	1.2	1.8	0.6	3.69	0.06
Witnessed rape of another child by an adult	290 (1297)	22.4	23.5	21.4	—	NS
Direct experience of child sale	39 (1297)	3.0	3.7	2.4	—	NS
Knowledge of child sale in community	607 (1291)	47.0	45.1	49.1	—	NS

NS = not significant.

Miles & Thomas 2007





18.9% boys aged 12-15yrs said they had been sexually touched on the genitals by an adult since they were nine years.  
Miles & Thomas (2007)

# What about **boys** as victims of sexual abuse?

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Globally,  
**ONE IN SIX**

males are sexually abused  
before the age of eighteen

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Men and boys are also sexually exploited but culturally men and boys are not seen as vulnerable.

The statistics are not as diverse as we might think:

**1:4** girls sexually abused

**1:6** boys sexually abused





# Emphasis on the ‘Girl Child’

One of the recent foci of the UN has been the “girl child”

- ❖ Feminists have welcomed the attention
- ❖ Donors have developed selection criteria that focus on girls
- ❖ Int’l NGOs have developed policies and programs for girls





# UNICEF VAC Report Gender Differential



LOVE146  
END CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION



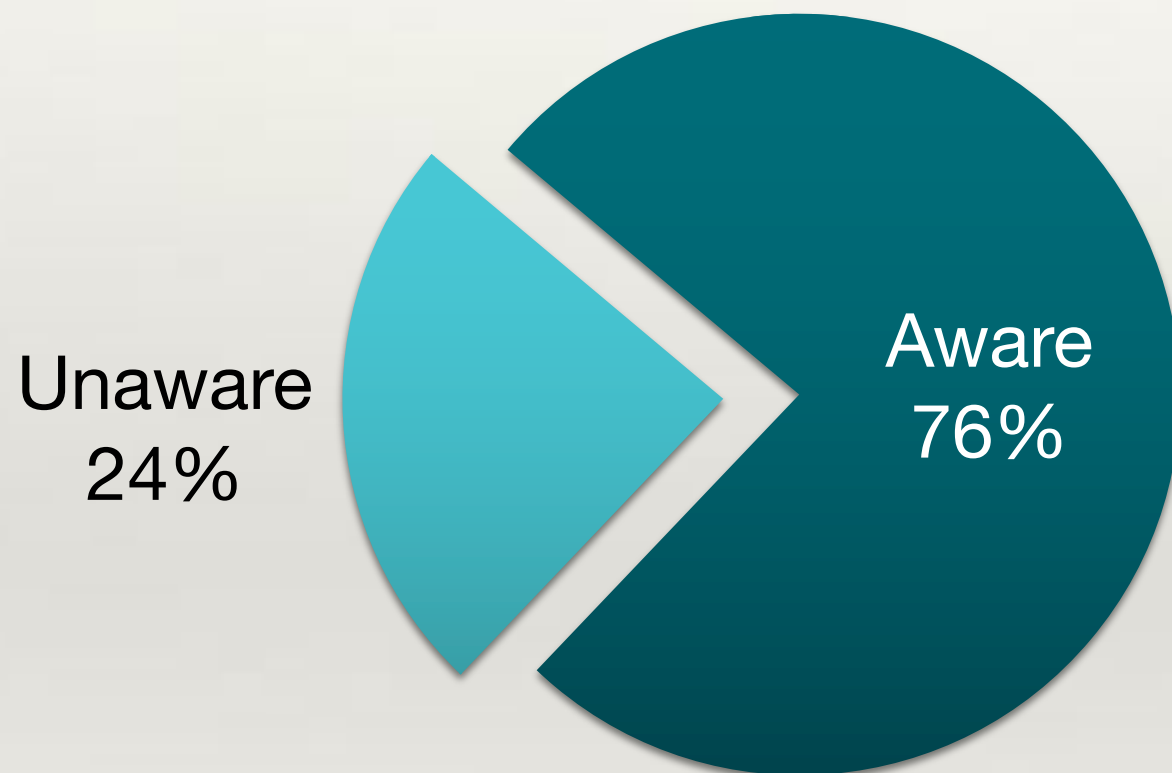
Julias.

