CHILD PROSTITUTION
IN JAMAICA

Draft
ILO Rapid Assessment

Executive Summary*

Leith L Dunn

Prepared for the International Labour Organisation

November 2000

* Disclaimer: This report has not been edited according to the ILO House Style
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

This study on child prostitution in Jamaica is part of the campaign to ratify the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and the accompanying Recommendation No. 190. The Convention defines the worst forms of child labour as:

(a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
(b) The use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution, production of pornography or pornographic performances;
(c) The use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs;
(d) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Convention No. 182 is the most recent of 13 child labour Conventions that the ILO has adopted since the first in 1919. Prior to 1973, various industries were covered by different Conventions. In 1973, to replace the sectoral approach, the ILO adopted the comprehensive Minimum Age Convention, (No. 138) and Recommendation No. 146. Convention No. 182 complements Convention No. 138 by focussing on the worst forms of child labour. These standards aim at the total abolition of child labour.

Jamaica has ratified the following four (4) relevant Conventions:

a) No. 7, Minimum Age (Sea) Convention, 1920;
b) No.15, Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers) Convention, 1921;
c) No. 58, Minimum Age (Sea) Convention (Revised), 1936; and
d) No. 29, Forced Labour Convention, 1930.

Efforts are being made to ratify Conventions No. 182 and No. 138 at an early date.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (CRC)

In addition to ILO Conventions, an important framework for this study is the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Jamaica ratified in 1991. Article 32 of the Convention defines child labour as any activity carried out by children, whether reimbursed or not, which implies exploitation, interferes with their education, or is dangerous or harmful to their integral development. The Convention states inter alia that:

a) The child has the right to protection from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regular working
conditions (Article 32). In this regard, the ILO Child Labour Conventions, in particular the Minimum Age Convention, No. 138, can be seen as reference points for implementation.

b) The state shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography. (Article 34).

Consistent with these requirements, the Government of Jamaica has established that

a) The age limit for compulsory schooling is 6-15 years
b) The basic minimum age for work is 12-15 years
c) The minimum age for light work is 12 years and
d) The minimum age for dangerous and hazardous work is 16-17 years.

UNICEF, the UN agency responsible for children's issues, is also committed to eliminating child labour and has provided various forms of support towards this end. This has included collaboration with the ILO to develop a joint ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment Methodology and Manual on Child Labour.

UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The third international framework standard relevant to this study is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and came into force in 1991. Jamaica is a signatory to this Convention. Article 6 of CEDAW requires all parties to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation through:

a) legislation
b) broadening the definition of traffic in women to include sexual slavery both generally and by the military, the deception of migrant women and mail order and false marriages and
c) measures to prevent women and girls from resorting to prostitution for survival.

These three international instruments provide a strong framework to guide action to eliminate the engagement of children in prostitution.

ILO/IPEC Rapid Assessments

This ILO study is one of 28 ILO/IPEC Rapid Assessments (RAs) being done to collect data and test the ILO/UNICEF methodology. It is also part of a series of sub-regional activities organized by the ILO aimed at raising awareness and developing a Caribbean information base on child labour issues. Recent activities have included:

1. The ILO Sub-regional Training Workshop for Statisticians on Child Labour Statistics and Survey Methodologies, held in Trinidad and Tobago in February 1999 and publication of a report of the meeting.
2. The ILO Caribbean Tripartite Meeting on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, held in Kingston, Jamaica, in December 1999 and publication of the proceedings and conclusions of that meeting in 2000.
3. Commitments to fund country programmes aimed at eliminating child labour beginning with a survey on child labour in Belize and full participation by Jamaica in the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour.
4. The ILO Caribbean Labour Ministers meeting in Jamaica in April 2000, which examined new challenges concerning the world of work, including the issue of child labour.
5. ILO participation in the 5th Ministerial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Children and Social Policy held in Jamaica in October 2000, which included hosting a major exhibition on child labour.

**Socioeconomic Context**

Awareness of Jamaica’s social and economic context is important to understanding the situation of child prostitution, child sex workers, its causes and eventual eradication. In 1999, persons under 18 years accounted for 39 per cent of the population. This included 502,911 males and 506,104 females. Debt burdens and several successive years of modest or negative economic growth have contributed to poverty, which places children at risk. Poverty is associated with crime and violence (especially domestic violence), unemployment (especially among women) and the illegal drug trade, all of which impact on children’s survival and standard of living. In 1998 an estimated 16 per cent of the population were classified as poor, meaning that they fell below the poverty line of J$136,949 (approx. US$3,112) for a family of five. In 1999, the weekly minimum wage was J$1,200 (approx. US$27). The rate of unemployment was 15.7 per cent and women accounted for 65 per cent of unemployed persons.

