



The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

– in St Petersburg and Northwest Russia

*I. Gurchich
M. Rusakova
T. Pyshkina
A. Yakovleva*



Save the Children

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1. Summary of Research Findings and Recommendations

1. The main reason for the growth of prostitution among minors in Russia is the on-going social-economic crisis. The rising number of poor and socially unprotected families, refugees, homelessness, and increasing alcohol and drug misuse all contribute to an expansion in the numbers of minors for whom prostitution represents the best or only means of survival. Prostitution is often the only source of income both for the minor and his or her family.
2. The collapse of state systems designed to guarantee children a certain level of social protection (general basic education, medical aid free of charge, employment, summer vacation, attention for the families of social risk etc) is another factor that has contributed to the growth of prostitution among minors.
3. Participation in the sex trade can lead to children's involvement in other illegal activities (such as theft, fraud, criminal groups, drug dealing), and is often associated with drug and alcohol abuse.
4. Minors are present in all the principal forms of prostitution that exist today in the territory of the northwest Russian Federation: street, railway station, road, club, hotel, apartment (brothel) prostitution, and prostitution in saunas and baths.
5. Minors are increasingly present in more organized and controlled forms of prostitution, and integrated into a well-organized, profitable and international sex industry.
6. At present, state and non-governmental organizations that seek to combat child prostitution and/or provide help for the minors involved are in competition for resources and rarely cooperate with one another. As a result, services for sexually exploited children are either completely lacking or fragmented.
7. It is not possible to generalize about child prostitution in Russia as a whole on the basis of research describing the situation in the northwestern region. Further research is necessary in order to understand the nature and scale of child sexual exploitation in other regions of the Russian Federation. More detailed research on children's involvement in prostitution in all regions, as well as on the clients, pimps and recruiters of minors, is particularly important if we are to develop effective preventive and rehabilitation programs.
8. Minors interviewed in the course of the research reported here did not place a high priority on social-medical help, but rather stated that first of all, they needed material assistance (clothing, food, money, a place to live). This fact is not taken into account by the programs that are currently provided by organizations offering social-psychological assistance to sexually exploited minors in the northwestern region of the Russian Federation. Assistance in rehabilitation and integration of minors involved in the sex industry needs to be more directly focused on the needs of the individual child.

99. State organizations, the government of St Petersburg, the northwestern region and Russia need to be provided with objective information on the problem of minors' involvement in prostitution. It is necessary to lobby for laws and state programs that are directed towards the improvement of children's lives, the protection of their rights and the prevention of child prostitution.

10. Preventative and rehabilitation programs that are financed by both Russian and foreign organizations need to take into account the experience of Russian specialists in the field of child sexual exploitation, as well as paying attention to the particular needs of the children affected. It is also necessary to make greater efforts to include Russian organizations in international networks of NGOs working on children's rights issues, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and so on.

2. Introduction

For Russia, child prostitution is not a new phenomenon. The First World War and Civil War (1914-1920), the revolution of 1917 and the disruption and hunger connected to them created many orphans in Russia of that time. Some survived by begging or theft, others engaged in unskilled work, but for many, prostitution was their primary source of income. The phenomenon of child prostitution was well documented by research carried out in the 1920s. The 1930s were characterized by the adoption of severe policies in all spheres of life of the new Soviet state, and approaches to the problem of child destitution and prostitution were similarly rigid and austere. All homeless children were placed in orphanages that were organized according to half-military, half-prison principles. Having established these institutions of social control, child prostitution, violence against children, child criminality and drug addiction were no longer discussed in official forums until the end of the 1980s. For almost 50 years, there was no official recognition that such social problems existed in Soviet society. And yet these problems undoubtedly continued to affect many children. In the course of our research, we came across much evidence to confirm the existence of child prostitution in Soviet times in the territories of northwest Russia. Ironically, it was in the orphanages and boarding schools established to eradicate child sexual abuse and exploitation that children were most at risk of sexual exploitation. There is, for instance, a small settlement in the region in which a boarding school for children with learning difficulties is situated. In this settlement it has for many years been the practice for pupils of the boarding school to render sexual services to the inhabitants of the settlement in exchange for cigarettes, food, and clothing. During the Soviet era, the phenomenon of child prostitution existed in parallel with a rigid system of state control of "normal" children. The basic institution of social control over the child life was school. Secondary education (the educational minimum, which everybody should have) was obligatory. It was impossible for a child not to attend school. In those rare cases in which the parents did not bring the child into the first grade, the state could call the parents to judicial account. Teachers were obliged to constantly supervise the life of the pupils, to the extent that they would even visit their families in the event of any unconventional behavior. There was a rigid control of school attendance, and if one of the pupils was absent, it was the teacher's responsibility to find out why and ensure that the child returned to school. Other organizations, such as medical and law-enforcement agencies, also controlled the child through the school. Indeed, from birth children were also supervised by public health agencies. Every child was issued a medical card upon which information on his or her health was recorded until he or she reached 18 years of age. Scheduled medical surveys, vaccination programs and so on were carried out. If a doctor began to suspect that a family was not taking enough care of a child's health, then the doc-

tor was obliged to visit the family and investigate the situation. If the misgivings proved to be well founded, the doctor had to write an application, on the basis of which the law-enforcement agents were called in. The local militia — employees of the regional branches of militia engaged in direct work with the population — also had to work with families deemed to be 'social risk' families who lived on the territory that was entrusted to them.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the systems through which the state monitored the life of minors broke down as the basic institutions of social control declined and ceased to perform their functions in relation to state management. Economic "recession" coupled with the destruction of systems of state regulation in all spheres of social-economic life of the country created serious social problems. As a result, many children's circumstances are as difficult as those faced by minors during the 1920s.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and local military conflicts in the territory of Russia and countries of the former Soviet Union has also generated a significant refugee problem as people from the southern regions of the country that represent zones of inter-ethnic conflict move to the other regions, especially to the larger cities. St Petersburg and northwest Russia in particular attract large numbers of refugees. The social problems faced by refugees in Russia are aggravated by the legal system of registration according to the place of residence. In order to access the services of various state organizations (clinics and hospitals, educational establishments, libraries, and so on), a person must be legally registered as a resident in a given administrative zone. Registration is also frequently a necessary precondition for applying for a new job. A person who has no registration is given the legal status of PWCR (person without certain residence). Refugees fall into this latter category, as they do not have registration. They cannot therefore receive medical aid free of charge, nor can they arrange for their children to attend school, or apply for work. This is also true of the large numbers of migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union who once had Soviet citizenship, but are now deemed to be citizens of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and so on, rather than citizens of Russia.

However, we should note that internal regional migrants face similar problems. In St Petersburg there are many people who have arrived from remote places of the Leningrad Oblast and the northwestern region as a whole. Because they do not have registration in the city, they are compelled to turn to unskilled and undetpaid work, begging and even crime in order to subsist. As a rule, the children of migrants and refugees do not attend educational institutions as the absence of a registration is an obstacle to reception into comprehensive schools. Thus, they frequently spend much of their time on the streets, where they join together in groups and often get involved in begging, theft, and prostitution. Such children are generally ignored not just by the state agencies responsible for child welfare and protection, but also by the ordinary inhabitants of St Petersburg. Dirty, poorly dressed children asking passers-by for money in the underground stations attracts little attention today.