“They Didn’t  
Help Me; They  
Shamed Me.”

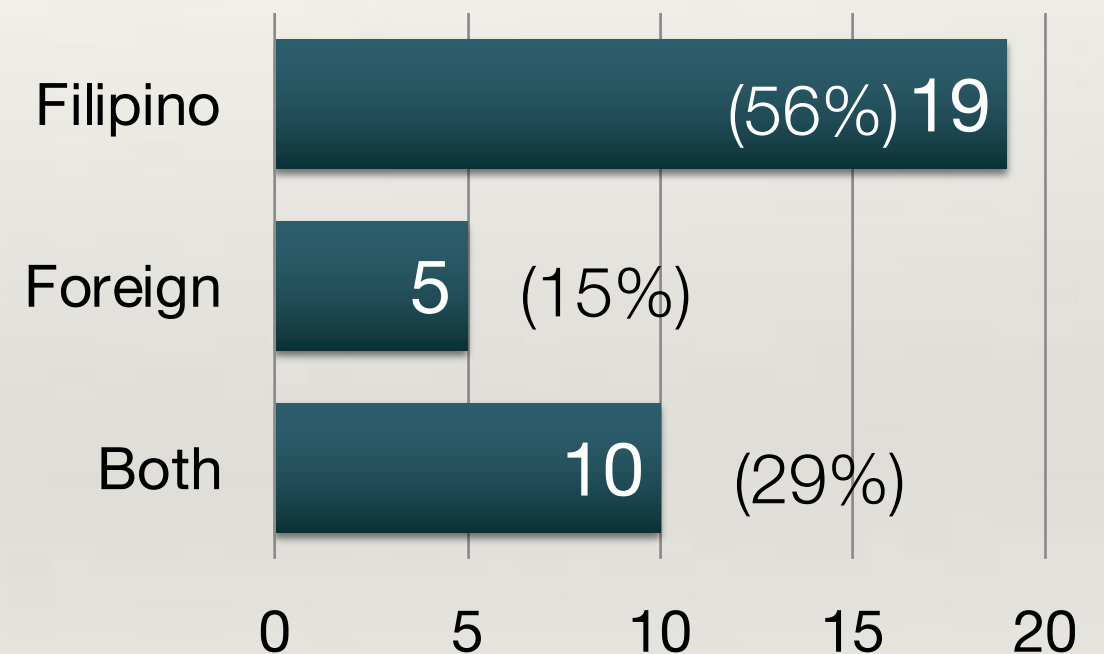
Exploring the vulnerabilities of  
street-working boys in Manila

# Sexual Abuse | Awareness & Perceptions

Are you aware of boys who are asked by adults to do sexual things?



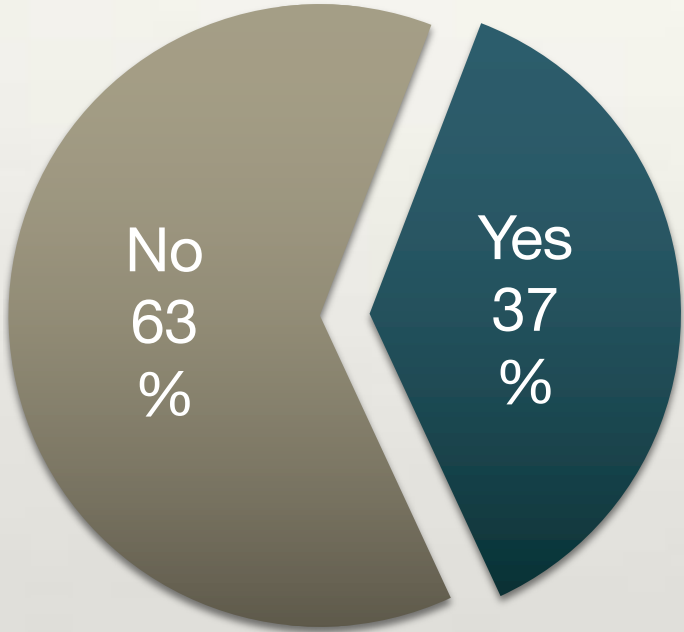
Where do you think they are from?





