



# Child Safe Tourism: The Tourist Perspective

A report produced by Project Childhood Prevention Pillar



## Child Safe Tourism: The Tourist Perspective

ISBN: 978-0-9874441-0-3

Copyright © 2012, World Vision Australia

*Any part of this document may be freely reproduced with appropriate acknowledgement.*

[www.childsafetourism.org](http://www.childsafetourism.org)

[childsafetourism@wvi.org](mailto:childsafetourism@wvi.org)

Research coordinated by Afrooz Kaviani Johnson and Aarti Kapoor, Project Childhood Prevention Pillar, World Vision. Report written by Dr Amie Matthews and edited by Afrooz Kaviani Johnson and Aarti Kapoor. Design by Juan Miguel Lago.

Photo credits: World Vision/Thongxay Phavixay, Albert Yu, Xuan Thiem Le, Jon Warren, Sopheak Kong.

Project Childhood Prevention Pillar is an Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) initiative. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Australian Government, AusAID.



# Child Safe Tourism: The Tourist Perspective

A report produced by Project Childhood Prevention Pillar





# Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background to the study	5
Data constraints and limitations	8
Participants in the child safe tourism survey	8
Where and why did these participants travel?	9
Modes and styles of travel	12
Trip planning and engagement with travel media	12
Observations of and encounters with children in the Region	13
Encounters with children begging or selling	16
Encounters with child exploitation/abuse while travelling	19
Tourist perceptions of and interests in 'child safe tourism'	24
Conclusion	26
Recommendations for further research	30
Annex: Questionnaire	33

# Executive Summary

This report summarises findings from a recent online survey conducted with over 300 international travellers to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam (collectively referred to in this report as 'the Region'). The survey was conducted to better grasp the sorts of interactions tourists have with children in these countries and to gauge their perceptions of these interactions and of child safe tourism in general. The survey findings show:<sup>1</sup>

**Tourists frequently engage with local children when visiting the Region and are generally happy to do so.** While such interactions may be positive experiences for tourists, they can also leave lasting negative impressions in travellers' minds. For instance, meetings with local children were positively described by those travellers who indicated that they had gained a unique insight into the country or local culture through the children they encountered, who enjoyed talking and playing with local children, or who felt that local children were especially welcoming. On the other hand, when encounters with local children highlighted poverty, their vulnerability, or were perceived as existing within a broader context of abuse or exploitation they were generally described negatively by survey participants. Such experiences not only impacted tourists at an emotional level but in many cases they also appeared to impact their perception of the local culture and destination.

**Over half (57.1%) of the participants indicated that they had witnessed situations involving the exploitation or abuse of children while travelling in the Region.** Respondents described situations where they had come across children selling goods or begging or where they were being used by adults (in some cases their parents) to play on tourist sympathies. They also expressed concern over children not being in school, being forced to perform for tourists, and children being subject to sexual exploitation.

**85% of survey participants reported being approached by young people selling souvenirs and 81.2% reported being approached by children or youth (under the age of 18) who were begging.** Many survey participants also reported seeing children

---

<sup>1</sup> The nature of the survey topic and the survey instrument itself mean that some findings reflect the respondents' perceptions rather than the actual situation of children in tourism destinations in the Region.

collecting rubbish (49%), working in a restaurant or hotel (48.5%) and street performing (38%). A significant number also claimed that they had seen children or youth working as tour guides (25.5%) and of most concern, in the sex industry (20.5%). Overwhelmingly, all of the participants that discussed witnessing these types of exploitation stated that it made them feel disgusted, sad, concerned or worried, helpless, guilty, angry and/or frustrated.

**28.8% of respondents indicated that they thought a combination of all of these exploitative behaviours was either deemed normal by locals, or that locals (including local authorities) turned a blind eye to them.** This perception is worrying on multiple fronts. For one thing, it sets an extremely low standard of behaviour for tourists to ascribe to and would likely impact the willingness of travellers to get involved or intervene in suspected cases of child exploitation/abuse. On the other hand, the idea that a community condones or accepts child abuse and exploitation is an extremely negative image for a tourist destination to carry, one which can ultimately be quite damaging to the tourism industry.

**Abuse and/or exploitation of children in tourism is not tolerated by tourists and it can have significant impacts on the destination images that tourists (and potential tourists) develop.** Many survey participants reported having shared their concerns about children in the Region being subjected to exploitation or abuse with friends, family and colleagues at home. A number of respondents also indicated that they had either cut their visit to specific localities short or would not return to some destinations as a result of their exposure to incidents which they believed involved the abuse of children and young people. Subsequently, it is in the best interests of the tourism industry for local and national governments, as well as tourism providers, to continue to address these issues and to ensure children are protected from all forms of abuse in tourism in the Region.

**53.2% of participants stated they did not purchase goods/services from children and 78.7% stated that they did not give money to a begging child or youth.** This shows that tourists who took part in the survey demonstrated reasonable levels of awareness with regards to the issues attached to children selling goods to tourists or begging. Most frequently the reasons given for avoiding these sorts of exchanges with young people were to discourage

unsustainable socio-economic cultures from developing and/or to avoid placing children or young people in 'at-risk' situations. Many of the survey participants seemed well educated about the fact that if children are on the streets begging and/or selling they are not likely to go to school and may be left vulnerable to exploitation or abuse. Many also talked about begging as not being an empowering or even likely means for ending the poverty cycle. By way of comparison, a significant number also made reference to what they perceived as better alternatives such as giving money to a local charity or giving the children food instead.

**Almost half (49.5%) of the respondents felt they had some sort of responsibility for local children and youth when travelling.** A number of participants seemed to have clear strategies for dealing with children who were begging or selling goods and services in the Region and many made real efforts to ensure their interactions with children were ethical. A number of participants reported taking very pro-active steps to assist children in need and many survey respondents indicated that they had felt a real desire to help while in the Region. However, even those participants who made clear efforts to help locals (and local children in particular) seemed unsure as to whether their actions had constituted best-practice. Frequently doubts and uncertainties about the best way to engage with children in the Region were expressed.

**Only 19.5% of survey respondents felt they had enough information to protect local children and youth encountered in public places.** Overwhelmingly though, many participants indicated that they wanted to know more about the situation and how they could help.

**84.8% of survey participants stated that they would like to know more about how to protect children and prevent exploitation in the Region.** Almost the same number of participants said they'd like to know more about local customs, appropriate dress and behaviour (83.3%) and about ways in which tourists could support the local economy (83%). In a similar vein, when asked whether a business' policy to protect children would influence their purchase habits 94.8% of participants said that it would.