Although the laws of the Russian Federation state that such children should be provided with special protection by the state, in practice they remain com-

pletely without help and support and represent one of the most unprotected groups of the Russian society. Laws in this sphere are not applied. This is partly because there is no properly functioning system of state social protection, but also because there is no history or tradition of observing children's rights in Russia. In particular, children have been and continue to be denied all opportunity to participate in decisions about their lives or futures. The destiny of any 'unsuccessful' child is determined by the parents or trustees; if the guardians are not present, decisions are taken by representatives of an orphanage, or medical or law-enforcement bodies. In Russian law, a child (or minor) is a person under age of 18. The Federal Law "On the General Guaranties of Child Rights in the Russian Federation" guarantees the child assistance in implementation and protection of its rights and legal interests in various spheres, such as healthcare, education, social welfare etc. It thus sets certain minimum standards regarding the quality of life to which children of the Russian Federation are entitled. A separate article of this law, Article No 15, is dedicated to the protection of the rights of children living in difficult circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Children who are left without parental custody;
- Children who find themselves in extreme conditions;
- Child victims of violence;
- Children from low-income households;
- Children with behavioral problems;
- Children whose lives are adversely affected by their current circumstances and who are unable to overcome these circumstances on their own or with the help of their families.

According to the law, such children have a right to special protection and support from the federal state authorities, legislative and executive authorities of Russian Federation subjects, and local administrative authorities. In reality, however, such children are amongst the least protected members of Russian society, and their number is growing from year to year. Well before they reach the age of 18, many have started to use drugs, to get involved in illegal actions or with criminal gangs, and/or to get involved in prostitution.

Children in the Russian Federation are vulnerable to various forms of commercial sexual exploitation for three key reasons. First, they are made vulnerable by the enormous social and economic problems that exist in modern Russia. The present situation is characterized by massive unemployment, especially among women and young people, and low incomes combined with a rapidly rising cost of living and housing shortages are increasingly leaving many Russian families in an extremely difficult situation. The phenomenon of 'social orphanhood' is growing — more than 590,000 children in Russia are now brought up in orphanages, and 90% of them have parents who are still living. Likewise, the number of street children is increasing. According to unofficial data there are more than 2 million such children in the Russian Federation. In other words, many minors

(some of whom are very young) are now attempting to survive on their own, as their parents are either unable or unwilling to bring them up. Nor can schools be said to be offering a safety net to such children. Reception centers that provide services to vulnerable children report that they are receiving more and more children in the 12 to 13 age group who have never attended school. Second, children are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation because the population of the Russian Federation in general lacks access to good information about sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, and women's rights. Modern Russian society's attitudes towards gender and sexuality are shaped by the legacy of traditional Orthodoxy on the one hand, and socialist culture from the Soviet times on the other. In Soviet society, it was considered unacceptable and shameful to discuss sexual relations, and even the adult population had very little knowledge about sexual health or sexuality. Teenagers received no sex education whatsoever. This situation has not improved since the end of the Soviet era, for there has been a return to the Orthodox tradition in Russia, a tradition that is equally repressive in relation to questions of sexuality. So, for example, attempts to stimulate public debate about issues of sexuality, as well as attempts to introduce sex education for teenagers, have met with great resistance from the Orthodox Church. Despite a growing incidence in STD cases (including HIV/AIDS), early and unwanted pregnancies, and prostitution among minors, the Russian authorities have paid little attention to issues of sexuality, sexual health or sex education. There has only been one case in which the legislative organs have considered such problems, and that involved draft legislation "On Citizens' Reproductive Rights and Guarantees of their Implementation", which was proposed by the "Women of Russia" political faction. Despite much advocacy in Russian society regarding the adoption of this legislation, opponents (who also opposed the idea of sex education in schools) argued that this legislation, as well as sex education programs, would lead to birth reduction in Russia. Sex education for teenagers is widely acknowledged to be an effective means of prevention in regard to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, STDs and HIV/AIDS. Teaching minors about sex can also play an important role in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. There have been attempts to develop sex education programs for teenagers in Russia at federal level over the past ten years, but none of these programs have to date been adopted.¹ Meanwhile, in the various regions of the Russian Federation there have been some attempts to develop school sex education programs. These initiatives have been undertaken by local administrations, pedagogical collectives in certain schools, medical organizations, NGOs, foreign organizations (medical, state and NGOs). However, most of the regional programs are based on principles of hygiene, rather than sex education, and are reluctant to discuss anything other than traditionally sanctioned sexual contacts within marriage. Sadly, partly due to lack of finance and partly due to the public opposition, such programs are unsystematic and do not address questions about emotional experience, gender

1 Such programs were developed under guidance of V. V. Chervyakov and B. Y. Shapiro, D. V. Kolesov, L. P. Anastasova, I. I. Sokovnya-Semenova etc.

relations and equality, comprehension of the child's own sexuality, homosexuality, prostitution, or sexual violence.²

Because they are disproportionately affected by the Russian Federation's serious socio-economic problems, many women and children are desperately seeking a means of economic survival, and this, in itself, makes them vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. Lack of access to effective sex education or to informed public debate on sexuality and sexual health not only compounds this vulnerability, but also renders them more vulnerable within prostitution.

Finally, children are vulnerable because law and law enforcement in Russia provides them with inadequate protection against those who would sexually exploit them for personal pleasure or financial gain. Prostitution both for adults and minors is illegal in the Russian Federation, and in theory, various articles of the Criminal Code protects children from commercial sexual exploitation. Third party involvement in the organization of prostitution is punishable by imprisonment for up to five years (Article 241), and those who force another person into sexual actions are also criminalized (Article 133). Where the individual so forced is under the age of 16, the punishment for the third party is up to four years of imprisonment (Article 134). Meanwhile, Article 151 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code states that those who involve minors in antisocial actions (including prostitution) may be punished by up to four years of imprisonment.

In practice, however, the above mentioned articles are rarely enforced. In St Petersburg, the number of criminal cases brought against people for violating such articles over the past few years can be counted on the fingers of one hand. This partly reflects the fact that it is extremely difficult to successfully prosecute individuals under many of these articles. For instance, to implement Article 151, it is necessary for the prosecution to produce video evidence of the actual transfer of money, or eye-witnesses to the exchange. Obtaining such evidence requires long and laborious work, and relies on the investigator being able to appear at the right moment in the right place to document the crime. This, in itself, militates against the prosecution of such crimes.

Furthermore, if there is no applicant (for example, the parents of the minor, representatives of a school or NGO concerned with the child's interests) to press for the investigation of sexual crimes against children, the police are unlikely to even embark on such complex and time-consuming work. Since the majority of children involved in prostitution are street children, there is rarely anyone who is interested in their destiny. Next we should note that even where an investigation is pursued, it is not difficult for the client to evade either prosecution or conviction with the help of the lawyer or by paying a bribe to officials involved. Finally, the negative stigma that is attached to prostitutes provides an impediment to effective child protection. In Russian society, prostitutes are morally condemned - teenage girls who

2 The Deviant Behavior and Social Control Sector at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology has some experience in school sex education program development and implementation. This project is conducted starting from 1999 together with the Finnish STAKES institute. The project is implemented in five schools of the St Petersburg Frunzenskiy District. The project supposes guidance of the teachers, sex education lessons for children, monitoring of how the pupils change their knowledge on sexuality and relations between sexes.

prostitute are stigmatized as immoral and loose, boys who are involved in homosexual prostitution are exposed to double stigmatization, both as homosexuals and as prostitutes. Thus, the police are under no pressure from public opinion to take active steps to protect these "low-grade" children. Those who work for children's NGOs and other organizations providing support to children report that children are increasingly involved in the commercial sex trade, and yet there is little reliable data on the extent or nature of CSEC in the Russian Federation. Even in a single area, such as St Petersburg, no official statistics or even estimates on the numbers of minors involved in the sex trade are available. Researchers and other experts in the field believe that this is due to three main reasons.

- First, prostitution, especially child prostitution, is not officially recognized.
- Second, the involvement of minors in prostitution is not generally viewed by the public as a cause for concern. Even when reported by the media, instances of child prostitution are treated as "hot and spicy" stories, rather than examples of a socially significant problem.
- Third, state agencies and NGOs that work with the minors in the city are reluctant to openly acknowledge cases in which minors trade sex for money. The concealment of cases of prostitution among the pupils of various children's establishments is a well known phenomenon in Russia, and this is because the administrators of such institutions have no incentive to reveal such cases, rather the reverse. If a pupil of an orphanage was involved in prostitution and it became known outside of the institution, the administration faces serious penalties (up to and including dismissal from work criminal prosecution).