# Sexual Abuse | Personal Experience(s)

Has an adult ever forced you to do something that you did not want to do?



#	Quote	Age	Age Occurred	Work
2	A 29 year old, sucking and playing with penis	17	9	Beggar
3	I go with the foreigners near the stones and they ask me, " pull down your shorts". But I don't want to.	16	12	Vendor
4 3	Asked me to put their penis in my mouth	11	-	Beggar
1 5	They wanted to suck my genitals but I didn't allow it.	14	13	Assisting

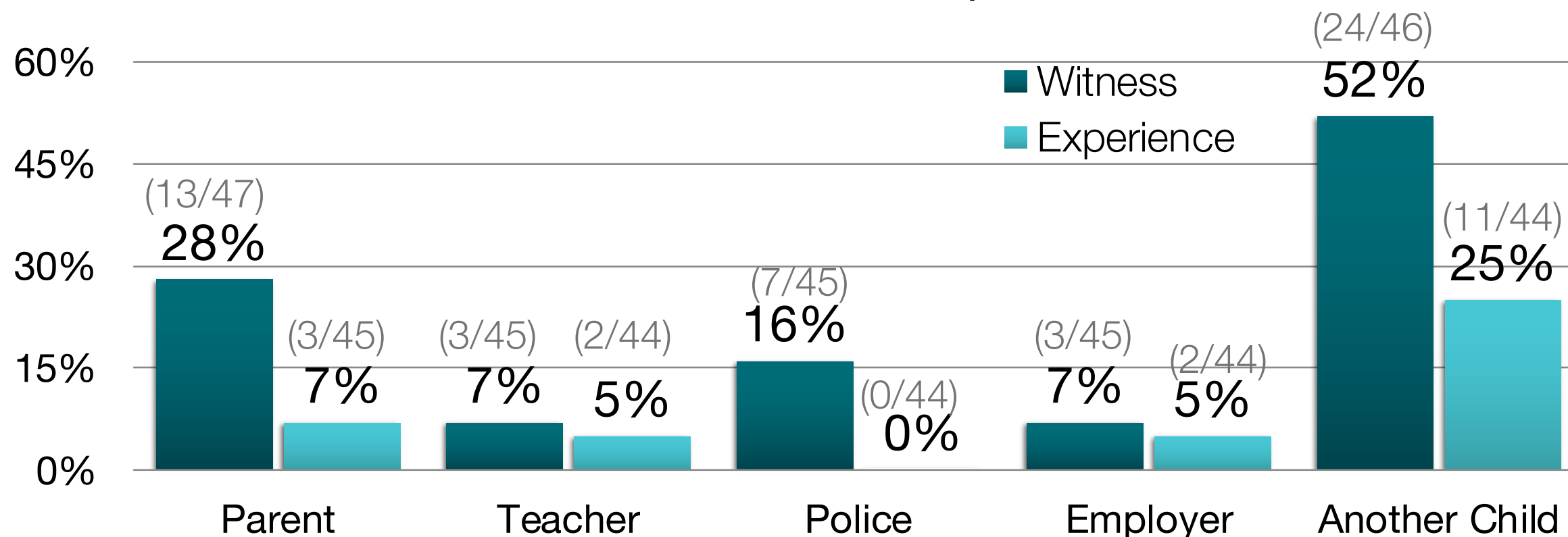
#	Quote	Age	Work
1 2	He commanded me to take the money of another child at school.	14	Vendor
4 5	There are adults who commanded me to steal.	12	Beggar
4	They make me steal things	17	Theif