# Background to the study

As one of the world's largest industries, tourism has significant economic impacts on the South-East Asian region. This is especially the case when it comes to the economies of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam where tourist visitation rates have grown exponentially in recent decades. In 2011, Cambodia received more than 2.8 million international arrivals, which was a 15% increase on the number of arrivals recorded in 2010. Subsequently, that same year tourism receipts totalled approximately USD 1,912 million.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, tourist arrivals in Lao PDR have consistently increased from 1990-2010, with an average growth rate of 20.67% per year.<sup>3</sup> In 2011, Lao PDR welcomed over 2.7 million international visitor arrivals, which was an eight% increase on arrivals in 2010.<sup>4</sup> Consistent with this growth, in Thailand, a massive 19 million visitors were welcomed into the country in 2011; this marked a 19.84% increase from 2010. The top visitor arrivals to Thailand were from Malaysia, China and Japan and tourism receipts totalled USD 23 billion, a 23.92% increase from 2010.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in 2011 Vietnam received over six million international visitors, a 19.1% increase over 2010. Top visitor arrivals came from China, the United States of America and South Korea.<sup>6</sup>

This growth is undoubtedly of economic benefit and subsequently it is often welcomed by members of government, the tourism industry and local communities. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2011 tourism accounted for 9.5% of the total gross domestic product ('GDP') of Cambodia and 5.8% of the GDP of Lao PDR (if the wider, 'induced' or 'indirect' impacts of tourism are taken into account then the contributions are even higher, at 22.1% and 18.2% respectively).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, tourism accounts for 7.1% of the total GDP of Thailand and 4.3% of the GDP of Vietnam.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, this means that tourism is also a key contributor to employment in these

---

2 Data from Royal Government of Cambodia (2012), Presentation at Project Childhood Coordinating Committee, Bangkok, 10 July 2012

3 The data in this section is from Lao National Tourism Administration (2010) 2010 Statistical Report on Tourism in Laos, Planning and Cooperation Department, Tourism Statistics Division.

4 Data from Lao People's Democratic Republic (2012) Presentation at Project Childhood Coordinating Committee, Bangkok, 10 July 2012

5 Data from Government of Thailand (2012) Presentation at Project Childhood Coordinating Committee, Bangkok, 10 July 2012

6 Data from Government of Vietnam (2012) Presentation at Project Childhood Coordinating Committee, Bangkok, 10 July 2012

7 World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Cambodia and World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Laos, [www.wttc.org/research/](http://www.wttc.org/research/), accessed 27/9/12.

8 For further detail see: World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Thailand and World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Vietnam, [www.wttc.org/research/](http://www.wttc.org/research/), accessed 27/9/12.

countries. In 2011, 607,000 jobs (8% of total employment) in Cambodia were directly supported by tourism and travel and in Lao PDR, tourism directly contributed to 4.9% of total employment (equating to 143,500 jobs). In Thailand, travel and tourism directly supported 1,833,000 jobs (which equates to 4.7% of total employment) and in Vietnam tourism resulted in 1,832,500 jobs (or 3.7% of total employment). In each of these countries it is expected that the economic contributions of tourism (including to employment) will increase in the future.<sup>9</sup>

Though the significance of these economic contributions should not be downplayed, it is also well documented that while tourism has the potential to make significant positive contributions to host countries, it can bring with it significant and substantial social, cultural and environmental problems. Such problems are amplified in contexts where there is rapid – and thus often unplanned and unmonitored – tourism development. One of the key concerns for Project Childhood Prevention Pillar (discussed in more detail below) is the way in which tourism impacts children's lives. Due to the economic pull factors of the tourism sector there is a clear correlation between tourism and child exploitation. Vulnerable children and their families are frequently attracted to tourism destinations in search of an income. This may mean giving up traditional livelihoods, communal ties and/or social support networks. It may also mean that girls and boys may end up working in the tourist industry in conditions that are unsafe or harmful. Furthermore, children earning money from tourists in various forms of child labour are less likely to go to school and face heightened vulnerability to other forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Due to the lower protective mechanisms around these children, they are more easily targeted by child abusers, including travelling child sex offenders.<sup>10</sup>

Evidence collated from identified cases and reports from this region show that travelling child sex offenders target children that are working on the streets or in various informal business establishments in tourism destinations.<sup>11</sup> In addition, they may otherwise gain unsupervised access to vulnerable children by working in schools or orphanages. Without adequate vetting and safeguards, the tourism industry sometimes facilitates offenders' access

---

9 For more information see: World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Cambodia; World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Laos; World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Thailand; and World Travel and Tourism Council (2012) Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2012: Vietnam, [www.wttc.org/research/](http://www.wttc.org/research/), accessed 27/9/12

10 A travelling child sex offender is a person who has travelled outside of their country and sexually abused a child.

11 Project Childhood Prevention Pillar (2011) Literature Review, unpublished.

to vulnerable girls and boys and may unwittingly enable exploitation. This can occur not only in mass tourism establishments (such as hotels, restaurants, bars, markets and tourist leisure precincts), but also within so-called 'responsible tourism' or 'cultural tourism' enterprises. For instance, 'orphanage tourism', where travellers are allowed to visit and interact with children in institutional care<sup>12</sup>, can leave children vulnerable to exploitation. So too can various forms of 'voluntourism'<sup>13</sup>, where adequate checks are not always placed on adults working with children, and "home-stays" where unknown adults who are accommodated within local homes frequently have unsupervised contact with local children.

In an effort to protect children against sexual abuse in travel and tourism in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) commenced a dual prevention and protection initiative Project Childhood, implemented by World Vision, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL. As part of this, World Vision is working with communities and governments to prevent girls and boys from becoming victims of sexual exploitation in travel and tourism and to establish 'Child Safe Tourism' practises and initiatives. To this end, World Vision recently distributed an online survey to international travellers in order to gauge their perceptions and understandings of child safe tourism, as well as their encounters and experiences with children in these countries.

World Vision defines child safe tourism as a form of tourism:

1. Recognises its potential role in, and impact on, child exploitation
2. Takes responsibility to minimise harmful impacts (direct or indirect) on vulnerable children
3. Takes an active role in strengthening and maintaining a safe environment for all children.

---

12 This can range from offering people the opportunity to teach English or take care of children in orphanages to providing tourists with opportunity to make a day trip to an orphanage or care centre for children. In most cases, tourists pay a fee to visit these children.

13 Voluntourism or volunteer tourism is typically understood as a niche form of alternative tourism where travellers are given opportunity to undertake volunteer work with a specific organisation or enterprise in a destination country. This work may be for a period of days, weeks or months and as with orphanage tourism participants often pay to take part (sometimes this payment may simply be in the form of funds to cover food and accommodation, in other cases there is a fee to participate). In South East Asia common volunteer projects include: teaching English to children, teenagers and/or adults; working on community development projects; working in healthcare; and working in environmental and/or wildlife conservation. Volunteers are frequently housed within (and sometimes by members of) the local community and cultural exchange is usually encouraged and advertised as part of the volunteer experience.

Ultimately then, Child Safe Tourism is seen as providing a long term sustainable solution to keeping children safe from abuse in tourism. Thus it is a key means by which a more sustainable and positively geared tourism industry can develop.