A fourth reason for the lack of data on the incidence of CSEC is that there are major barriers to independent academic research on the subject. On the one hand, prostitution is regarded as somewhat tawdry subject, and not one that is likely to command the attention of mainstream social scientists. More importantly, however, Russian Universities and academic institutes simply do not have resources necessary to conduct extensive research in this field. There are no funds to financially support projects, and most academic institutions are seriously under-resourced in terms of accommodation, computing and other basic facilities. There is also a shortage of trained and qualified lawyers, psychologists, and researchers etc, to work with children involved in prostitution.

Without a reliable body of empirical evidence on the phenomenon, it is extremely difficult to formulate effective policies with regard to the problem of CSEC (commercial sexual exploitation of children). This report is based upon pilot and preliminary research in the Russian territory (mainly in St Petersburg and northwest Russia).³ It aims to provide an insight into the phenomenon of CSEC in the region, and to act as a stimulus for future research as well as to draw attention to key policy issues that need to be addressed.

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- 3 The paper draws upon a number of studies of prostitution, gender-related problems, and addictive behavior, including the following:
- "Child prostitution in St Petersburg" (autumn 1999). A pilot study involving interviews with 32 drug addicted minors involved in prostitution, and two pimps. Research manager: M. M. Rusakova.
 - "Child prostitution with involvement of foreign nationals in northwest Russia" (April – June 2000). This project developed from the pilot research noted above and was supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers Information Bureau in St Petersburg. It involved interviews with 81 experts and professionals, and 41 minors in prostitution. Research managers: I. N. Gurvich and M. M. Rusakova.
 - "Prostitution with involvement of minors in St Petersburg" (September – November 2000). The research was conducted within the framework of the STOP-2 project. It focused upon minors (under 18 years of age) living in St Petersburg and included interviews with 15 minors involved in prostitution. Research managers: M. M. Rusakova, A. Kolesova, T. Pyshkina and A. Yakovleva.
 - "School research": survey research on high school pupils in two districts of St Petersburg: Primorskiy (uptown) and Frunzenskiy (downtown) The Primorskiy District research: October–November 1999, scope – 278 persons. Frunzenskiy District research: April–May 1999, scope – 195 persons. Research manager: I. N. Gurvich

3. Research on CSEC in St Petersburg and northwest Russia

The research on minors in the sex trade was conducted in St Petersburg area and northwest Russia and took the form of three studies. In the autumn of 1999, pilot research focusing on drug addicted minors who were involved into prostitution was undertaken. This was followed in April - June 2000 by a project entitled "Child prostitution with the involvement of foreign nationals in northwest Russia", which was supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The main focus of the research was minors up to the age of 12 who were involved in prostitution. A third study took place in September - November 2000 within the framework of the Stop-2 project ("Prostitution in St Petersburg where minors are involved"). This project looked at the experience of minors up to the age of 18 who lived in St Petersburg and were involved in prostitution. The research was directed towards the following goals:

- To collect data on the medical, legal, socio-psychological assistance services in prevention and how they perform the minor prostitute assistance programs.
- To describe the life and background characteristics of minors involved in prostitution.

The research involved semi-structured interviews with experts/professionals who are knowledgeable about child prostitution in the region (such as those working in shelters for minors, educational facilities, socio-rehabilitation centers, healthcare organizations, and law enforcement agents).

Representatives from both state agencies and NGOs were interviewed.

Information was also gathered from hotel workers, taxi drivers, pimps, and representatives of criminal gangs. Semi-structured depth interviews were also conducted with minors involved in prostitution. Obtaining access, especially to children in the sex trade, was one of the most difficult aspects of the research, and it was necessary to develop special techniques for contacting them. Child interviewees were recruited with the assistance of NGOs (educational facilities, shelters for minors, healthcare facilities), charity eateries, key informers, street social workers, law enforcement agents, and gangsters. Because the sample of children interviewed was not randomly selected, it is not possible to generalise about the entire population of children involved in prostitution on the basis of the research findings.⁴ However, the data gathered nonetheless provide an insight into the lives of some of the minors

4 The research focused on "street children" and therefore does not address the experience of the following groups:

- Children from successful families, who can prostitute at school, in schoolyard, in the small companies;
- Pupils from orphanages;
- Child victims of domestic violence who can be traded by their parents, or other relatives;
- Children whose parents are members of various religious sects, and who can be involved in different sexual relations with other members of sects, including cases involving the exchange of sex for money;
- Children, especially teenagers, involved in modeling and show business.

involved in prostitution in the Russian Federation, and also allow us to describe some of the key features of the social organisation of CSEC in St Petersburg and northwest Russia.

The Social Organization of prostitution in St Petersburg

There are a number of different types of prostitution in St Petersburg.

Street prostitution: For a long time street prostitution in St Petersburg was relatively undeveloped, and involved girls and women who would wait in their pimp's car whilst the pimp negotiated with the client. The client was then led to the car where he selected a girl and they then left together. The places where the pimps and cars appeared changed constantly, so that there was no "red light" area as such for clients to cruise in search of prostitutes. Instead, clients normally relied on taxi-drivers to take them to the spot where the pimps were waiting on any given night. Many of the girls involved were minors; their average age being 16-17 years.

Street prostitution involving prostitutes standing soliciting on particular streets (which can be called the "red light streets" of modern St Petersburg), appeared only two years ago. However, the streets and regions of the city where prostitutes can be found still changes constantly. Both minor boys and girls are involved in street prostitution. The working practice of street prostitutes is as follows: they stand in streets known to clients. Clients cruise the streets, by as a rule, looking for prostitutes. Sexual services are provided in the clients car or in his hotel room, or apartment.

Highway prostitution: Prostitutes also work from highways, generally the major highways where a lot of freight transport passes, or that lead to the Russian-Finnish border. Those who work in this type of prostitution usually live close to the highway, in small settlements. Notably, highway prostitution involves either very young girls, including children of 12-15 years of age, or women aged over 35 years who do not find it easy to solicit in the city because of competition from younger women. Information about minors' involvement in this kind of prostitution first became publicly available about 15 years ago, when the mass media started to report on girls of 16—18 years, who traveled with long-distance truck drivers around the country. These girls did not normally consider themselves to be prostitutes, but rather referred to themselves as "batde girlfriends", traveling the country with men they had chosen. Some did not even take money from the drivers^ When long-distance truck journeys were undertaken by two drivers, the girl who traveled with them became what is known as a "sin wife", sexually servicing both of them. Gradually, this group of girls is disappearing. Today's highway prostitutes do not travel with the truck drivers or enter into longer term and more diffuse forms of sexual-economic exchange, but instead enter into brief, narrowly focused transactions, rendering sexual services in exchange for cash in parking spots on the highway.

Railway station prostitution: Railway stations in St Petersburg, as well as in many other cities, are sites where sex is sold, especially by homeless and drug-addicted adults and youth. Three main groups are involved:

- *Homeless women:* As a rule, these women are alcoholics who exchange sex for a bottle of vodka, food, and so on. Sexual services are rendered in the station itself (for example, in the public toilets), in the entrances of houses, or, less commonly in the clients apartments.
- *Station prostitutes:* They live or rent rooms not far from the station and work primarily with visitors to the city. Sexual services are usually provided in rooms in big community apartments near the station. This form of prostitution has traditionally been controlled by organized crime networks and the militia. Station prostitutes are as a rule involved in criminal affairs, supporting thieves and sometimes getting involved in thefts and attacks on clients (visitors to the city often become victims of theft and robbery).
- *Homeless children:* They often live either at the station, or near it. They subsist primarily through theft and begging, but will also render sexual services in exchange for food or some money. Some of their clients are people who work at the station. Parents of the children involved in prostitution at the station are themselves often homeless, refugees, or local alcoholics who live near the station. They come to the station to meet their friends, to drink, to work etc and some introduce their children into prostitution.