WHAT ASKED	Freq	%
Sexual	11	65%
Forcing to Steal	3	18%
Drugs	2	12%
Undefined	1	6%



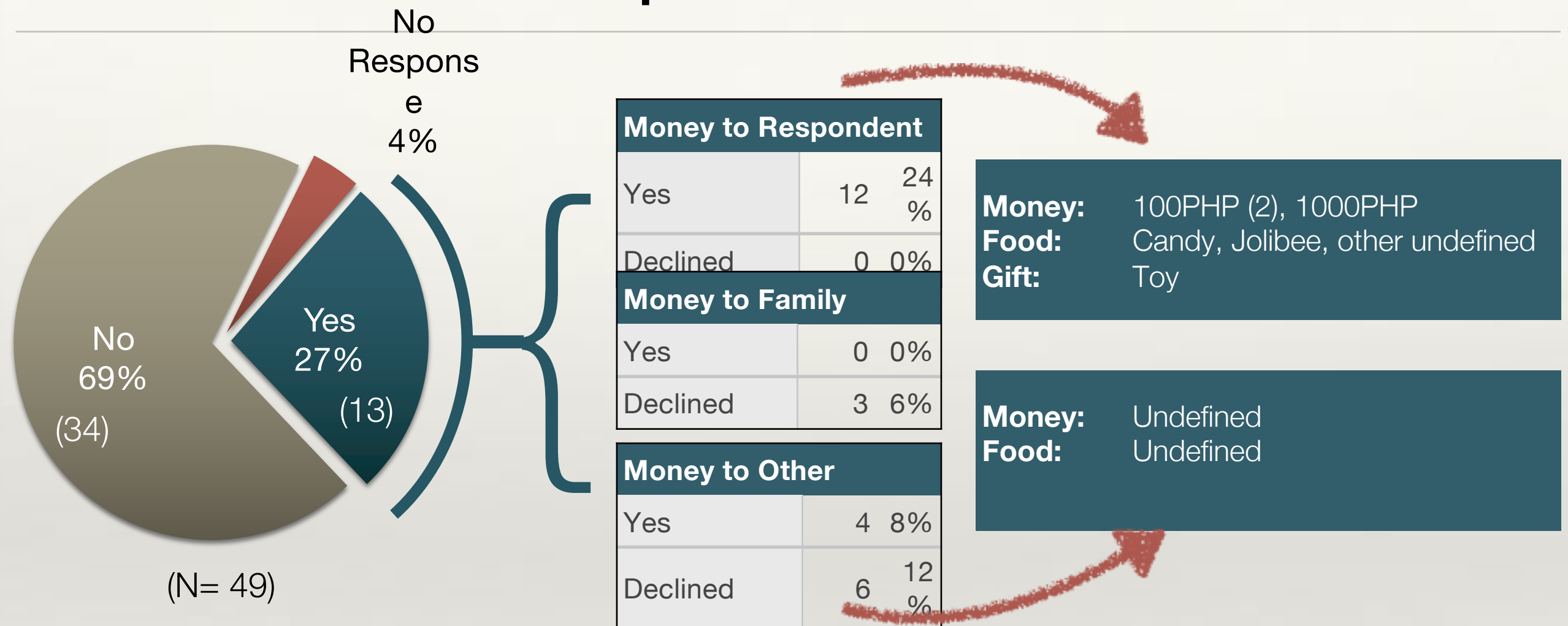
# Philippines

## Sexual Abuse: Witness of & Experience



- While 47% disclosed sexual abuse from adults, **69% disclosed sexual abuse in this section** (which includes purp. by other children)
- Despite the high number of who disclose sexual abuse, **only 12% sought help.**

# CSEC | Commercial Sexual Exploitation



"(He gave me) a big Toblerone. I went to the [name redacted] Hotel with him. He had me take off all my clothes, and he took off his as well. We showered together. He put my penis into his mouth."

— R3, 16 years old, Flower Vendor





# Philippines

- Population: 107,668,231 (2014 est.)