Poverty in Jamaica is multidimensional and families who are poor have inadequate access to health, education, housing and social services. The incidence of poverty is highest in rural areas (19.5 per cent). Jamaica also has many single female-headed households (44.7 per cent) and women are concentrated in low-wage sectors. Poverty also contributes to the phenomenon of street and working children. A 1994 Report indicated that there were some 22,000 working children under the age of 16 years. According to that report, 55.0 per cent were in the age group 15-16 years, while 34.0 per cent were 12-14 years old. These children were engaged in vending, newspaper delivery, welding, mechanics, carpentry, care giving, farming and domestic work. A study being done in 2000 is trying to determine the current population and situation of street and working children.

Tourism is the major foreign exchange earner in Jamaica, contributing approximately US$1.2 million in 1999 and employing more than 30,775 persons in the accommodation sector alone. In addition, hundreds more earn their living by selling services (including sex) to tourists. Some of these persons are children under 18 years.

Cultural patterns are also important to understand the situation of child prostitution and child sex workers. In Jamaican society, children are historically seen as the property of their parents rather than individuals in their own right. Class also affects the adult responsibility given to children with older girls in low-income communities often being given adult responsibilities such as child-care, cooking, cleaning and housework. Many children from low-income agricultural communities are integral to the labour force, with attendance in local schools often dropping on Fridays to facilitate the harvesting and marketing of produce. In urban centres, some of the street boys who are seen wiping windscreens, selling products and begging at traffic lights, are working to support family members. This study must therefore be understood within the context of poverty, cultural practices and the use of various strategies to survive.

**Process to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jamaica**

The timing of the Jamaica rapid assessment on child prostitution in 2000, coincided with the review of several international agreements and conferences, as well as the drafting of local
legislation that impacts on women, children and health. These factors have created an enabling environment that has broadened the number of interest groups and stakeholders that can be mobilized to eliminate child prostitution as one of the worst forms of child labour. Among these events were:

- The 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- The Beijing + 5 process culminating in the UN Conference in June 2000 to review progress made on the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action (POA) to promote the empowerment and advancement of women.
- The global conference on HIV/AIDS held in July 2000 in Durban, South Africa.
- Discussion of the Draft Child Care and Protection Act (2000) to be tabled before the Jamaican Parliament.
- The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Children and Social Policy held in Kingston, Jamaica in October 2000.

This study builds on research done by Sian Williams of the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC) at the University of the West Indies on sexual violence and exploitation of children for cash and goods in Jamaica. Further, the study also benefited from research on tourism and the sex trade in Jamaica done by Shirley Campbell, Althea Perkins and Dr. Patricia Mohammed of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Mona Campus Unit at the University of the West Indies.1

Finally, the study also builds on the recommendations and views expressed at the Caribbean Youth Summit held in October 1998 that addressed the rights of adolescents and young persons to be:

a) Protected from coercive sex and sexual exploitation;
b) Free from sexual exploitation and harassment, trafficking and abduction.

Two recent consultations in Jamaica on child labour were also supported by the ILO and UNICEF, which recommended:

- Advocacy and legislative changes for ratification of ILO Conventions No.138 and No. 182;
- Rehabilitative services for children engaged in child labour;
- Surveys to determine the extent and characteristics of the problem;
- Awareness raising on child labour;
- Generating commitment to the elimination of child labour;
- Measures to improve school attendance of primary school age children; and
- Strengthening employment creation, credit facilities and training opportunities for parents.

---


2. Methodology

**Research Process**

The two complementary studies by Williams and Campbell provided guidance to develop the Rapid Assessment on child prostitution. In doing so, they helped to clarify the problem as one in which children were involved in various forms of sex work for money or gain, the use of the term child sex workers and the link between children and sex tourism. Using the ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment Methodology Manual as a background document, the conceptual framework and methodology for the study were developed by a team that included:

- the IPEC Focal Point in the ILO’s Caribbean Office in Trinidad and Tobago;
- the national IPEC Consultant in Jamaica;
- the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC);
- the Project Coordinator.