In order to assist Project Childhood and other agencies to support the development of a protective environment for children in travel and tourism, the survey, which consisted of open and closed answer questions, was administered from May to June 2012. This report provides an overview of the research and discusses the results of subsequent quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

## Data constraints and limitations

The survey sample has biases in terms of age, gender, nationality and perhaps more significantly, traveller type. This undoubtedly results from the fact that it was an online survey in English and that it was disseminated online via sites popular with independent travellers. Recruitment via Intrepid Travel also likely means that more of the respondents than normal have been educated about responsible travel (after all this is something Intrepid prides itself on).<sup>14</sup> Also, the one-month data collection period resulted in a relatively small, although not insignificant, sample size of 316. As a result, the ability to make statistical inferences from the survey sample to the population being studied is limited. Notwithstanding, the survey results provide a good starting point for developing strategies regarding child safe tourism.

## Participants in the Child Safe Tourism survey

The survey, which was run for a month, was disseminated online in English language via the *SurveyMonkey* website. It was advertised to potential participants through social media (such as twitter and Facebook), various email networks, internet forums (such as Yammer) and via various tourism websites and blogs. For instance, one participant indicated they had heard about the survey from youth travel agent STA Travel and a number of participants accessed the survey after it was publicised by Australian small-group tour company, *Intrepid Travel*. The key means by which most (38%) participants were recruited to the survey was through social media.

---

<sup>14</sup> Though Intrepid tours are marketed and conducted worldwide, the company is based in Australia and this probably accounts, in part, for the high number of Australian participants in the survey (as documented in Figure 3). For more information about Intrepid and their operations see [www.intrepidtravel.com](http://www.intrepidtravel.com).



This was followed closely by the Intrepid Express newsletter (a subscription based publication issued to prospective or past Intrepid tour participants) (31%) and individual email networks (25.6%). The result was a self-selected sample size of 533 participants. Of these 533 only 442 had travelled to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and/or Vietnam in the last 5 years, the remainder were excluded for lack of recent personal knowledge and/or experience of travel to the Region. While not all participants answered each question in the survey, the final number of participants was 316.

## Where and why did these participants travel?

Demographic data collected through the survey revealed that the vast majority (71.4%) of survey participants were female, aged 30-39 (40.66%) and that they had spent, on average, 1-4 weeks in at least one of the destination countries in the previous 5 years. The most frequently visited country was Thailand, followed by Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR (see Figure 1). Most survey participants indicated that they had travelled to the Region for a holiday (59.7%), however a significant number had also visited primarily for business and work (26.8%). Others indicated that the main purpose for their trip was to visit family or friends (5%), to study or undertake an internship (1.8%), to undertake development work (0.8%), for religious reasons (0.5%) or to volunteer (2.9%). In keeping with contemporary tourism trends (which point to increased diversity in the motivations for and types of travel that tourists engage in) a number of participants (4.7%) also indicated that their trips had been dual purpose (for example, combining volunteering with travel or business and holiday travel).

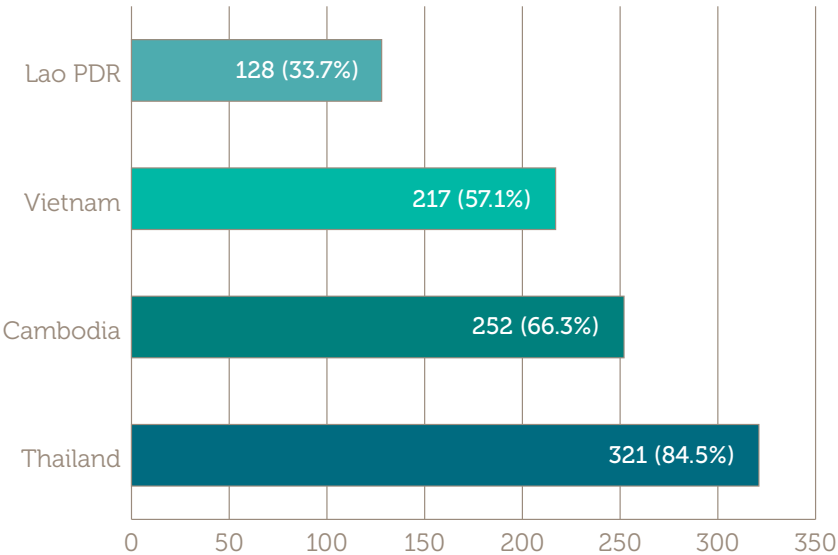
Interestingly, where 29.2% of participants had only visited one country in the Region, 21.3% of participants had visited all four countries in the past five years, 28.2% had visited three of the four countries, 21.3% had visited two countries and a number of qualitative responses indicated that some survey participants (whether they had visited one, two, three or four countries, were repeat visitors to the Region). These multi-country and in some cases repeat visits may be explained, in part, by a preponderance of participants who were resident in Asian-Pacific countries. For instance, residents from Australia and New Zealand (for whom South East Asia is a, relatively speaking, proximate and affordable travel destination) featured heavily.<sup>15</sup> So too did individuals resident in Cambodia and Thailand, many of whom – when countries of

---

<sup>15</sup> This, along with high rates of American and British participants can also be explained by the fact that the survey was conducted in English.

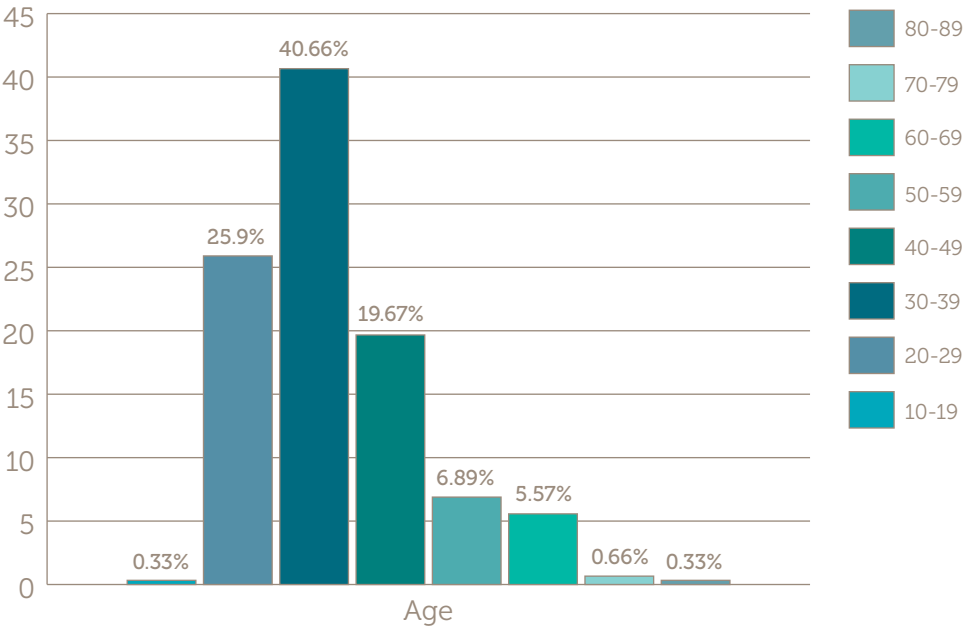
residence and countries of survey completion were compared – appeared to be expatriates.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 1:** *Proportion of participants who had visited each*