Types of Abuse	Total	Male	Female
1. Abandoned	884	511	373
2. Neglected	2,327	1,192	1,135
3. Sexually Abused	1,401	29	1,372
3.1 Rape	885	15	870
3.2 Incest	401	9	392
3.3 Acts of Lasciviousness	115	5	110
4. Sexually Exploited	116	4	112
4.1 Victims of Prostitution	47	0	47
4.2 Victims of Pedophilia	34	1	33
4.3 Victims of Pornography	2	0	2
4.4 Victims of Cyber Pornography	33	3	30

Source: PPB-DSWD, CY 2011, Preliminary, as of Feb. 2012)

# Research on Male Vulnerability (Miles & Davis)

See [www.gmmiles.co.uk](http://www.gmmiles.co.uk)

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- Started with research listening to young men who were most visible – **masseur industry** *Phnom Penh, Mumbai, Chiang Mai, Manila*
- Then **street boys** in cities, border areas and beaches *Manila, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Poipet, Phnom Penh, Kompong Som,*
- As well as more **masculine young men** we discovered **transgender women** exceedingly at risk. *Bangkok, Phnom Penh*
- Sexual exploitation can happen to **anyone irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity and ability/disability.**
- We have come to realize how **selective** the abolitionist movement has been in **focusing only on girls**

COMMERCIAL  
SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION OF  
CHILDREN IN  
CAMBODIA

*A manual based  
application of time-space  
mapping to assess  
prevalence in Phnom  
Penh, Siem Reap and  
Banteay Meanchey*

But it was actually  
Commercial Sexual  
Exploitation of...  
**Girls**  
**and NOT Children**



Google

human trafficking victim



Web

**Images**

News

Videos

Shopping

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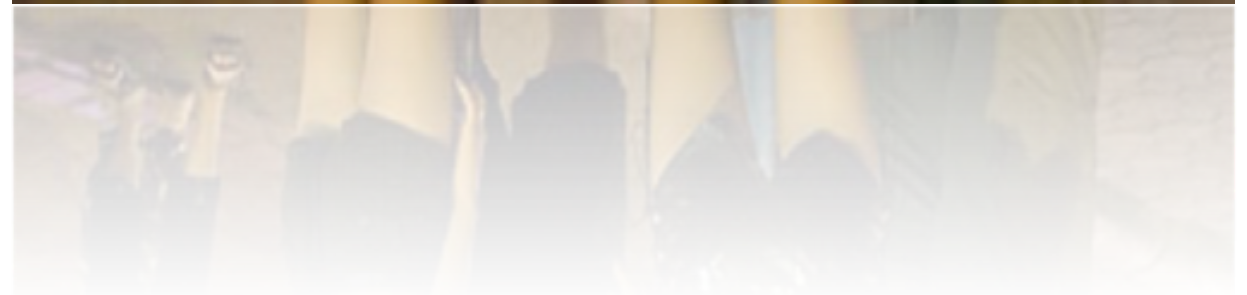
Search tools



# The current, prevailing understanding of **Trafficking & Exploitation**

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- Hinges on **stereotypical constructions** of the social roles of men and women.
- Predator vs. Prey. **Sex is a male right** and entitlement; Women and girls are sexualized commodities functional to that male right.
- As a result of this emphasis there are hundreds of NGO's dedicated to **rescuing and helping girls** and young women but only a handful dedicated to assisting boys





# BBC Wales Report **The students who turn to sex work to make ends meet**

By Lucy Ballinger BBC Wales News 27 March 2015. Although only a third of those researched were men, of those taking part in the survey, **5% said they were involved in sex work, compared to nearly 3.5% of the women.**






A 2008 STUDY ESTIMATED THAT  
AS HIGH AS

**50%**

OF COMMERCIALLY  
SEXUALLY EXPLOITED  
CHILDREN IN THE US

ARE **BOYS**

 ECPAT

# What are some of the **misconceptions** about sexual exploitation of boys?

- Boys are not seen as **sexual objects** and are not targets of sexual exploiters.
- Sexual exploitation of boys is perpetrated only by **men of homosexual** orientation.
- Exploiters are mostly **foreigners**.
- Boys **consent to have sex with women** therefore are not victims when women are buyers.
- Sexual exploitation of boys **is limited to more 'open' societies**.
- The magnitude of the problem is **small**.