Hotel prostitution: This form of prostitution is organized with the help of hotel employees. These employees will approach hotel guests and tell them that it is possible to obtain sexual services. In Russia, this is a very traditional kind of prostitution that developed and grew during Soviet times (particularly in hotels for foreign visitors), when it was referred to as "currency prostitution". Today, it is usually adult women who work in hotels, but some 16- 17-year-old girls are also involved. The organizers of this trade may also be able to find young boys, usually 14-16 years of age, if the client so desires, but no male prostitutes are permanently based in hotels.

Club prostitution: Some prostitutes solicit custom in certain clubs in the city. Officially, children are denied entrance to most clubs in St Petersburg, but in practice, nobody is asked to show identity papers to gain entry. Teenagers who look as though they are over 18 have little difficulty in entering the clubs. Those who consistently solicit within constantly a given club usually need to pay off the doorman or another third party. There are also special "closed" clubs, where prostitution, including child prostitution, is more explicitly and formally organized. It should also be noted that nightclubs are often frequented by the teenage children of successful, high-income families who are looking for a rich patron and potentially a husband. The same clubs are attended by men who want to find a teenage girlfriend. This phenomenon is not normally thought of as prostitution, but yet involves sexual relations between adult men and teenage girls.

Apartment prostitution (public house): According to the Russian legislation, a 'public house' is any room (apartment, separate room etc) where sexual services are rendered systematically. Typically this form of prostitution involves an apartment rented by a pimp, from which several prostitutes work.

Call Services: This type of prostitution is at the elite end of the commercial sex market in St Petersburg in terms of prices. Clients are solicited through advertisements placed in newspapers or on Internet sites. A phone number that clients can call to order sexual services is provided. This is usually a phone number of a dispatcher, who arranges the details of the transaction. The prostitute is generally accompanied by guards when she goes to meet the client. The cost of sexual services bought from call girls/boys is high, and clients are therefore normally quite wealthy. They also often provide regular custom. In this context, it is profitable for the third parties involved to cater to clients who are looking for young children, virgins, and so on, and it is believed that call service firms are involved in the organization of CSEC in St Petersburg.

Prostitution in saunas and baths: Because it is illegal to operate a brothel, sexual services are often sold under the cover of legal businesses, such as bathhouses or saunas. Some saunas that serve as a front for prostitution have their own "permanent" sex-workers who are present throughout business hours. Others will call sex workers from other firms by phone when a sauna customer asks for "additional" services. Takings from prostitution are shared between the owners and employees of the sauna and the prostitutes themselves. Prices are in the middle range of the prostitution market, but can be higher depending on the quality of the baths or sauna involved. Minors are also present in this form of prostitution.

4. Children and the Sex Trade

As has been seen, the social organization of prostitution varies. Prostitutes can work from many different settings, and solicit custom in a variety of ways. Also, while some work independently, others enter into some form of direct or indirect employment relation with a third party, and others still are directly forced into prostitution, and controlled, by a third party. During the research, interviews were conducted with minors involved in all the types of prostitution that have been noted. In terms of working practices and throughput of clients, the children we interviewed reported having from one to six (on average three or four) sexual contacts during their working day. However, few of them worked every day of the week. Most often, children provide sexual services in a side-street, a doorway, in a car or at the client's apartment. Less frequently, it may be a hotel room or a brothel. For instance, there is a specially rented room in an apartment situated near the Moskovskiy Railway Station, where some prostitutes who solicit from this station may bring their clients. There is also a "hotel" in St Petersburg, which is organized like a Finnish brothel. Child as well as adult prostitutes work there. A majority of the children we interviewed use drugs or alcohol whilst selling sex. This, especially where boy children are involved, may happen at the client's wish, and it is the client who pays for the drugs. It is also important to note that minors are sometimes paid for sex services in kind, rather than cash. Payment may take the form of food and/or alcohol, less often drugs, as well as presents, payment for education, or in some cases, a client may fully financially support the child.

As in most countries of the world, there is a hierarchy within prostitution in terms of earnings and conditions in Russia. Children are generally at the cheaper, more vulnerable end of the prostitution hierarchy, but the findings of the research suggest that the market for prostitution in the St Petersburg area, and hierarchies within it, are highly gendered. Where girl children's involvement in prostitution often resembles a form of "survival sex", a low paid activity, usually undertaken independently and to meet basic needs, prostitution involving boys is generally better organized and more profitable. The earnings of boy children, as well as their third party exploiters, are generally higher than those of girl children.

Most of the girls involved in prostitution in the St Petersburg area work by themselves, rarely with a pimp. These girls are, as a rule, "street children". They hit the streets as a result of their life situation (usually family conflicts, and/or their parents being drug addicts or alcoholics). Living in the streets, or spending most of their time there, they meet up with people who introduce them to the sex trade, typically a sexual partner or a peer who has experience of prostitution. The research found that girl prostitutes generally find their clients in the following places: the major streets of the city (Staro-Nevskiy Prospect, Suvorovskiy Prospect, Iskrovskiy Prospect, Prospect Veteranov etc); Metro stations ("Plosh-

chad' Vosstaniya", "Prospect Prosveshcheniya", "Lomonosovskaya", "Pionerskaya" etc); and at the Moskovskiy Railway Station.

For girl children living on the streets, prostitution is closely connected to other forms of violence and abuse, as well as to drug and/or alcohol use. Often they are subject to sexual and physical abuse, and drink daily. Some are drug addicted, and will work for a dose of drugs (heroin as a rule, for which one dose costs 150 rubles, i.e., US\$5). Drug addicted prostitutes usually work near the places where the drugs are sold. Oral sex, which is the service most widely offered by minors, costs 100 to 150 rubles (US\$3 to 5), while intercourse costs from 200 to 250 rubles. For a girl to spend a whole night with a client will cost him between 500 to 600 rubles and 1,000 rubles (US\$17 to 20, rarely more than US\$35). In other towns of northwest Russia where research was conducted, prices are much lower than in the capital cities. Here, child prostitutes report that they often make only enough money for food or a dose of heroin. In these regions, there is also a practice whereby minors are paid for sexual services in kind (food or clothing, etc), rather than cash. If the child's parents are alcoholics and also acting as pimps, then the payment is often simply a bottle of vodka. Cash payments in northwest Russia are often beggarly. The lowest reported level of payment for a sexual service is a sum a little less than US\$1. Prices are regulated by basic market mechanisms of supply and demand. Competition for 'business' is relatively high amongst girl prostitutes, and they are not therefore in a position to negotiate higher prices from clients.