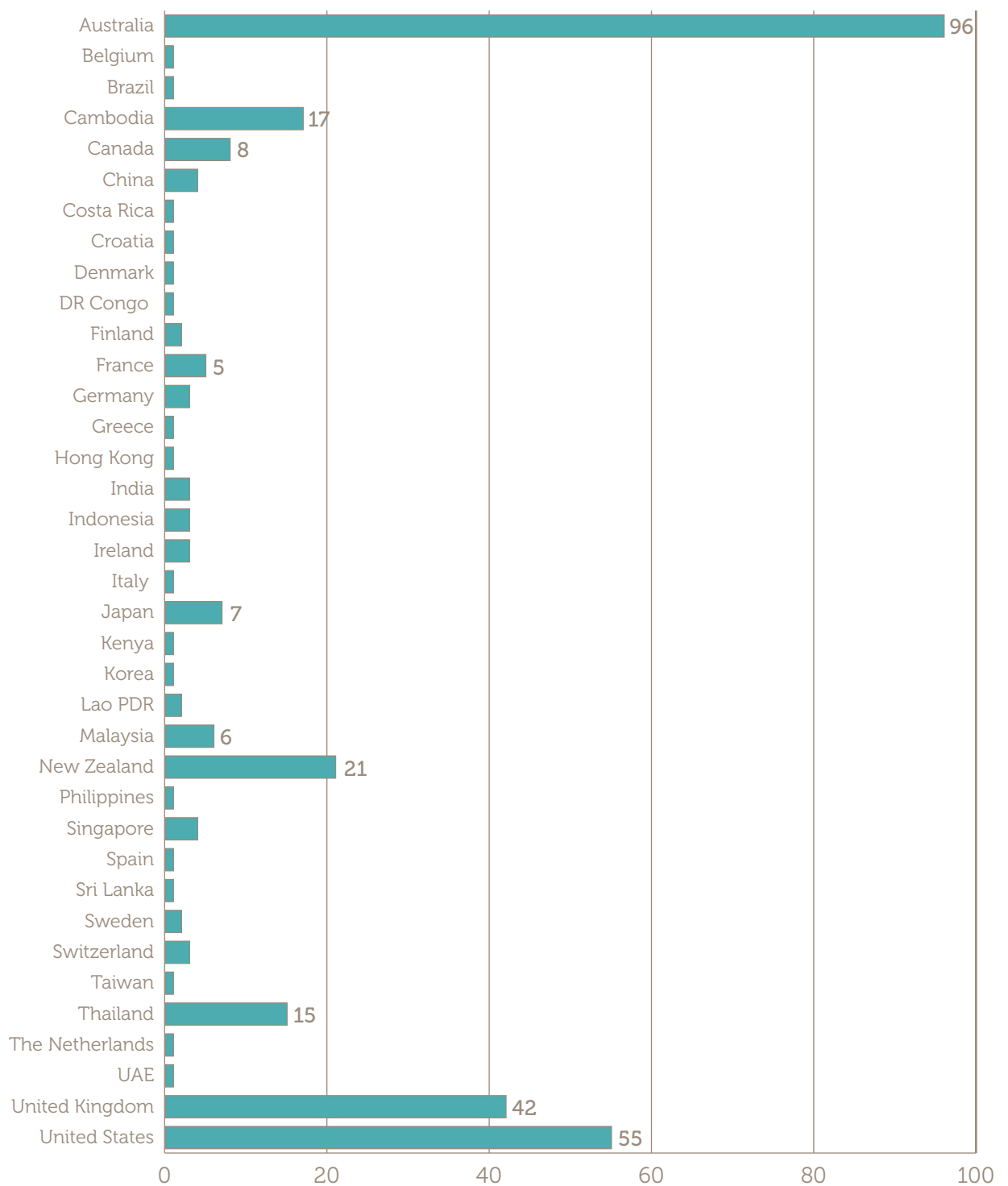
On the other hand, given the rates at which American and British residents also took part in the survey (many of whom were neither expatriates nor proximate to the destination) it is clear that the Region is popular with travellers around the world, particularly young travellers who made up the vast majority of the sample (66.56% were aged 20-39). For a further breakdown of participant ages and countries of residence, see Figures 2 and 3, respectively).

**Figure 2:** *Participant age range distribution*



<sup>16</sup> This interpretation is further corroborated by the fact that 9.7% of participants had spent longer than 6 months in Cambodia and 4.2% of survey participants had spent longer than 6 months in Thailand.

**Figure 3:** Participant country of residence



# Modes and styles of travel

In terms of the modes or types of travel that survey participants had engaged in while in the Region 58.7% identified themselves as having undertaken 'independent travel', 13.4% said they had travelled as a 'backpacker' the majority of the time, 21.8% indicated that they had taken part in a tour (many of them with Intrepid) and 17.3% indicated that they had travelled in a variety of different modes or styles whilst in the Region (sometimes across different trips).<sup>17</sup> In addition, 17.6% said they had travelled the majority of the time with a partner and/or their family, 5.8% had travelled with friends and 9.2% had travelled with colleagues or their peers. Again, given the high numbers of younger travellers represented in the survey,<sup>18</sup> it is not surprising that so many independent travellers or backpackers feature, this being a popular mode of travel amongst younger tourist cohorts. The same trends (toward younger travellers and independent travellers) may also help explain the high presence of online media and guidebooks in trip planning.

## Trip planning and engagement with travel media

When asked what media they had used to plan their trip to the Region, the vast majority (72.4%) of survey respondents indicated that they had utilised travel websites and 'apps'.<sup>19</sup> Second to web-based media were guidebooks, which were used by 66.6% of the tourists that were surveyed. Other sources of information deemed helpful (albeit less frequently) by survey respondents included travel agents, tour guides and tour briefings, airlines, accommodation booking websites (such as Agoda, Expedia and Hostel World), and the word of

---

17 Many of the terminologies used by travellers to describe their mode of travel are frequently imprecise and such descriptors often have different meanings for different audiences. In fact, there is some evidence of participants in this survey conflating independent travel not only with non-institutionalised travel or travel that is less dependent on the tourism industry (the typical meaning) but with solo travel. In interpreting these statistics it should also be pointed out that the term backpacking and independent travel are often used interchangeably and in some cases references to 'backpacking' are more indicative of a cultural affiliation and statement about identity (that one is a backpacker/part of the backpacking culture) than about specific travel habits/practises. Nonetheless, there is a clear distinction in this sample between those who undertook an organised tour and those who did not.

18 This may result, as already indicated, from the popularity of South East Asia (which is often perceived as a more 'adventurous' travel destination) amongst younger travellers. On the other hand, it is likely also influenced by the fact that the survey was heavily promoted via social media and carried out online – environments where there is a well-documented age or generation gap.

19 Software applications typically used on mobile phones and portable electronic devices.



mouth advice of friends and family. User generated travel websites (such as TripAdvisor and Travelfish) were also frequently mentioned.