**Research Team**

The research team included seventeen persons. Thirteen were community development workers and the others were researchers who had previously done similar studies or work in the field of child labour, child rights and sex work in Jamaica.

**Research Objectives**

The three main objectives of the study were to:

- Produce quantitative and particularly qualitative data related to child prostitution;
- Describe the magnitude, character, causes and consequences of the involvement of children in prostitution;
- Provide recommendations for policy development and improved methodologies for investigating child prostitution to be applied in subsequent studies and research work.

**Research Methods**

During the Rapid Assessment, four main research methods were used:

- Interviews with child sex workers, guidance counselors, NGOs working with street and working children and key stakeholders in government, international agencies and the private sector.
- Focus group discussions with children and key stakeholders
- Observations of locations reported to be associated with child sex workers
- Documentary reviews

Three workshops were held at strategic points during the research process, which helped to collect information. These were:

i. A training workshop with interviewers and researchers at the beginning of the process;
ii. A post-data-collection debriefing workshop with interviewers and researchers;
iii. A stakeholders workshop with representatives from local, national and international institutions working in the sector to present and get feedback on the preliminary findings and recommendations.

**Interviews:** The main Interviewer was appointed based on her prior research experience, in particular, in a study of sex tourism. She conducted most of the interviews with key institutional informants who had attended the CCDC workshop in 1999 to present research findings. Other interviewees were identified through workshops conducted for the current study and as the research developed. Agencies, who work with street children, working children and sex workers, identified and facilitated linkages with child sex workers who were then interviewed. Other members of the research team also assisted in conducting interviews.

**Focus Group Discussions:** A Focus Group Coordinator was appointed who made all the arrangements for the children’s focus group discussions. She was chosen on the basis of her professional knowledge and working experience with street and working children and her previous involvement in an island-wide study on child labour. The Coordinator is also a well-known television and media personality. This public recognition helped her to establish trust and rapport with the children.

**Observations:** The field researchers identified most of the locations for observation by ‘brainstorming’ during Workshop 1. Their background as social workers, community animators and conflict resolution mediators, as well as their prior experience of doing participatory research in rural and urban inner city communities, enabled them to identify easily a number of locations.

**Documentary Sources:** In addition to the two UWI studies and the two ILO reports mentioned previously, local and regional studies on child labour and sex tourism were also reviewed. This included a 1981 study on child labour in Jamaica published by the UK-based Anti Slavery Society. Information on other studies emerged during the process. In addition, local newspaper clippings provided an excellent source of information.

**Review Process:** The final document incorporated feedback on drafts of the report from:
- a) The ILO/IPEC Caribbean and international staff in Trinidad and Tobago and Geneva;
- b) the CCDC team;
- c) a researcher/child rights activist whose agency supports street and working children in Jamaica;
- d) a researcher who has done extensive work on sex tourism internationally.

**Scope and Limitations of the Research**

The study focused on children under 18 years of age, who were involved in various forms of sex work. Consistent with the Terms of Reference, seven locations were used as the primary sources for data collection: Montego Bay, Negril, Sav-la-Mar, Lucea, Spanish Town, Portmore and Kingston.

A total of 266 persons were consulted across seven parishes through:

- 73 interviews
- 15 focus group discussions and three workshops
- observations in 35 locations in the tourist towns of Montego Bay and Negril, the rural town of Sav-la Mar, and the urban centres of Kingston, Spanish Town and Portmore. Another 45 locations across the island were identified through reports from stakeholders.
The 266 persons consulted included:

- 128 children (48.1 per cent), the majority of whom were females.
- 138 adult stakeholders (52 per cent)

The large number of children consulted was considered a major achievement, given the well-known difficulty of gaining access to street and working children generally, and especially children involved in sex work.

Among the main limitations of the study was the non-inclusion of children in a number of other sectors, such as agriculture and transportation, and children with disabilities. Verification of children’s ages was also difficult and the team had to depend on self-reports or estimate ages. The study was also unable to analyse the vast store of information in police records, newspaper archives in print media companies or data in the Ministries of Health and Education.

**Timeframe**

Data collection in the field was completed during three weeks in June 2000. The data analysis and report writing were done between July and August 2000. Feedback from reviewers was received in October and the final revisions were done between the end of October and November 2000.

