

D2S1 - Exercise 1: Risk and vulnerability

Read the following descriptions relating to children in the fictional country called Central Country and its main province, BeloBelo. Then answer the questions.

Family-level risk factors

MaiMai is a district in BeloBelo Province that is on the border with Booming Country where people live in relative affluence. MaiMai faces significant problems with child trafficking into Booming Country but further analysis suggests that it is a problem mainly among its two ethnic groups the Bla and the Kra.

The ethnic composition of the population is 70 % BeloBelo, 17 % Bla, and 13 % Kra. The BeloBelo own all the land and manage sizeable farms. The Bla are mainly small farmers and the Kra mainly do street trading. Both the Bla and Kra do not register at birth and have no official status.

Both ethnic minorities have a history of illegal migration. Young girls in particular migrate to neighbouring Booming Country where they are rumoured to work in restaurants and bars. Many girls migrated with the help of older girls that went before to Booming Country, or they used the services of non registered recruitment agencies that have flourishing operations in most villages of the district.

The Kra have a history of drug & alcohol problems. Recent reports suggest rampant numbers of domestic violence among Kra. The Kra live in the low areas close to the district capital, whereas the Bla live higher up in the mountains far away from basic services. The Bla tend to have large families and are dominated by men who make all family decisions.

Many Bla girls drop out of school at the age of 13. AIDS is widespread among Bla and many household heads died of AIDS. Children of such AIDS affected families have often migrated for work.

The Bla also have a habit of placing their daughters in an extended family household elsewhere in the province, where they make long hours doing domestic work. Some reports of sexual abuse have come out recently in these extended families.

1. Based on the case description above and your own knowledge of child trafficking, please discuss and list risk factors – in particular at the family level - that make Kra and Bla children vulnerable to trafficking.
2. In responding please pay attention to differences between Kra and Bla and boys and girls.

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Community-level risk factors

MaiMai is a district in BeloBelo Province that is on the border with Booming country where people live in relative affluence. MaiMai is a quiet district without industry. It has a big land size and it has a population of sixty thousand, though its inhabitants are scattered all over the district living in small villages. 45 % of the population is under the age of 16.

Given the agricultural set up and historic patterns most families prefer sons and see little value in continuing the education of daughters as they will marry out anyway. There is only one secondary school in the district. It is located in the district capital.

The road connections to neighbouring Booming Country are good and it is fairly easy to just cross the border (even without an ID), in particular in the dry season when one can just wade through the river to Booming Country (this has been happening for centuries).

Border guards & police are actively enforcing the anti-drug trafficking law along the border with Booming Country, as they get a bonus when they apprehend drug traffickers. At the same time, non-registered recruitment agencies have flourishing operations in most villages of the district and mainly target boys. Girls often migrate with help of female returnees that appear to have been successful.

Most community leaders in the district live in big houses and drive around in Landcruisers while a large part of the villagers live in straw huts.

When visiting some of the villages in MaiMai district – in particular those higher up the mountains - you mainly see elderly people and children under the age of 12. Many youth migrated for work to neighbouring Booming Country – in particular after a recently broadcasted story on BeloBelo provincial TV of a migrant girl from MaiMai who made a lot of money and was able to buy a TV and a motorbike for her family.

Less well known is that some girls recently returned to MaiMai with AIDS, others seem traumatized and unable to find jobs back home in MaiMai. Many as a result cross the border again.

1. Based on the case description above and your own knowledge of child trafficking, please discuss and list risk factors – in particular at the community level - that make children vulnerable to trafficking.
2. Where some of the risk factors relate to girls more than boys, or boys more than girls, be sure to indicate this.

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Institutional-level risk factors

BeloBelo is a province in Central Country. It has 10 million inhabitants and is densely populated. Fifty per cent of the population is under the age of 20. It is a mainly agricultural society. Each August, annual rains regularly destroy the crops.

With few jobs outside agriculture, youth unemployment is high, in particular among girls. Most young men that stay in the rural areas are farmers. Most other young men have migrated for work to nearby Booming Province.

BeloBelo province is known for its skewed birth ratio (for every 100 girls there are 135 boys). Official statistics indicate that girls on average drop out of school 1.2 years earlier than boys. Suicide is the number one cause of death among girls and women aged 15-34 in rural areas.

All BeloBeloan villages have access to television and people can watch their local television station, or the channel of neighbouring Booming Province. Many young people have seen programmes showing the higher standard of living and job opportunities in Booming Province, especially along the east coast where the port cities are fuelling growing affluence.

There is one registered recruitment agency in BeloBelo Province, and it is in the provincial capital. It offers job placement services catered to skilled labourers. A number of unregistered recruitment agencies operate in smaller district towns. They can quickly arrange a trip to the city. It has become popular among young people, early school leavers in particular, to use the services of these unregistered agencies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these young people end up in sweatshops and illegal factories (mainly in Booming Province) where they have to work 14-hour shifts, sometimes without pay.

1. Based on the case description above and your own knowledge of child trafficking, please discuss and list risk factors - in particular at the institutional level - that make children vulnerable to trafficking.
2. Is the situation different for boys and girls? Explain any differences; if you cannot be sure, say what other information you would need before you could answer this question in more detail.

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Workplace risk factors

Recent reports in the media indicate that large numbers of young girls from BeloBelo Province work in hairdressing salons in the big cities of Booming Province. Recent research suggests that they are generally aged between 13 and 15, and mostly arrive alone.

In these hairdresser salons they sometimes have to perform sexual services. They work long hours, and often sleep in a room with seven or eight more girls. Food is of poor quality and the costs for food and accommodation are deducted from their monthly wages, which are already very low.

After a year or two, many of the girls are offered jobs in an entertainment palace where they are promised higher wages. Here they have to offer sexual services on a regular basis. They are given free alcohol and drugs for the first three months but have to pay for their drugs afterwards and the cost of the drinks is deducted from their wages.

The education and skills level of the girls is low and most of them do not have identity papers. Those that do have papers are obliged to hand them over to the employer for 'safekeeping'. Without papers they do not have access to basic healthcare or social services. The girls are told that, if they attempt to leave, their families back home will be punished.

Once a year there is a police spot check in the entertainment sector – usually it is announced beforehand. Once a year, around Christmas, most young migrant workers are allowed home to see their families, but in the three months before Christmas they do not receive any wages, so they have to return after Christmas to get their pay.

1. Based on the case description above and your own knowledge of child trafficking, please discuss and list risk factors - in particular at the workplace level - that make girls vulnerable to trafficking.
2. Would the situation be different if the girls were aged 15-18 rather than 13-15?