All of the above suggests that while there may be some clustering in the survey sample (with for example, higher than average numbers of women, young people, Australians, independent travellers/backpackers and expatriates/NGO workers featured) there is nevertheless a diversity of travel motivations, styles/modes of travel, nationalities and age groups represented in this preliminary data. This is significant when one considers that irrespective of travel style or purpose, age or gender, most of the survey participants reported some interaction with the local communities in the countries they visited and with children in particular.

## Observations of and encounters with children in the Region

Of the 316 survey participants who responded to questions about their observations of and interactions with children and young people in the Region, the vast majority indicated that they had engaged with children/young people in some way. Most commonly this took the form of witnessing or being approached by young people selling souvenirs or begging (reported by 85% and 81.2% of participants, respectively: see Figure 4). Many also reported seeing children collecting rubbish (49%), working in a restaurant or hotel (48.5%) and street performing (38%). A significant number also claimed that they had seen children or youth (under the age of 18) working as a tour guide (25.5%) and of most concern, in the sex industry (20.5%).

Other interactions that were frequently reported included talking and playing with children. To this end, comments such as the following were not uncommon:

*Often they'd [children] come up and want to practice English and I was always happy to talk to them about their lives.* (Female, Australia, aged 35)

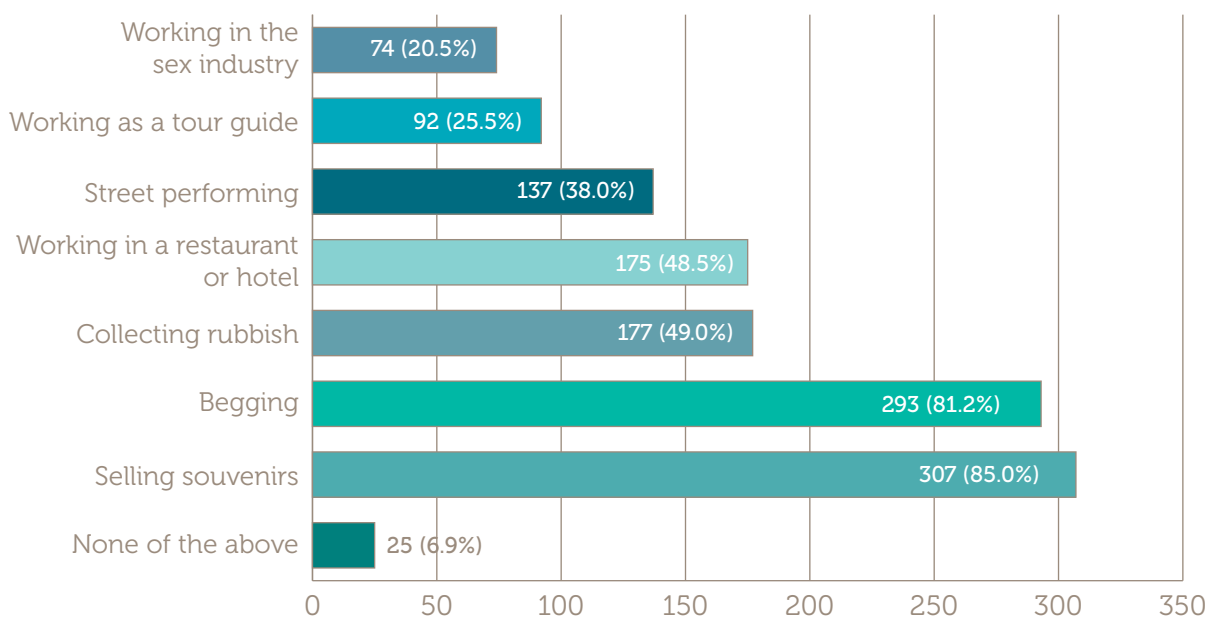
*We talked to children around the countryside because they came to us, excited to meet and greet us.* (Female, Croatia, aged 30)

*There was a young girl that approached me whilst I was reading a book in a park. She had good English for her age and I helped her feed the fish in the fountain.* (Female, UK, aged 37)

*Kids would run out of their houses to greet you and wave...* (Male, Costa Rica, aged 43)

Frequently, emphasis was placed in these statements on the fact that tourists spoke to/played with children because the children had approached them (not the other way around). Similarly, those who reported taking photos of children tended to indicate that they engaged in this either at the request of children (whether implied or explicit) or at least for the children's amusement and entertainment. For instance, participants reported that "[children] happily posed for photos while [we were] out on village photography walks" and that they spent time "talking to children and taking their photo to show them on the screen". Another participant reported that on giving a local a lift on their bike (in a village in Lao PDR), they were invited to join the local and their family for a meal. This participant observed that "the children were interested in us and THEY took pictures on my camera" (original emphasis).

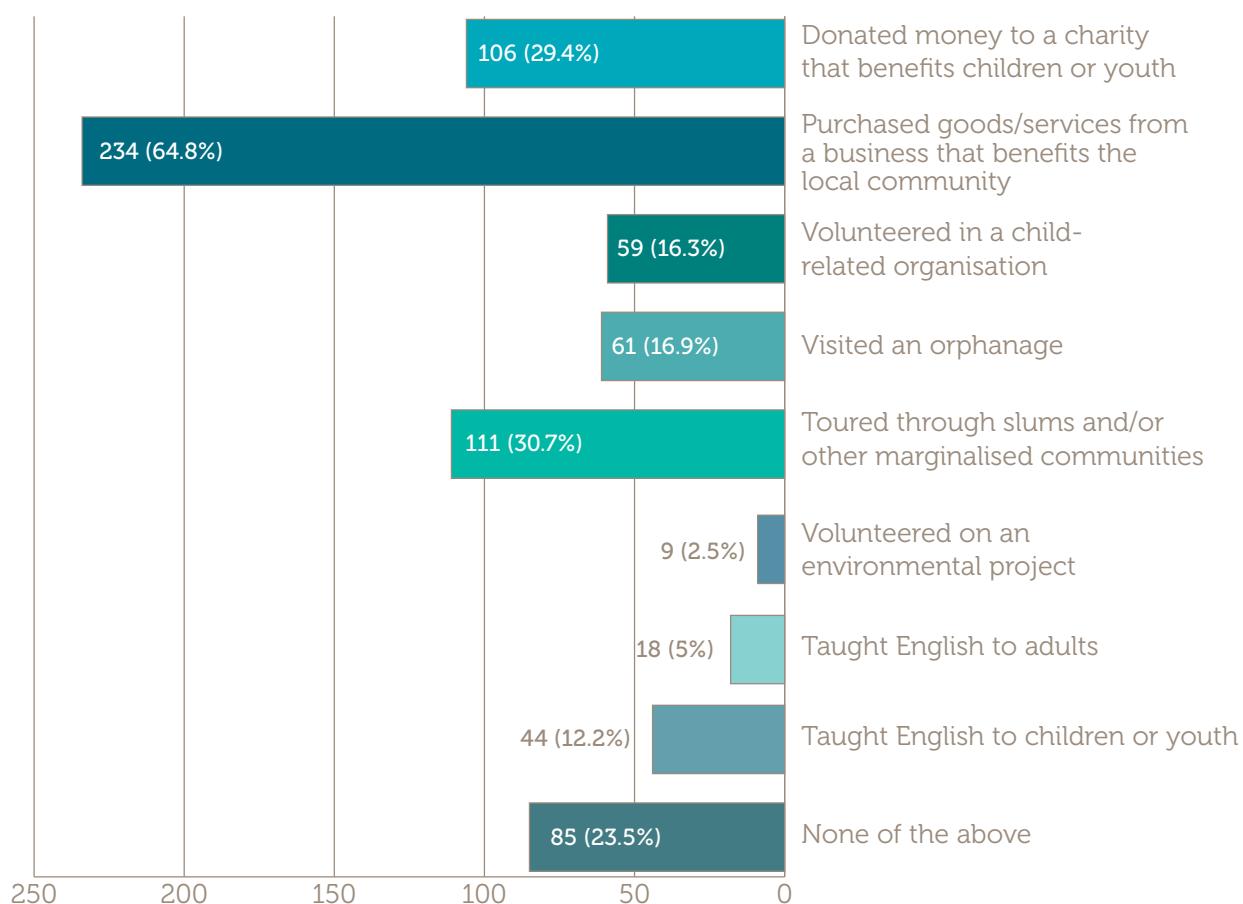
**Figure 4:** Response to the question 'Did you see children or youth (under 18 years) doing any of the following in the Region?'