**3. Research Findings**

**Character of Child Prostitution & Sex Work**

Consistent with Convention No. 182, the study regarded child prostitution as one of the worst forms of child labour. Children were found in situations that exposed them to prostitution and involved them in pornographic performances and other activities that adversely affect their health, safety and morals. They were found in both private (household) as well as public spaces. In the seven locations surveyed, children under the age of 18 years were involved in a variety of activities described in Convention No. 182. These are summarized below.

A gender analysis of the findings also showed that the majority of children involved in sex work are girls and there is a gender division of labour in some activities. Numerically, girls are more exploited than boys, although there are groups of boys who are severely sexually exploited. Among the most exploited and vulnerable children were: street and working children (mainly boys) who exchanged sex to meet basic survival needs; girls who work on the streets as prostitutes; girls who work as go go dancers and girls who work as massage parlour workers. Children involved in sexual relations with adults and children involved in pornography were also exploited. The categories of identified child sex workers are described below.

**Categories of Child Sex Workers**

**Street and working children.** Children in this first category of sex workers were considered the most exploited and vulnerable. The majority of these children were small boys, between the ages of 6 and 17 years. Some who were involved in sex work were as young as 12 years old. Most were from very poor backgrounds and were out of school, although a few attended school irregularly. Lack of support and protection from family or friends, as well as
extreme economic deprivation, made them open to exploitation and abuse. Their main clients were adult homosexual males and, to a lesser extent, female prostitutes. Inability to meet their basic needs made these children desperate and often reduced their ability to bargain with ‘clients’. There were several cases reported of boys engaging in sexual intercourse in exchange for a basic meal of a patty and box drink. Jamaica’s strong homophobic culture also means that boys involved in homosexual relations are more invisible and therefore less accessible for rehabilitation and support.

**Prostitutes:** Children involved in formal prostitution comprised the second category of child sex workers who are not street children. The majority of these were girls, but boys were also involved, primarily in homosexual relations. Some girls worked in the traditional prostitution sector, operating from established or informal brothels, while others worked from bars, massage parlours or go-go clubs. Some children worked mainly with local clients from various classes, while others worked primarily with foreign tourists. Some clubs had accommodation facilities for short stay or overnight rentals. Short-stay rentals were calculated on the basis of hourly rates. In some institutions, rates were set for specific sexual acts. In others, sex workers were able to negotiate rates with clients. On a more informal basis, children hung out on the streets or in locations that attract large groups of people such as malls, food courts, fast food restaurants, cruise ship ports and beaches. These locations served as points for seeking clients and as pick-up points for sexual liaisons. Girls were also involved in providing ‘escort services’ to local and foreign clients. A few child sex workers (mainly females) operated from their home and provided services to regular clients. The study also interviewed a few female sex workers whose mothers were their pimps and managers.

A few girls estimated to be as young as 10 and 11 years were found working as prostitutes in tourist areas. Others of a similar age were having sex with local male clients on the fishing beach in one rural location studied, sometimes in exchange for as little as a fish.

**Seasonal Sex Workers.** The study also identified girls who operated as seasonal sex workers. These part-time workers mainly provided sex to meet their ‘wants’ as opposed to their ‘needs’ and when particular events required extra cash. These wants often included: designer clothing, trendy hairstyles, opportunities to travel in luxury vehicles, a higher standard of living and access to persons with power, status and influence. Some girls reported that their need to meet the financial costs associated with school graduations and special events had motivated them to engage in sex work.

**Go-Go Dancers** (exotic dancers) in clubs across the island represented a third category of children engaged in sex work. The majority of these were girls whose ages ranged between 13 and 18 years. In some locations, the range was between 14/15-18 years. Some worked full-time at specific clubs, while others were migrant workers, moving to various locations around the island. Working conditions varied and the analysis showed various forms of exploitation. Work times and rates for specific acts were regularized, but some dancers reported that they were exploited by their owners/managers, who forced them to work as prostitutes, as a condition of their employment. Others complained of sexual harassment from club owners and customers. Some clubs had rooms for prostitution and sleeping accommodation for the dancers. Accommodation was provided in some establishments as part of the dancers’ remuneration package. Covering the cost of what the girls described as ‘costumes’ was also an issue. Dancers working in some establishments reported that they were initially provided with costumes, (including negligees) but were unable to keep them. In other establishments, dancers were responsible for providing their own costumes and had to rent them for $500 a night per costume, which was deducted from their
pay. Some girls purchased their costumes from men who specialize in selling costumes worn by go-go dancers and massage parlour workers.