The market for male prostitution in St Petersburg has a rather different profile. A small number of the male minors involved in the sex trade in St Petersburg are "street children" working as prostitutes in order to survive. Some are around 12—13 years old and have been living in the streets for several years. Most come to the city from the Leningrad Oblast region. The children who come to St Petersburg from the regions and get involved in prostitution can be divided into three main groups:

1. Children who come to the city for 'day-trips', to walk, beg or sell sexual services. They may be children from relatively affluent families who are skipping school for the day, or children from poor and socially marginalized families, some of whom do not attend school at all. They may be pupils from boarding schools or orphanages. These children return home or to their school at night.
2. Children who have run away from home, boarding school or orphanage because of physical and/or sexual violence, problems at school, or with the children of the same age. Amongst this group are some children who are habitual runaways, and some who have run away for the first time. Usually they spend some time in St Petersburg, then either return home of their own volition, or are arrested by the militia and sent back to their parents or orphanage.
3. Children who migrate with their family from poor and empty settlements and small towns. Their parents prefer to endure the condition and status of home-lessness in St Petersburg than to suffer life in such settlements. The children try to survive by stealing and begging, either with their parents or by themselves, or with a group of children of the same age. Such children roam the

streets and form groups with others like themselves, or with runaway children who have been living in St Petersburg for several years, and have lost all social connections with their families, relatives, and former friends. Many of these street children will exchange sex for a small sum of money or food, or for a place to sleep overnight. Most such boys work near metro or railway stations. On the whole, however, boy prostitutes are able to command much higher rates of pay than are their female counterparts. Though boy prostitution is not well researched, our interview work further suggested that boys treat prostitution as an additional, rather than sole source of income, and therefore exercise greater control and discretion in relation to clients than do girls. Some said they would refuse a client if they did not like the look of him, or if he offered too little money, for example. None of the girls we interviewed made similar statements. We should also note that because modern Russia is a profoundly homophobic society, gay teenagers have very few opportunities for sexual expression, and very limited opportunities for finding sexual partners. Some gay adolescents therefore become involved in the sex trade as a way to get access to sexual partners and experience. The boys we interviewed told us that they can normally get between 3,000 to 7,000 rubles (US\$ 100 to 250) for spending the evening with a client. Clients will usually offer a given sum of money, and the boy can then either agree or refuse the offer. Very often, the clients of boy prostitutes are fairly rich and well-known people in the city. The research also found that third party involvement in boy children's prostitution was quite common, although the boys interviewed often denied this. This takes the form of pimps, or panderers, who act as middle-agents. They deal directly with clients, with whom they usually establish long-term relationships. The client calls the panderer by phone, or sends him a message over a pager or by e-mail. He specifies his requirements, and sets the time and place for the meeting. The panderer then finds a boy, explains the deal to him, and if the boy agrees, the panderer takes him to meet the client. Interviewees told us that the price for this "service" is about 3,000 rubles (US\$100). The panderer is paid separately by the client. As a rule, this style of working is characterized by a long-term business relationship between the panderer and the boy.

5. Third Party Involvement in CSEC

The minors interviewed in the course of the research had been introduced to prostitution by a range of different actors, including strangers, parents, acquaintances, friends and sexual partners. In a number of cases, children stated that they had initiated their own involvement in prostitution without assistance or prompting by any other party. From the research data, we can identify a number of different routes into child prostitution, including:

- situations in which a father or stepfather pressures a child into a sexual encounter and later starts selling the child to his friends (often for a bottle of vodka), and/or in which parents initiate or encourage a child's entry into the sex trade and rely on his or her earnings as the sole source of family income;
- situations in which a minor has economic problems and identifies prostitution as a way to make money, or in which the child is drug addicted and views prostitution as the only way to earn money to buy drugs or pay off a debt to a drug dealer;
- situations in which the minor meets a pimp or a peer who introduces him or her to the sex trade and encourages/facilitates involvement.

No matter how a child was initially introduced to prostitution, once familiar with the sex trade he or she may make contact with clients in a variety of different ways. Some solicit custom independently. Popular spots for seeking clients include highways, highway cafes and gas stations. Minors also solicit near or inside bars, restaurants, cafes, marketplaces, near metro stations, on embankments, in parks, and at specialized clubs. Contact with clients, particularly tourists and other foreign visitors, is often established through begging. As one informant, a teacher, explained:

Girls make contact with clients by themselves. They just follow after Finns who come to the town. First they beg for Finnish money, offering something like souvenirs in exchange. They meet those Finns and then make contacts themselves according to personal characteristics and development level.

Some minors who sell sex have addresses and phone numbers of regular clients, and will contact them when they want work. However, third parties also often play an important role in establishing contact between clients and child prostitutes. They are usually members of the child's immediate social circle, which is to say they can be parents, older peers and/or friends working in prostitution. People who work in hotels, bars, restaurants and discos (especially security guards) will also act as agents, as well as some employees of educational facilities for children, police officers (especially traffic police), drug dealers and other prostitutes. Some pimps are unemployed, and make a living exclusively from organizing the prostitution of others. A few are professional gangsters. Both men

and women are known to act as pimps. Most pimps are fairly young. They may be either single or married. In St Petersburg, some pimps are homosexual or paedophile, and some are drug addicted, but as a rule they are "ordinary people". They are of Russian ethnicity; sometimes coming from other parts of Russia or from the Caucasus. Those pimps who arrange the prostitution of their own children are usually alcohol and drug addicts, homeless people, or low-income single mothers.

Pimps are not a homogeneous group in terms of their economic situation and social position. Some are in an unstable and vulnerable economic position, some have another source of income that they are seeking to supplement, while some are already relatively well off. Furthermore, as a social worker we interviewed noted, some children make a transition from prostitution into pimping. Though pimps are, as a rule, adult men, some older teenage boys also act as pimps; "The more the teenager does it, the more shop-soiled he becomes and then he works as a pimp". Our interviews with children suggest that relationships between child prostitutes and pimps are rarely based on physical violence, blackmail, or threats. Usually it is viewed and conducted as a business relationship. The pimp may carry out various tasks, but the most common is to find clients for the child. The pimp may get the share of the earnings either from the prostitute or from the client, and the cut taken by the pimp may be anywhere from 30 to 100%.

In some cases, third party involvement is highly organized. In addition to the fact that internet and other means of advertising are employed by some pimps, one informant in St Petersburg, a teacher, observed:

There are hotels in the city that offer sex services. They have prostitutes on file and addresses where the services are to be found. They have their own taxi drivers, service people, hotel, restaurant, and bar personnel. Maybe there are also people who are officially unemployed but have contacts in hotels and cafes.

Interviews with experts/professionals found mixed opinions regarding the degree of third party organization and control of child prostitution in St Petersburg. Some believe that formally organized child prostitution is practically nonexistent, and that most minors in prostitution work independently, or perhaps for a friend or relative who is pimping them. They argue that it is costly for third parties to organize child prostitution as a business venture and that the profits to be returned from any investment in such a business are relatively low. Other experts are convinced that CSEC is a well organized business.

As far as links with organised crime are concerned, a number of the child prostitutes we interviewed did state that they were required to spend some portion of their income on protection ("roof"). However, none of them reported being controlled in any way by organised criminal gangs, and they were not aware of any link between child prostitution and organised crime in St Petersburg. The rest of our research findings tend to support this view. The fact that child prostitution is rarely linked to organised crime can be explained by two factors: first, this type of activity violates the norms of the criminal world, and second, CSEC yields low profits in comparison with other illegal activities controlled by the

organized criminal world in modern Russia. However, we did find some cases in which there appeared to be a connection between drug business and illegal currency transactions, and the provision of child prostitutes to foreigners. As one interviewee, a representative of criminal circles, explained:

It's hard to describe. There are one or two people in every hotel who look after the girls and make contacts with clients, add bartenders and guards, and there are also taxi drivers at each hotel... All those people possess information about where to go to if the client has non-standard wishes... We rarely start the business up, we are there when all the stages are done... I don't want to go into details, it's all easy and effective.

Finally, we should note that though prostitution involving both adults and children is illegal, the police and other government authorities are known to connive at the existence of apartment-brothels and other manifestations of the sex trade. Our research findings suggest that prostitution brings a stable income in hard currency for corrupt individuals within such authorities, in exchange for which they provide protection. This can include legal protection and/or providing information to organizers of the sex industry. The research also found cases in which employees of orphanages and other institutions for children were participating in the organization of child prostitution.

6. *The Demand for Child Prostitutes*

The research reported here did not include interviews with clients of child prostitutes, but we did ask children involved in the sex trade to tell us about their clients. Though there are some obvious limitations to data on clients gathered in this way, children's accounts may give us some broad indication of the main groups providing demand for their 'sexual services'. Our child interviewees had the impression that most of their clients are middle class, rather than working class. They commented on the fact that some women, as well as men, pay for sex. Some children have regular clients. As one 15-year-old commented, "I have a whole phone book full of potential clients, I may call diem when I want". Another interviewee, aged 16, told us, "There is Uncle Valera, he's got a jeep, he has a wife and a daughter. He is Russian and lives near my house. He is 30 to 35. Sometimes I visit him when his wife is absent." Children who solicit at the railway station serve a more specific segment of demand, and report that most of their clients are travelers or military servicemen.