Other survey participants reported engaging with children on school visits, while teaching English, or interacting with them in the course of employment or volunteer work in the Region. Also reported were meetings with children during orphanage visits or home stay programs and in some rare cases, engaging with the children of friends and family members in the Region. Many of these reported interactions are to be expected given some of the community-based tourist activities that survey participants said they had engaged in while visiting one of the four countries (see Figure 5).

Generally, survey participants were quite candid about their encounters with children and many seemed to have clear and distinct memories of these interactions which they openly shared. For instance, one participant wrote that he had given children “candy, took their photos and showed them the images on my camera LCD”. However, as mentioned above, for some participants the matter seemed to be a little more complicated and many appeared to feel the need to contextualise, explain or justify their interactions with children in the Region, particularly when it came to talking with or photographing them.

**Figure 5:** *Community-based tourism activities engaged in by participants in the Region*



This tendency, indicative perhaps of some level of awareness about the issues surrounding interactions between local children and tourists, was even more notable when it came to participants’ discussions of moments where, in an attempt to help, they had given children something (such as food or clothing). Frequently in narrating such interactions, which were obviously well intended, the participants expressed doubt about what they had done and what in fact was the correct course of action to have taken under the circumstances. For instance, a female participant commented that on one occasion she had taken a child to a restaurant for lunch, explaining that:

*He was a street vendor, and I refused to buy from him, and in the end he told me "It's not so easy as you say", and turned away and cried. I felt for him, and later found him and asked if I could meet his mother, but in the end that didn't work out so I bought him lunch instead - possibly still promoting the "Great Western Provider" mentality which I had been aiming to avoid! (Australia, aged 40)*

The moral and ethical issues that this participant associated (implicitly) with the 'Great Western Provider' mentality were made more explicit by another participant who recounted that on her tour to the Region:

*Some of the ladies in [the]... group had brought clothing and school supplies for children in the floating village [but that] the tour guide handed these out in a way [making the children push and jump for them] that made me very uncomfortable. (Female, USA, aged 40)*

Even when interactions such as these were carried out with good-intent it is clear from these quotes that participants still had some doubts or concerns about the potential impacts of their interactions with children. In the latter case it is also apparent that representatives of the tourism industry, such as tour guides, are scrutinised by tourists for the impacts that they have on local communities and children in particular and are expected by tourists to show cultural sensitivity when acting as a mediator between tour groups and locals. Ultimately though, the ambivalence or uncertainty about how best to behave with local children presented as an even stronger theme amidst survey participants' discussions of their responses to children who were begging or selling something in the Region.

## Encounters with children begging or selling

Out of 316 survey participants who answered questions about their encounters with children begging, 78.7% stated that they did not give money to a begging child or youth while in the Region. Of those who had avoided giving money to children engaged in begging, most explained their actions with reference to notions of sustainability as well as their concern with minimising the potential for child exploitation. Many of these participants seemed well educated about the fact that if children are on the streets begging they are not likely to go to school and may be left vulnerable to exploitation or abuse. Many also talked about begging as not being an empowering or even likely means for ending the poverty



cycle. A significant number also made reference to what they perceived as better alternatives such as giving money to a local charity or giving the children food instead. Comments such as the following were not uncommon:

*I think giving money to beggars perpetuates the problem; the children often don't get to keep it anyway. Where possible I'd donate to a local charity or community project instead.* (Female, Australia, aged 36)

*I bought several children dinner at a street side-stall. I wanted to feed them rather than give them money as we didn't know where that would end up.* (Female, New Zealand, aged 46)

*I bought about 6 local street kids pairs of sandals from a local market. I spoke to them about their desires to go to school. Many said they went to school or that the money that you give would help with their education but I thought it was probably doubtful.* (Female, United Arab Emirates, aged 27)

*[I] believe that giving to a begging child will keep them in an at-risk situation... [I am] aware that many children and youth are trafficked for begging.* (Female, Cambodia, aged 33)

On the other hand, when people did report giving money to children who were begging (17.5% of participants) many of them seemed to recognise that it was perhaps not the best course of action (in the long-term) but said they did so out of sympathy, because it was “too hard not to”, and/or because they wanted to help. For instance, one female participant said she had given money because she “couldn't help herself” and another reported giving money because “they looked so dirty and underfed, that I wanted to give them money”. Perhaps most tellingly, one female participant said that she often gave money, acknowledging at the same time that “it is said to make their situation worse so there is always... doubt when you give that you are not obviously doing them a favour”.

*“I think giving money to beggars perpetuates the problem; the children often don't get to keep it anyway. Where possible I'd donate to a local charity or community project instead.”*

For instance, one female participant said she had given money because she “couldn't help herself” and another reported giving money because “they looked so dirty and underfed, that I wanted to give them money”. Perhaps most tellingly, one female participant said that she often gave money, acknowledging at the same time that “it is said to make their situation worse so there is always... doubt when you give that you are not obviously doing them a favour”.