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# Males are seen as having more agency and more choice.

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- ❖ The invisibility of men and boys in scholarly discussions of the global sex trade was analyzed through a sample of 166 recent articles published in social science journals.
- ❖ Most failed to acknowledge the existence of male sex workers at all. When male sex workers were discussed, they were assigned considerably more agency than female sex workers, the chief danger ascribed to them was HIV rather than violence, and the question of their sexual orientation was always addressed, whereas female sex workers were always assumed heterosexual.
- ❖ The results are discussed in the context of world system theory, Orientalism, and heteronormativity.
- ❖ *Source: Dennis, J. (2008). Women are Victims, Men Make Choices: The Invisibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade. Gender Issues, 25(1).*



# Victims or Oppressors?

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Men are more likely to be the victims of violent crime. And yet resist the label of “victim”.

Men are conceptualized as the sexual aggressor.  
(R. Graham, 2006)

# A few common **misconceptions...**

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- Whether we like it or not, these common misconceptions (and others) often impact the findings of research.
  - Impact on the **researcher**
    - Research often views males in the sex industry as liabilities for sexual health, rather than vulnerable human beings that are at risk of violence, stigma and abuse.
  - Impact on the **respondents**
    - Male victims of females often viewed as “lucky” (V. Jones, 2010)

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# Why are Commercially Sexually Exploited Boys **so frequently ignored?**

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- ❖ The unwillingness of boys to self-identify as sexually exploited due to shame and stigma about being gay or being perceived as gay by family and community.
- ❖ A lack of screening and intake by law enforcement and social services agencies rooted in the belief that boys are not victims of CSE.
- ❖ Limited outreach by anti-trafficking organizations to areas, venues and tracks known for male prostitution.
- ❖ Oversimplification of the reality that boys are not generally pimped hides the needs and misinforms
- ❖ Lack of potential services.

# Social Service agencies and NGOs need to **acknowledge the risk of sexual exploitation**

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- ❖ Social service/third sector providers must examine why they tend to ignore male sexual exploitation, how these attitudes lead to exploitation, and how sexual abuse affects young men later in life. Boys tend to enter into prostitution either as a means of escaping abuse at home, or as a result of early life experiences that lead them to prostitution.

*Source: Lillywhite, R., & Skidmore, P. (2006). Boys are not sexually exploited? A challenge to practitioners. Child Abuse Review, 15(5).*



# 1. THE VALUE OF SMALLER BUT **DEEPER** RESEARCH

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- Less focus on macro-level prevalence studies
- Understanding the value of mixed method research

## 2. The value of **Collaboration** & CO-LEARNING

- Listening
- Avoiding researcher egoism

## 3. THE VALUE OF A **HUMAN FOCUS**

- “Gender based violence” ≠ “violence against women”.
- Sharpening feminism, not detracting from it

[www.goodtouchbadtouchflipchart.org](http://www.goodtouchbadtouchflipchart.org)  
Asia Africa > America and Europe next?