Though our interviewees stated that most of their clients are Russian, or people from the CIS states, they also reported that there is demand from foreigners in St Petersburg and northwest Russia. Some child prostitutes establish contact with foreigners by begging, but it is also the case that some foreigners actively seek out minors in prostitution. This can be done by picking up minors soliciting on highways or in other locations; or by approaching hotel employees and bartenders and asking them to procure children. Children we interviewed in St Petersburg stated that diey had had clients from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Norway, England, other European countries and die USA. They also mentioned clients from "distant" countries, including Africans, Turks, Arabs, Indians, Iranians and Japanese. Among die "nearby" countries mentioned by respondents were Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Demand from foreign clients is particularly significant in die northwestern region of Russia due to its geographical location. Its proximity to Western Europe, where incomes are so much higher dian in Russia, has made it one of the most accessible and fast growing markets for illegal sex services.

However, diere was some variation between cities in terms of the nationality of clients reported by children. In all the cities surveyed, children stated that Finns were in a majority amongst their foreign clients. Swedish citizens were only mentioned as clients by children in Viborg and Petrozavodsk; Georgians were only mentioned as clients by children in Petrozavodsk; and Azeri clients only mentioned by children in Petrozavodsk and St Petersburg.

Foreigners are often (but not always) willing and able to pay a great deal more for commercial sex than are locals. The hourly rate can be as high as 1,500-30,000 rubles (US\$50-1,000) depending on the client's spending power and preferences. Some of our informants who had experience of working for a company which provided sex services stated that the price for Russian and foreign clients varied significantly. Where a Russian would pay approximately

1,500 rubles (US\$50) to spend an entire night with a boy, a foreigner would be charged 900 rubles (US\$30) per hour.

We should also note that there is a practice of "selling" a minor to a foreigner for the whole duration of his stay in Russia, which may be anywhere from 2-3 days to 3-4 weeks. The cost for such services is often close to US\$150 per day. In St Petersburg the payment for sex services by foreigners is usually made in US dollars, while in the northwestern regions it is made in Finnish marks. One 13-year-old boy described his experience with foreign clients as follows:

Well, I was eleven, I ran away from home and started here to gather return bottles for living, I didn't know, that it's here. Well, an American approached me, took me to Grill-Master near Hollywood Nights [a club]. I was shabbily clothed, and he invited me home to his place and, well, fucked me.

In response to a question about his last sexual contact with a foreigner, he continued:

Recently, I ran away from home again and then I was standing at the Lesnaya metro station. I saw a foreigner. I started to ask for cigarettes, and then asked for three rubles to pay the metro fare. The last train was soon and I told him in English: "Please, give me three rubles". So he asked me if I wanted to come to his place, and I saw in his eyes what he wanted to do. We went and he gave me US\$100. He is here once every two months... There are also those who come here from Africa, and England... Like one guy, comes here alone and meets his friends right away and then goes to the apartment. Michael hires an apartment here at the Konyushenaya Ploshchad nearby here.

Other children stated that they went to hotels with foreign clients from America, Finland, and Sweden, a 12-year-old said that he had had clients from China, a 13-year-old boy explained:

I knew a guy called Jim from America and Robert from Malaysia, well, really he was American but he lived in Malaysia... Then I knew a guy called Mika from Finland, Josef from Australia, I mean he came recently, also I saw lots of guys I know during the Ice Hockey Championship... from Canada, for example.

Other interviewees commented that "some have true foreign clients. Boys call them and ask if they may come. And then those guys send for them" (12-year-old boy), and "I had buyers from the US and Europe, a lot of students from various countries, often Indians" (16-year-old boy).

Foreign clients typically prefer to "consume" the services of child prostitutes in their hotel, but other popular places include trucks/automobiles, places next to streets, roads, gas stations, rooms in restaurants, bars, places located next to markets, entrances of apartment buildings next to railway and metro stations (in St Petersburg), public restrooms next to the railway stations (homosexual services), rooms in cafeterias or discotheques. Some of the locations in which commercial sexual transactions take place are a specific feature of an individual city.

For example, in St Petersburg, there are facilities in closed specialized clubs which do not exist in other cities; in Viborg, casinos and waterfronts are used; in Petrozavodsk, dorms and parks. Transactions may also take place in private apartments, private baths, saunas, dachas and even sanatoriums. The following extracts from interviews with children gives a sense of this diversity:

Well, they take us to various hotels... Also they pick us up at the Moscow railway station at the toilet... you go to the toilet and stand there like this then he approaches, like: "let's go, take a ride have a talk... with interpreter". (K., aged 13)

They come to Catherine's Garden and walk around the monument there, three or four times... Some of the boys who fuck about there will definitely approach them, ask for a smoke or something. (S., aged 14)

Usually they take you to some hotels, like Moskva, Rossiya, or to some cool ones like Europe or Palace... There is also such a club called Mono... and they have an apartment there called Gnom... a client may come there with a boy. (S., aged 14)

7. Child Pornography

The use of minors in pornography is the least studied sphere of the commercial sex trade, but there is reason to believe that child pornography is a highly profitable, though well-concealed, business. In northwest Russia, St Petersburg in particular, there have been several well-publicized scandals surrounding cases of child pornography. Such cases are usually investigated by the Vice Department of St Petersburg. The street children are the most vulnerable to exploitation as models in pornographic video and other materials. The individuals involved in the production of pornography seek out such children in the streets, marketplaces, and near metro and railway stations and other places of the city. After feeding them, they ask the children whether they would like to "make good money". The minors, who are in an extremely hard economic situation believe that it will be an easy way to make money, get food, clothes, or sometimes drugs, alcohol, cigarettes.

Homosexual porno-production is widely spread. According to information from researchers, cadets of military boarding schools of St Petersburg are often used for the shooting of homosexual porno-materials. It is natural that in these cases boys that participate in shootings do not get any reward for that. They are forced to obey the orders of their commanders, who are paid by the interested party for the possibility of taking pictures and shooting a film. Officers in the Vice Department in St Petersburg state that the bulk of pornographic materials involving children is produced for sale abroad. There are also some Internet-sites that feature child pornography, and websites dedicated to child pornography increasingly feature Russian-made photographs and film. (The material is readily identifiable as Russian by the apartment interiors, which are of typical Russian style and furnishing). There are also special Internet sites where sex tourists exchange information and experience, telling each other, for example, where minors can most cheaply and easily be found. They provide names, addresses, details about the child's personal appearance, comments on the type and quality of services provided. They also offer each other advice on how to bargain, bribe, and to escape the police (sex-tourists share their experience of how to avoid police in cases of sexual contacts with minors). A law enforcement officer interviewed for the research commented that:

You can find any information you want on child prostitutes through the Internet, it is all there on our Russian websites. But it is all secret, it goes under certain passwords and codes. People first check each other, then they exchange photos, videos, download information from hard disk to hard disk. The police departments in St Petersburg and Russia more generally have little opportunity (and sometimes little inclination) to analyze the content of such sites. Indeed, child pornography usually only comes to light when and if por-

nographic material is confiscated during raids on video-salons by the tax police. When this happens, criminal cases may be opened and sometimes lead to successful prosecutions.

During recent years mass media shed the light on some notorious criminal cases, that were connected to the use of minors for porno-shootings. The organizers of such shootings are often people who directly work with the children: teachers from public schools and boarding schools, teachers from the orphanages etc.