These comments are demonstrative of the fact that many participants want to help but are either unclear or undecided about how best to do this. Even more conflicted were the responses regarding whether participants had bought anything from children or youth working as vendors. While the

majority of participants avoided interacting with children in this way, they were generally less adamant about this than they were begging. Here only 53.2% of participants answered no when asked if they had purchased goods or services from a child and 34.9% answered yes. Of those who said no, most indicated that they refused to purchase goods or services from children because they were aware that this may minimise their opportunity for schooling and could lead to them being exploited. Again they also indicated that they felt torn about this. Subsequently, sentiments such as the following were not uncommon:

*Helping street kids often presents a moral dilemma for many. You know that kids should be in school and should not have to be on the streets begging or selling things. However, it is very difficult to walk away from them knowing that they may go to bed hungry that night.* (Female, Spain, aged 32)

On the other hand, those that did purchase from child/youth vendors tended to have more varied rationales for doing so. Typically purchasing from children was explained as a response to the children's persistence, because they thought that by doing so they were helping, because they were sympathetic, or in some cases simply because the product/service being sold/provided was 'needed' or not being provided by anyone else (i.e. by adults). Comments such as the following are exemplary:

*I purchased small items from children on weekends after I asked them directly about going to school. If they need to work to support their family's meagre income and to allow them to attend school during the week I felt that was okay.* (Female, Australia, aged 35)

*I felt sorry for them and wanted to support them. Also they tend to be very persistent.* (Female, UK, aged 37)

*[I] wanted to support them in some way. Rather than buying the goods at the tourist locations outlets, as I had already spent some money there, [I bought from children to] share it around.* (Female, Australia, 38)

*They said they went to school in the morning and worked afternoons. [I] figured helping your family eat is a good thing.* (Female, Australia, aged 44)

It is clear that these participants were quite judicious about their consumer choices while travelling. They report making conscious efforts to find out more about the lives of the children that they engaged with and clearly took the time

to not only make these enquiries but then evaluate the limited choices available to them and the potential impacts of those choices. Overall though, not being entirely certain about the best way to respond to a child seller or beggar was recounted quite frequently by the participants. Such uncertainty echoed also through participants' discussions of how they had responded to incidents of child abuse and/or exploitation that they had witnessed while in the Region.

## Encounters with child exploitation/abuse while travelling

When asked if they had seen anything that made them think a child or youth might be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or exploitation, 57.1% of participants said yes. Many of the accounts of

this abuse or exploitation made reference to children selling goods or begging and being used by adults (in some cases their parents) to play on tourist sympathies.

Others talked about the violation of children's rights to an education and/or childhood and interestingly a few participants identified the commodification of children and local culture as a problematic

component of the tourism industry (reporting for instance children being made to *'dress in native costume for pictures'* and children in orphanages being *'taken out of school to perform'* for tourists as examples of abuse).

Numerous participants also made reference to the sexual exploitation of children, documenting occasions where they had seen (typically) young girls (and occasionally young boys) with older 'Western' men; situations which they perceived as being extremely troublesome.

Overwhelmingly, all of the participants that discussed witnessing these types of exploitation stated that it made them feel disgusted, sad, concerned or worried, helpless, guilty, angry and/or frustrated, observing for instance that:

"Often you would see an adult lurking [nearby], encouraging the kids to hassle the tourists. I often wanted to engage the kids for as long as possible, my false hope [being] that this would keep them away from their bosses. In all cases I felt helpless."

*Often you would see an adult lurking [nearby], encouraging the kids to hassle the tourists. I often wanted to engage the kids for as long as possible, my false hope [being] that this would keep them away from their bosses. In all cases I felt helpless. (gender, nationality and age not provided)*

*Instead of being in school, so many children were out on the streets and beaches selling books, bracelets, fruit etc. I loved talking to them and they liked practicing English, but I felt bad that they were being forced into work by their parents and were missing the opportunity to be properly educated in schools. (Female, Australia, 26)*

*The number of single, older men visiting made me feel physically sick and reduced my enjoyment of the trip. (Female, New Zealand, aged 45)*

*[I saw a] young girl (5-6 years old) selling souvenirs. [I] kept thinking there was someone behind her forcing her to do this and abusing her no matter whether she sold them or not. I chose not to buy anything from her but I still remember that experience vividly – and the ensuing hours of crying that followed as my heart broke. (Female, USA, aged 31)*

*[Seeing] young women being exploited for sex tourism. [I was] absolutely disgusted and left much earlier than planned because of this. (Female, USA, aged 30)*

**"I feel responsible, but I don't know what I can do about it, to make it right."**

A sense of anger, frustration and/or concern was no doubt compounded by the fact that almost half (49.5%) of the respondents felt they had some sort of responsibility for local children and youth when travelling but only 19.5% felt they had enough

information to protect local children and youth encountered in public places. This is evident in the following comments from tourists that were surveyed:

*I feel responsible, but I don't know what I can do about it, to make it right. (Female, Australia, aged 38)*

*Without knowing a wise manner to engage [with the problem] I often feel more like an observer. (Male, USA, 37)*

*I have some information on where to get help if [I] needed [to], but [it is] never enough. (Female, Australia, 54)*

*I feel like I want to do more now that I am aware of the... situation. I just don't have the resources, skills and knowledge required. (Female, Finland, aged 20)*



While some reported taking very pro-active steps to assist children in need (in many cases making reports to police and more commonly staff at specific non-governmental organisations or charities<sup>20</sup>) when it came to child sexual exploitation in particular survey participants frequently reported that they had felt they did not have enough information about the situation, were not equipped to assist or that their reports went unheard. Accounts such as the following are indicative of this trend:

*"I feel like I want to do more now that I am aware of the... situation. I just don't have the resources, skills and knowledge required."*

*I saw two children in a cafe with men who told me they were their girlfriend's children. The kids were clearly very unhappy and I didn't believe the story for a second. I had no opportunity to talk to the kids on their own and without more than a gut feeling to go on, I didn't feel I could report the situation to police. I still wonder about those two kids and hope they're okay. (Female, Australia, aged 35)*

*...We encountered a young local girl in the company of a much older white male. We were concerned that she was at risk of abuse/exploitation and reported it to police. In some ways, we felt powerless because we were not sure if the police responded to our report to the full extent they could have. (Female, Australia, aged 24)*

*I saw an older Western man with several young girls on the beach. It looked very suspect and I felt sickened. I tried calling a child safe hotline, but I couldn't get through, so I pointed him out to local police (who said they couldn't do anything unless he had them in his hotel room). I felt angry and very frustrated not knowing what to do to help. [I experienced the] same deal in my next destination. Older western men with very young girls are everywhere, in bars drinking etc. but I didn't feel I could do anything to help. I found it very confronting and disturbing, so much so that I don't think I would return. (Female, Australia, aged 36)*

Like this participant, a number of respondents indicated that their exposure to incidents which they believed involved the exploitation or abuse of children and young people impacted negatively on their holiday and that they had

---

<sup>20</sup> For example, one participant reported having "found a small homeless boy on a beach who was very sick with a fever". This participant apparently waited with the child and then "called Childsafe to come and take him to a doctor".

in fact either cut their visit to specific localities short as a result or would not return to those destinations. However, many participants also stated that they did not report their concerns (22.2%) or that when they did they predominantly shared them with other travellers (61.3%). While occasionally this seemed to result from a lack of trust in the local authorities, more often than not it seemed to also stem from not knowing who (else) to report an incident to. The latter is in keeping with the finding that 48.2% of participants indicated that they had not received or accessed any information on how to protect children and youth in the Region from abuse/exploitation prior to or during their trip. Of those that did receive such information, only 15.6% had received such information prior to arriving at their destination (others received it in destination (27.1%) or once they had left (4.4%)).