**Massage Parlour Workers.** This was the fourth category of sex workers who were all females between 15 and 18 years of age. At this age, they were more physically developed with ‘pointed breasts’, which were regarded as a marketable asset. Most had secondary education and were therefore the most educated child sex workers. Their working conditions were, however, similar to those of go-go dancers and, in some establishments, the girls were required to be willing to have intimate sexual relations with clients as a condition of employment.

**Sugar Daddy Girls.** The fifth category involved young girls, some below 12 years, who were pressured into sexual relations with adult males. Many were sexually exploited in exchange for economic benefits that sometimes included support for the girl’s family. This included basic needs such as education, food, clothing, shelter and financial support. Though difficult to enumerate, the practice appeared quite common and was reminiscent of the historical practice during slavery, of handing girls over to the slave master for his sexual pleasure. The hope was that the girl and her family would have a better chance of survival and an improved standard of living. Children in this context were being doubly exploited, by the men, as well as by their own family. The male ‘Sugar Daddy’ has replaced the slave master in a similar unequal power relationship.

‘Chapses.’ A similar category of sex workers involved teenaged schoolboys (called ‘Chapses’), who had sexual relationships with (female) ‘Sugar Mummies’. These women were usually affluent and, like their male counterparts, had sexual relationships with the boys, in exchange for providing them with economic support, access to education and a higher standard of living. The emerging pattern was of women picking up the boys from school, occasionally taking them on outings, treats and holidays and providing them with clothing and money. More research is needed to determine the magnitude of this phenomenon of Sugar Daddies and Sugar Mommies, and the extent to which these activities interfere with the health, education and morals of the boys and the girls in these relationships.

**Porn Production Workers.** A sixth category of child sex workers included children who earned income from their involvement in the production of pornographic videos, photographs and live sex shows. Most were girls who also worked as prostitutes. The majority of these activities were found in the tourist town of Negril. There were also reports of girls being exploited and enticed by foreigners visiting Negril. The girls reportedly thought the men had become engaged to them to be married and migrate because they had fallen in love with them, only later to discover that their sexual liaisons had been videotaped and copies had been reproduced for sale.

**Sacrificial Sex Workers:** The seventh category that emerged in the study were girls who were reportedly being sexually exploited in sacrificial and ritualistic sex for devil worship and satanic rites, as well as to ‘cleanse’ men with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The team was unable to interview any of these girls, but they are considered at risk because of the migratory nature of these activities. Further research is needed.

All of these activities are considered to be among the worst forms of child labour because:

a) The basic rights of the children are violated;

b) The education of children is often disrupted;
c) Some children are involved and exploited in heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual relations;


d) Some of the children are involved in unprotected oral, anal and vaginal sex, which exposes them to STDs, including life-threatening health risks such as HIV/AIDS;

e) Adults willingly engage children in a range of sexual acts that socialize the children to compartmentalize and sell their bodies, for fixed and variable rates, and corrupt the moral values of the children.

**Children's Roles**

The study identified several roles being played by the children involved. These included family breadwinners, professional and part-time prostitutes, as well as business entrepreneurs making connections between clients and sex workers with the use of cellular telephones. Other children interviewed reported that they tricked and stole from clients, sometimes drugging them and robbing them of money and jewelry. In Westmoreland, there was also a report of a 15-year-old girl who was already in charge of a group of female child prostitutes.

**Wages and Working Conditions**

This section of the study provides estimates of earnings and working conditions. On an average, go-go dancers earned basic rates of between J$800 and $1500 per night for four sets of dances and an additional J$900 if they stripped. Tips were also a source of income and some reported that they could earn another J$3,000 per night from tips. In the tourist city of Montego Bay, dancers reported that they earned J$2,000 per week, plus food and boarding and an additional J$1,000 - $5,000 per night from tips, especially if they were paid in US dollars. Even higher earnings were possible if they also worked as prostitutes. Working hours in the clubs are between 8 p.m. and 3:00 am and sometimes much later if they have clients. The dancers rest during the day until it is time to work again. Supervisors organize the girls for dances and in some clubs they collect money from clients who want to have sex with the girls.

Girls who work in massage parlours tended to have a higher level of education than go-go dancers and prostitutes. In one establishment, most of the girls interviewed were secondary and high school graduates. They earned an average of J$3,000-J$4,000 per week, working on shifts of six to eight hours. The shift options in parlours that operate for 24 hours are 8am –5pm, 6pm to 12 am and 12 am to 6am. The girls work on commission and get paid according to the number of clients they serve. In some establishments, accommodation and food are provided for the girls who want to live in. They reported that they sometimes get gifts of perfume and jewelry from clients.