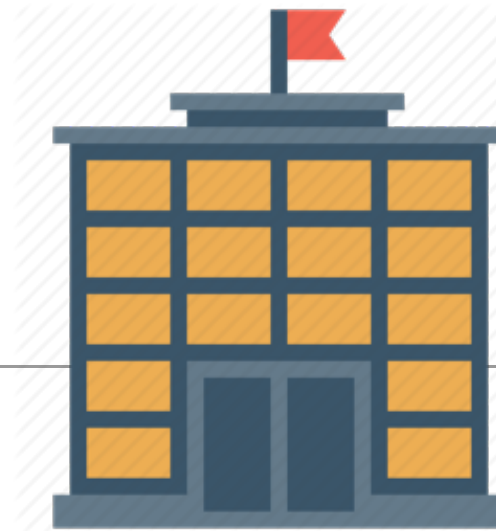
Normalising the idea that...  
**both boys and girls can be sexually abused**





## Major development agencies —

- Greater funds / Wider influence
- Creates and sustains the conversation on vulnerability
- Removed from communities & vulnerable people groups
- Indirect, secondary understanding of vulnerable groups

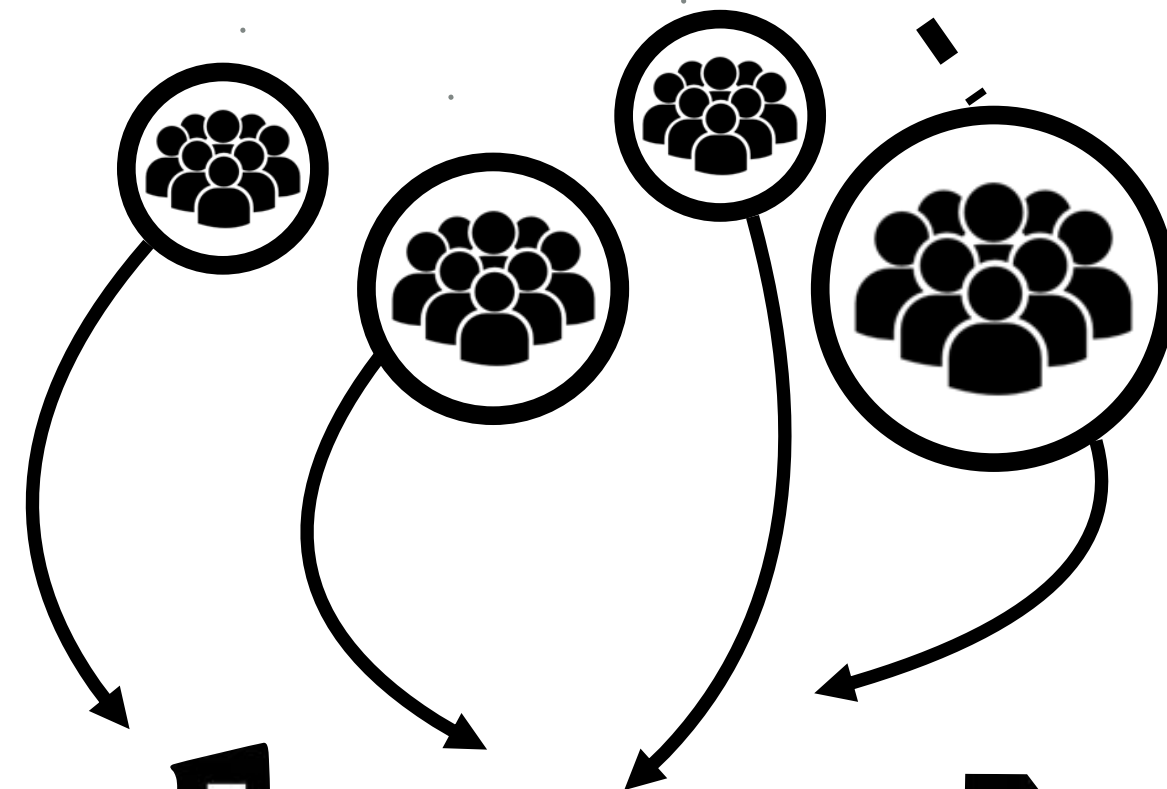


THE GAP

## Grassroots organizations —

- Small donors / deep, local influence
- Little voice in the larger conversation on vulnerability
- Deeply invested in real people and communities
- Direct, first-hand understanding of vulnerable groups