8. Background Characteristics of Children Involved in Prostitution

In the course of research, both boy and girl children involved in prostitution were interviewed. The majority were Russian. The rest were Finno-Ugric, and there was also one Korean child. Some had been born and raised in major cities, but some were natives of small towns and rural areas. They had generally dropped out of educational institutions, though a few of our interviewees were graduates from vocational schools. Virtually all the children we interviewed who were involved in prostitution were also involved in various illegal activities such as burglary, fraud, drug dealing and/or involvement with criminal gangs. Many respondents had already faced administrative or criminal charges. In most cases, they had received a suspended sentence.

The children's living arrangements and family backgrounds varied. Though minors involved in the sex industry are often described as "street children", few of our sample were actually unregistered persons without a permanent place of accommodation. The majority had a formally recognized place to live, though many either could not or did not want to reside there. On the whole, the juvenile prostitutes we interviewed lived in communal apartments, or together with their parents, a few rented a room or lived with a friend or sexual partner (sometimes their pimp). It is not uncommon for minors involved in sex industry to preserve their family relationships, though there may be some variation between cities and areas. In St Petersburg and Sortavala, for example, all the minors involved in prostitution that we interviewed had parenting families, but the majority of those in Viborg and Petrozavodsk did not.

Most of the children we interviewed came from "social risk" or "troubled" families (i.e. single-parent households, and/or families in which one or both parents were unemployed, and/or alcohol addicted resulting in a poor financial situation), and within this, some had been rejected by their families ("social orphans"). They were either residents of orphanages, or runaways from other Russian cities and towns. Almost all the children had grown up with their mothers, but in many cases they were brought up in homes where the father was absent or there was a stepfather. Most of the children reported that their parents had alcohol and/or drug problems, and described family backgrounds that can be characterized as disadvantaged. They had lived in poor quality housing, their diet was not good, they had been provided with few books or games, and their access to entertainment outside the home was limited. They typically described a psychological climate within their family that was tense, hostile and authoritarian. The parents of many of the juvenile prostitutes we interviewed were unemployed. In some cases, the child's earnings from prostitution represented the only source of income for the family. Many children stated that their parents were either aware of or suspected the fact that they were selling sex, and few reported

having family members who actively supported their involvement in the sex industry because they relied upon the income. As one 14-year-old boy explained:

My mother receives child support, 2,800 rubles in a month from my father, but she drinks them all away... I also have an uncle, he gives me money sometimes. He knows that I work to get some extra, and he forbids me, but I work anyway, because there is not enough money... My mother knows everything. Sometimes the clients come right home to pick me... She sees it as quite normal.

A 13-year-old girl described her situation as follows:

I would like to hire a room for me and my elder sister, we have problems with our parents. They don't feed us, they simply refuse to. My sister works, but I help. I buy clothes, foods, but she is unaware what I do.

We should note, however, that some of the child prostitutes in our sample of interviewees actually came from relatively advantaged and well-to-do families. As a rule, this latter group's involvement in prostitution came about as a result of their attempt to escape over-restrictive and authoritarian parental control. Some were also influenced by fantasies (often fuelled in media reporting) about prostitution as a life of glamour.

In terms of their sexual experience, the average age at which our interviewees had had their first sexual encounter was eleven. For many, this first sexual experience had been preceded by alcohol or drug use, and in many cases, our interviewees' sexual life began following an experience of rape by their father, stepfather or an elder teenager. Indeed, incest (often on-going) was widely reported and the majority of our sample had experience of sexual contact, often forced, with close relatives. About half of our respondents reported having been raped (often gang raped) prior to becoming involved in the sex industry. The perpetrators included both peers and adults, and whilst some were strangers to the child, others were known to him or her. Usually the victim had not pressed charges for rape.

9. Health Issues

About one third of the children involved in prostitution that we interviewed stated that they always took measures to prevent pregnancy and STD infection when working. About another third reported that they sometimes took precautions, but the remainder admitted that they took no precautions against pregnancy and STDs when providing sexual services. Condoms were viewed by the majority as the best means of prevention against STDs, including HIV/AIDS, and pregnancy. Some girls used the pill as well as condoms. Children who admitted to never using condoms or using condoms inconsistently, stated that sex without condoms was most likely to occur when the following conditions are present:

« Where the client is very drunk. This can be taken as indication of the fact that the client, rather than the child, normally initiates condom-use, and so as an indication of the child's relative powerlessness as regards negotiating and enforcing the terms and limits of the contract.

- Where a client promises a girl prostitute to use the withdrawal method. Girls are afraid of pregnancy but know little about sexual health. Some therefore view condoms as necessary only in order to prevent pregnancy.
- Where the client offers additional payment for unprotected sex. The additional payment offered is normally about 40-300 rubles (US\$1.5-10). Few children admitted to being offered or accepting extra payment for unprotected sex.

About half of the sample of children in the sex trade reported that they had been examined for STDs, HIV/AIDS. The same number had been treated for STDs (mainly syphilis, gonorrhea, and/or trichamidirosis). This lends support to the idea that minors involved in prostitution only seek medical examination and assistance in critical situations (for example, when a condom breaks, if they have some symptom that they recognize as suspicious). Only a few reported that they sought regular examination (about once per month). In St Petersburg the majority of those respondents who sought assistance went to STD treatment units and the medical center "Yuventa" or to the organization "Doctors of the World".

Although it might be assumed that pregnancy is rare amongst girl prostitutes since they tend to provide oral rather than penetrative sex, amongst those we interviewed, almost all had fallen pregnant, often more than once, during the course of working in the sex trade. Pregnancy had usually ended up in either abortion or miscarriage, or with the baby being placed in an orphanage or brought up by relatives. Organizations involved in providing services to minors have different policies regarding pregnancy amongst girls involved in prostitution. The shelters under the supervision of Christian churches advocate against abortions. This means that the babies born to girls in such shelters either end up in an orphanage, or the organization assumes responsibility for caring for both

the baby and the child-mother. Other organizations assist girls in such situations to obtain abortions.

Alcohol and drug use

The research found that half of the respondents consumed alcohol daily, the rest reported drinking a few times per week. Research on drug and alcohol use amongst teenagers as a whole suggests that it is not uncommon for children in St Petersburg to experiment with drugs and drinking. However, the difference between children who work in prostitution and those who do not is that the former engage in more drug and alcohol use, and do so more often. Children who live on the streets typically consume heavier and poorer quality alcohol drinks (cheap vodka) and heavier and poorer quality drugs. About 95% of street children in prostitution use heroin, and they began to use it after they started to prostitute. More than half our sample reported having used drugs, and many of them were drug addicted at the time of interview, being dependent either on opiates (heroin) or stimulants (ephedrine).

Prostitution among minors in the northwestern region of Russia is often connected to prior involvement in drug abuse. Likewise, for most girls in St Petersburg who take drugs, prostitution is the only way to earn enough money for a dose. In this case drug abuse is the basis for involvement in prostitution. On the other hand, it should be noted that most children who live on the streets gain experience of drug abuse. Street children often start by inhaling substances and solvents - acetone, glue, gas - at the age of seven to ten years. As they get older, most of them then move on to narcotic substances, in particular heroin. This is connected to the accessibility of this drug on the streets, where low quality heroin is widely available, already in a syringe that will be used by several different persons.

More profitable kinds of prostitution (club, escort, etc) are also accompanied by drug abuse, but here, prestige* drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy are used. Thus, prostitution is almost all the time accompanied by drug abuse.

Finally, our data suggests that suicide attempts among minors involved in prostitution are quite rare, but nonetheless several interviewees had attempted to kill or harm themselves. Suicide attempts took the form of vein cutting and attempts to poison or hang themselves.