The earnings of prostitutes vary widely according to their social status and the location in which they work. Girl prostitutes on the beaches of Old Harbour Bay are sometimes paid in fish, while street children in Kingston will exchange sex for a patty and box drink, fried chicken or some other fast food meal. Income earned varied from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, with occasional gifts such as designer clothes and shoes. Female prostitutes providing services for male clients in urban centres earned an average of J$1,500 nightly and approximately $5,000 weekly. Their clients also paid room rental expenses of J$700 per hour or J$1,500 per night. Male homosexual prostitutes earned an average of J$7,000 per night and reported being able to earn up to J$10,000 if they steal from clients. Street boys, however, earned less. In Montego Bay, male homosexual prostitutes earned about $1,000 per night while street boys in Kingston earned about $500 on average.
The study was unable to determine the level of earnings for female prostitutes who provide services to female clients, or the income earned by ‘Chapses’. Age, experience, sector, season, location, length of a relationship, class, the range of services to be provided and the time of the week emerged as factors that influence earning levels. Business in go-go clubs, for example, was slower during midweek while weekends were peak times. As previously noted, rates also varied for local and foreign clients.

Locations

Research in Montego Bay, Negril, Sav-la-Mar, Lucea, Spanish Town, Portmore and Kingston, revealed a number of high risk areas that are potential havens for child prostitution. These include parks, bathing and fishing beaches, sea walls, bus stands, taxi stands, major tourist centres, school gates, malls and fast food restaurants, go-go clubs, massage parlours and brothels. Tourist centres and the main roads between major towns are the kind of locations where clubs flourish. These businesses on public transport routes offer travelling clients opportunities for short sexual encounters.

Estimated Magnitude of Child Prostitution

While it was not possible to estimate the number of children involved in ‘Sugar Daddy’ and ‘Sugar Mummy’ relationships, it was possible to collect some rough estimates of the number of go-go dancers and prostitutes in some locations. In Hanover, a Ministry of Health study suggests that there are at least 30 go-go dancers below 18 years of age working in clubs.

In Negril, the total numbers were not ascertained but interviews were done with thirty-one (31) female child sex workers between the ages of 13 and 18 years. The majority was between 15-18 years and was interviewed in six locations. These girls reported that they were mainly involved in prostitution and received protection from six boys between 14 and 18 years who themselves worked as male homosexual prostitutes.

In Montego Bay, 20 girls and 10 boys between 10 and 18 years from the communities of Canterbury, Railway lane, Flankers, Glendevon and Mount Salem, were identified as being involved in sex work on a large scale. They are organised in groups; an adult is usually in charge of the younger ones, but they work independently of each other. In Canterbury, one group, the ‘Marjorie Crew’, includes young girls aged 13-18 years, but the numbers are not known. Nine boys aged 10-16 years were interviewed in the Amphitheater. They were from the surrounding communities, as well as from Adelphi (St James), Lucea and other parishes. An interviewee from the Jamaica Aids Support organisation in Montego Bay estimated that among child prostitutes, 60 per cent were girls and 40 per cent were boys.

A dancer interviewed in Western Jamaica noted that there are over 100 girls working as go-go dancers. An official from the Health Promotion and Protection Division of the Ministry of Health’s Epidemiology Unit, however, confirmed that total numbers are very difficult to estimate. He stated that last year, over 100 persons from Ocho Rios (St. Ann), St James and Kingston had participated in a small focus group study of child prostitutes under 16 years of age. He said that a survey, however, is needed to ascertain actual numbers. He reported that females as young as 10-12 years old were being seen by the health authorities. Boys classified as ‘Rent-a Dreads’ and ‘Beach boys’ were reportedly working as male prostitutes and were concentrated in the tourist resorts of the North Coast. These boys engaged in oral, anal and vaginal sex with three to four partners per night (local and overseas clients), and earned between J$500-J$20,000 per night.
Another Health Education Officer in Sav-la-Mar stated that prostitutes who work on the streets rarely appear in Westmoreland, but are confined mainly to Negril, but go-go dancers operate all over the parish. This was described as a hidden form of entertainment, so health workers visit clubs in addition to providing services at health centres. While similar reports were received of children dancing in clubs and working as prostitutes or in massage parlours in Portmore, Spanish Town and Kingston, it was not possible to estimate numbers.