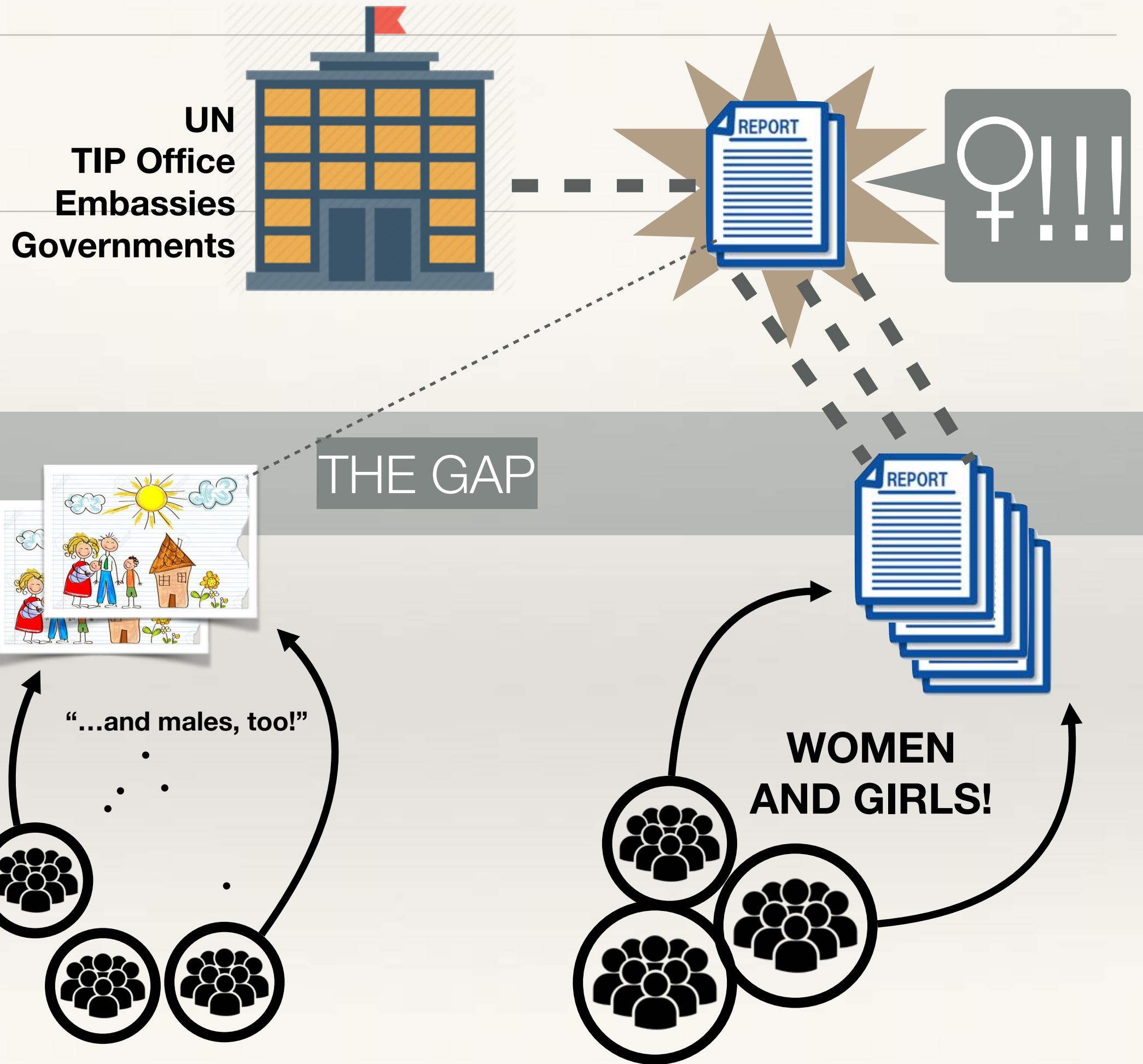
## Vulnerable communities —





POLICIES

PROGRAMS



# CONTACTS

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