10. Social and Psychological Assistance Currently Available to Children in the Sex Trade

According to their articles of conduct, most of the organizations such as shelters and rehabilitation centers in St Petersburg that were reviewed in the course of the research, see their priority as providing assistance to minors who live in extremely difficult circumstances. The workers in these organizations have developed rehabilitation and social adaptation programs for such children. Some of the organizations have a day healthcare facility as well as housing facilities. They provide medical, material and legal help. There are also a number of organizations that provide vocational training for minors and some attempt to arrange for children to return to a normal school or to find some kind of employment (usually a low-paid, unskilled job). We should further note the existence of organizations dedicated to providing healthy lifestyle programs, sex education, or doing preventative work around drug and alcohol addiction. Finally, there are a number of organizations that attempt to assist minors by working with their families and attempting to provide better conditions for the child.

However, whilst there are various provisions for minors living in difficult situations, a key problem is that children who are involved in the sex trade actually find it very hard to access these organizations or to get involved in these programs. For example, one way in which children could get access to shelters is via the police, who are entitled to detain minors picked up during raids, but not for more than three hours. If it is shown that the minor has nowhere to live, the police can then refer him or her to one of the city shelters. But to be accepted, the child must possess the right documents, pass the medical tests, and there has to be a space free in the shelter. Children can also, in certain circumstances, be referred to shelters by the District Minor Service Officer. Another alternative is that the minor could be referred to a shelter by the street social worker, but again, he or she will only be accepted if he or she has all the necessary identity papers and medical documents. The third alternative is that the child can be taken to the shelter by his or her parents, family members or other adults.⁵ Lastly, the child may go in person to the shelter and ask for assistance.

In most cases, the minor will not be allowed a place in the shelter. The children are rarely in possession of their identity papers, if indeed they have any. Furthermore, if the child has an STD, which is highly possible amongst children working in the sex trade, he or she will be denied a place in the shelter. Thus,

5 The experts interviewed noted that very often the parents or family members of children with learning disabilities or children other problems bring children to shelters saying they are unable to continue to care for them. Sometimes the minor is unable to live with the family because of the parents' alcoholism or because of marital or familial conflicts etc.

even the minority of children who get referred to shelters will generally end up back on the streets.

A key finding of our research on the city organizations for children is that there are practically no functioning programs of assistance for minors who are involved in the sex trade, or programs designed to prevent children's entry into prostitution. The only real exception to this is a program titled "Teenage prostitution prevention and rehabilitation of girls involved in this kind of activity who need medical, psychological, social and legal help". This is a joint project between *UNICEF* (grant giver) and the Teenage Girl Socio-Rehabilitation Center "Malookhtinskiy House of Work" (grant recipient). This program targets teenage girls who have experience in prostitution and works towards preventing children's entry into prostitution. The concept of prevention is understood as meaning that the girls participating in the program would never, even in the hardest situation, turn to prostitution. The 'rehabilitation offered includes counseling aimed at changing the children's values and motivations, but also focuses on improving the child's life chances (creating alternative income sources, professional training and careers advice). In St Petersburg the following organizations provide assistance to minors caught in difficult life situations: Malookhtinskiy House of Industry (as already noted), a shelter called "Almus", a drug addiction treatment center (Marata street, 12), "Woman in Danger", "Doctors of the World", crisis apartment on Frunze street, and the Center of Isolation for minor criminals. From this list of organizations, only Malookhtinskiy House of Industry and "Doctors of the World" offer specialist assistance to children who are involved in prostitution. Other organizations state that they have assisted in some specific cases, but they do not work with commercially sexually exploited children on a permanent or routine basis.

Our research found that minors involved in the sex trade are fairly well informed about the agencies that may provide them with assistance and about the kind of help they can expect. Street social workers and often the minors themselves help to spread this information. Child prostitutes do make use of the social services that are available, but they normally go to such organizations only when they are facing a particular crisis and in order to meet very specific wants. Once the child has received the help that is immediately necessary, he or she returns to the streets. Among the main reasons for contacting social agencies were fear of STDs, unwanted pregnancy and drug addiction. The minors we interviewed stated that they received the assistance they required. Child prostitutes will also meet with street social workers, who provide them with clothes, tea, sandwiches, and who organize visits to movie theatres and theatres. Some of our respondents stated that they use soup kitchens (Fontanka waterfront).

The children involved in prostitution whom we interviewed identified their most important and urgent needs as housing, clothes and financial assistance. They did not necessarily have a high opinion of the shelters that provide rehabilitation services, in fact, some interviewees regarded them with suspicion. One 17-year-old commented: "I tried to get to the shelter, but then I refused to do it after talking with children who lived there". A 14-year-old said: "I do not trust

them. They can use information against you, for example give it to the newspapers". Nor do those running the shelters necessarily wish to provide support for children who are involved in the sex trade. As one psychologist who works for shelters for minors put it:

The rules of shelters do not prohibit receiving prostitutes. They bring a lot of headaches, and that is another question. It is a big headache to deal with a prostitute, and brings no results. She usually lives here and leaves after two or three weeks, sometimes stealing something before she goes.

11. Recommendations for Prevention

As far as preventative work is concerned, one of the most obvious measures missing from existing provision in St Petersburg and northwest Russia is effective sex education programs in schools. Providing teenagers with reliable information about sexuality, gender relations and sexual health would help them to protect themselves against commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation. However, attempts to implement such programs in St Petersburg Frunzenskiy District schools, as well as court cases in St Petersburg, show that such programs meet intense opposition both from parents and pedagogical collectives. This means that media and public information campaigns are necessary, as well as directive work with pedagogical collectives and parents so that they are better informed about child prostitution in the region, and about methods of prevention, about real threats and practically proven methods of control. This kind of primary preventative work should target school children, parents, and school teachers.

There is also a clear need for better methods of secondary prevention, which should be targeted at the "risk groups" (that is, drug addicted teenagers, street children, and others who are particularly at risk). Special forms of intervention are necessary for them, and it is important that this work is conducted at the places where such children actually live and "hang out".

Third, there is a need for tertiary prevention, which is to say work with minors who are already engaged in the sex trade. Individual or group work is possible for the rehabilitation of such children aimed at achieving their integration into society and restoring them to social networks other than those which exist within the sex industry. It is also necessary to organize material support for boys and girls involved in the sex trade. Various programs — including food, medical examinations and advice, distribution of contraceptives and hygienic articles under conditions of full single-visit anonymity- should be an important element of the activities of such organizations.

The fourth recommendation concerns the need for measures that integrate all the three named above. These should comprise activities targeted at the workers of organizations which execute direct control over various aspects of teenagers' lives, such as workers from health care, law enforcement and education agencies, who currently possess a very little knowledge on the problems faced by minors engaged in prostitution. Our research, in particular, highlights the very low level of their knowledge. It is also necessary to change the attitudes of such professionals towards the problem of CSEC, because at present, they take an extremely harsh, moralistic and punitive approach towards children involved in prostitution, as well as towards children in the "risk groups".

Finally, we should note that the situation as a whole cannot be changed through local initiatives alone (at one school or district). We can only begin to move towards a decrease in the numbers of children involved in the sex trade by addressing the problem more widely, and encouraging the general population to view it as an issue for concern.

12. About the authors

Rusakova Maya—sociologist, Ph.D., scientist at the Deviant Behavior and Social Control Sector at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology. The sphere of her scientific interests is: empirical research of drug addictions, prostitution and trafficking, organized crime and social control. Development and implementation of prevention programs for drug consumers and parents of drug addicts, for those engaged in prostitution.

Pyshkina Tatiana - sociologist, student, researcher at the Deviant Behavior and Social Control Sector at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology. The sphere of her scientific interests is: Empirical research of prostitution, gender-related issues.

Yakovleva Anna - sociologist, postgraduate student, researcher at the Deviant Behavior and Social Control Sector at die Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology. The sphere of her scientific interests is: Empirical research of drug addictions, social control of drug, prostitution, trafficking, gender-related issues, sex education.

Gurvich Iosif - professor, Doctor of Psychology, senior scientist at the Deviant Behavior and Social Control Sector at die Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology. The sphere of his scientific interests is: sociology of deviant behavior, empirical research of drug and alcohol use, social control, methodology of empirical sociological research.

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