**Causes of Child Prostitution**

Several causal links were established by the research findings, which acted as ‘push’ factors that encouraged children to become involved in sex work. Among these were:

- Legal loopholes and inadequate monitoring of existing laws which create an ‘enabling’ environment for child pornography to flourish
- Economic poverty
- Unemployment and limited job opportunities for young people and their parents
- Low levels of literacy, education and training as well as undetected learning disabilities that affect children's ability to cope with the school system so that they drop out.
- Newspaper advertisements seeking girls to work in massage parlours, with little monitoring to determine if children are being employed. These ads are also misleading, as they do not specify that in some parlours the girls are required to provide sex to clients.
- Poor parenting and adolescent parenting, which contribute to various forms of child abuse and child neglect which in turn ‘encourage’ children to leave home and find their own forms of survival
- Early sexual exposure
- Peer pressure
- Family traditions and values, which contribute to inter-generational prostitution and go-go dancing being promoted as viable lifestyles
- Fear of reprisals from community dons and people in power (‘the bigger heads’) that made some women, in particular, tolerate situations that adversely affected the rights of their children.
- Untreated psychological problems, as well as emotional deprivation, also emerged as possible causes. Some counselors interviewed felt that many of the children interviewed were searching for love, comfort, belonging and security.
- Some children have had adult roles thrust on them and have therefore had to learn to act as adults. Many girls interviewed said that they had major responsibilities for the care and economic support of their family including younger siblings. In some low-income communities, a girl becomes a woman when she starts to menstruate. Some girls were forced into adult activities, such as sexual intercourse, at a very young age and were required to contribute to their economic support, using any means possible, including sex work.

**Consequences of Child Prostitution**

The findings show that many of the activities associated with sex work, violate Article 3 (d) of ILO Convention No. 182, which states that ‘work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children’. These findings therefore underscore the urgency with which Jamaica should ratify ILO Conventions No. 182 and Convention No. 138 and implement polices and programmes to eradicate the worst forms of child labour.
The range of sexual activities in which children are engaged have far-reaching implications for their education, health, moral values, self-esteem and development. The main consequences are:

- Disruption of the children’s education. Most children interviewed who were within the compulsory schooling age range were either attending school irregularly or not at all. Many experienced low levels of literacy and had limited training.
- Exposure to hazardous work associated with occupational health and safety risks, physical violence from clients, gang rape, physical and mental abuse and sexual harassment. Physical violence was also associated with conflicts among female co-workers in clubs because of jealousy.
- Exposure to STDs including HIV/AIDS infections.
- Exposure to the danger of addiction to hard drugs.
- Children living in fear of discovery by their family or neighbours that they are working as prostitutes or in massage parlour.
- Depression, psychological pressure, stress, tension and physical illness which children suffer from and associate with their need to find work in order to care for family members.
- Some child sex workers interviewed said that they were under pressure to earn as much money as possible during a relatively short time span from activities such as go-go dancing, despite the risks, because they paid well.
- Some children said they felt justified doing these illegal forms of work because of the higher income-earning potential than legal forms of work. Some adopted the attitude ‘a no nutten.’ Involvement in these activities had expanded the children’s moral boundaries, which also justified criminal behaviour, such as stealing, as acceptable.

Some guidance counselors interviewed also felt that children involved in sex work had a very limited ability to set personal life goals and were unable to identify activities that would enable them to explore their full potential.

4. Recommendations

Policy Development

Consistent with Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190, the policies of the Government of Jamaica should focus on:

- Prevention
- Rehabilitation
- Providing free education and attention to children at special risk and
- Taking account of the special needs of the girl child.

To achieve the policy objectives outlined above, the Government of Jamaica should:

i. Ratify Convention No. 182 and Convention No. 138 as a matter of urgency.
ii. Strengthen the legal framework to protect children at risk and to punish persons who violate the laws.
iii. Provide institutional support to ensure the start of the new IPEC Programme for Jamaica in January 2001.

iv. Establish a National Machinery in collaboration with the IPEC Programme, to eradicate the worst forms of child labour that have been identified in this Rapid Assessment, the CCDC study and the ILO/UNICEF consultations to date. The Terms of Reference of the National Machinery should include:

- Prevention and eradication of the worst forms of child labour
- Promotion of inter-institutional collaboration between the National Machinery and resource agencies
- Monitoring and evaluation

Membership of the National Machinery should include representatives of:

- Working children
- Government agencies
- Non governmental oragnisations working with street and working children
- Trade unions
- Private sector groups and
- International development agencies

The National Machinery should seek collaboration with:

- The Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment
- The Bureau of Women's Affairs whose mandate focuses on women and the girl child
- The Ministry of Health/Child Support Unit, responsible for child health issues and should include the HIV/AIDS Programme and Jamaica AIDS Support
- The Ministry of Labour
- The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NPEP)
- The Human Resource Employment and Training Programme and the National Training Agency (HEART/NTA)
- Jamaica Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL)
- The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)
- The Jamaica Constabulary Force (Police)

v. The National Machinery should host a series of workshops to consult with key stakeholders and develop a Plan of Action to eliminate child prostitution. Workshops should be held with:

- Child sex workers to share the findings and recommendations of the study and get feedback on priority interventions for the Plan of Action.
- Other key stakeholder groups to share the findings and recommendations of the study and the feedback from the consultations with the children in order to develop policies and programmes for the Plan of Action. Representatives of groups of children at risk should be invited to participate in these consultations.
vi. The Plan of Action should include:

- **Special programmes for children involved in sex work.** These should be identified by the children (including girls involved in sex work) and should be aimed at prevention, rehabilitation and eradication of the worst forms of child labour.

- **A Legal Reform Programme.** This should seek to improve legal protection for Child Sex Workers and should include strategies to improve monitoring and enforcement of the law. Research findings of this Rapid Assessment should be used to strengthen the Draft Child Care and Protection Bill 1999, to ensure that child prostitution is classified as a criminal offence that attracts criminal penalties and to bring legislation in harmony with the provisions of the Convention 182.

- **Public Education Programmes.** These should be aimed at policy makers, parliamentarians, the judiciary as well as the general public. Special education programmes should be developed, targeted at children. The Public Education Programme should include information on ILO Conventions No. 182 and No. 138; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW, as well as the recommendations of the UNFPA-sponsored Caribbean Youth Summit; health risks associated with sex work; and parenting education.

- **Special Education Programmes for Children.** These should include:
  a) The establishment of community-based drop in centres for children where they can access information to increase awareness and protection from STDs, including HIV/AIDS, and encourage children to practice healthy lifestyles and build life skills;
  b) Special efforts to ensure compulsory education and provide children with vocational skills;
  c) Motivational and counseling programmes in schools and communities, to build children’s self-esteem and discourage their involvement in sex work.

- **Sensitivity Training Programmes** for specific target groups such as Health, Education and Labour Officers; NGOs/CBOs and media practitioners. Similar programmes should be developed for owners and operators of clubs and other places of adult entertainment that may employ children to discourage and eliminate the employment of children in clubs, massage parlours, bars and brothels.

- **Information Exchange.** Consistent with article 11 of Convention No. 182, the national machinery should collect and exchange information at a national and international level.

- **Networking and collaboration.** There should be close collaboration with National Poverty Eradication Programmes and institutions promoting health, education and training, to support poor families at risk. Low-income single mothers should be targeted for special attention.

- **Establishment of a Registry.** Consistent with Recommendation No. 190, a Registry should be established to collect court and police records to improve monitoring.

- **Research and Data Collection.** Consistent with Paragraph 5 (1) of Recommendation No. 190, further research and data collection should be conducted to fill information gaps. Consistent with Paragraph 5 (2), disaggregated data should be collected and centralised, to monitor and report on progress in eliminating child prostitution and child pornography.
• **NGO/CBO Support and Capacity Building.** Institutional support should be provided to Employers’ and Workers’ organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to strengthen their capacity to be partners with government and international agencies. This would enable them to expand preventive and outreach programmes to the children at risk.

• **Sex tourism.** The Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment should develop a special programme to eradicate children’s involvement in sex tourism.

**Enhancing research methods for investigating Child Prostitution**

A variety of rapid assessment research methods should be used and data should be triangulated to verify information. Researchers should probe to identify the various forms of sex work that exist as these are often invisible. In doing so, they will need to move beyond the barriers of social prejudice. They should use key informants who can lead them to child sex workers. Researchers need to recognize the security risks often associated with this kind of research and take necessary precautions. Budgets should take account of related costs for night work, food, drink, entry fees to clubs and higher transportation costs for information on key locations. The recording and analysis of data as well as report writing, should respect and protect the identity of key informants, and should avoid sensationalism.