"I saw an older Western man with several young girls on the beach. It looked very suspect and I felt sickened. I tried calling a child safe hotline, but I couldn't get through, so I pointed him out to local police (who said they couldn't do anything unless he had them in his hotel room). I felt angry and very frustrated not knowing what to do to help."

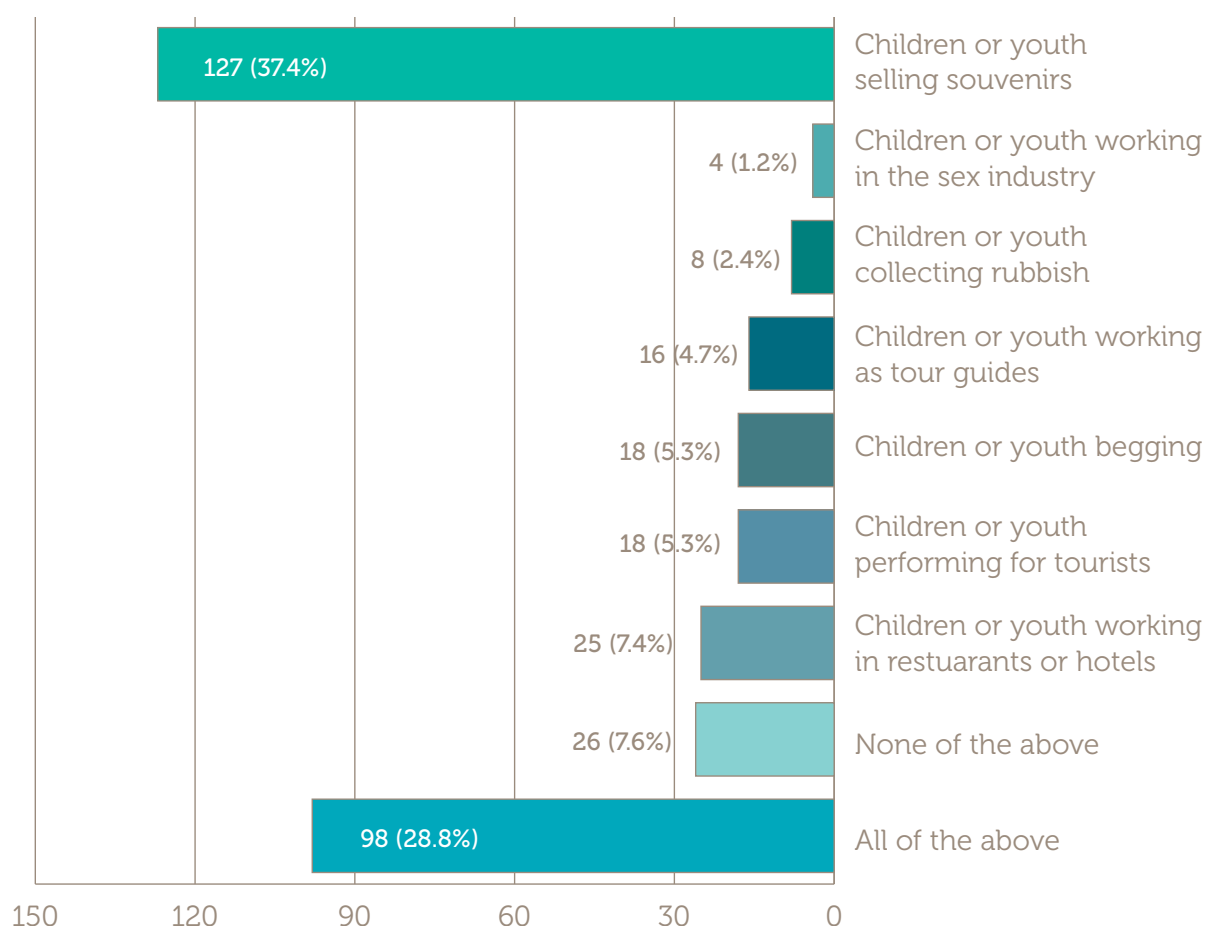
In addition, some of those that didn't report exploitation or abuse indicated that they did not feel it was their responsibility to get involved, commenting for instance that the responsibility to look after local children/youth in public places rested with local government/policy makers, legal officials and/or parents. In addition, some participants felt that it was inappropriate for them to judge another's culture, to intervene in local matters or that it may be dangerous to do so. More frequently participants said they had refrained from communicating their concerns because they were not certain enough about what was going on and a few commented that they didn't think reporting the situation

would make any difference, that it was simply a 'fact of life'. Certainly it seems that in some cases a failure to report may have resulted from a perception that much of this behaviour was inevitable.

For instance, 37.4% of respondents thought that children or youth selling souvenirs was tolerated or accepted by the local community. A significant number also thought that children or youth begging, children performing for tourists, or working in hotels or restaurants was also tolerated or accepted. While only 1.2% thought children or youth working in the sex industry was accepted by the local population, 28.8% of respondents indicated that they thought a combination of all of these exploitative behaviours was either deemed okay or that locals turned a blind eye to them (see figure 6).

In many cases survey participants did distinguish between tolerance for and acceptance of these behaviours, pointing out that they thought the practises had likely been normalised over time. In particular they seemed to think that this normalisation had occurred because the economic and sometimes physical ‘survival’ of families and communities depended on children earning an income via tourism. Overall, there was a clear perception amongst participants that these behaviours were for the most part condoned by local communities (if only through their silence). Such perceptions undoubtedly compound tourists’ sense of powerlessness and frustration and likely influence their willingness to get involved/intervene when it comes to suspected cases of exploitation and abuse. Subsequently, providing more information to travellers about the locals’ perceptions of these issues would likely be beneficial.

**Figure 6:** Response to the question ‘Which of the following do you think is tolerated or acceptable to the local community in tourism destinations in the Region?’



# Tourist perceptions of and interests in 'Child Safe Tourism'

On the basis of many of the survey findings that have been discussed already, it is not surprising that while some participants may have had limited knowledge about the impacts of tourism on children prior to visiting the Region, many (84.8%) reported wanting more information on this issue before they travelled in the future. Certainly some participant comments did reveal that there were perhaps gaps in their understanding of the ethical issues surrounding tourism when it comes to children (many had visited orphanages for instance). Likewise, tourist perceptions of child sexual exploitation in tourism seemed to be limited to a rather stereotypical image of an older, white Western man acting in a predatory fashion. This would no doubt blind tourists to non-Western travellers engaging in such behaviour and also to the fact that women may also be embroiled in this activity. To a lesser extent there was also a sense that these things only happened in more downtrodden or, to quote one participant, 'seedy' tourism areas.

Nonetheless, overall the attitudes of the participant group seemed to indicate a reasonable level of awareness about responsible and ethical decision making in tourism practice. For instance, a number of participants made reference to non-governmental organisations operating in the Region that were responsible for implementing such codes of conduct and for protecting children's rights.<sup>21</sup> It is heartening to note, that many of the survey participants had also seen the promotional materials that were being circulated by these organisations in order to promote child safe tourism. For instance, the majority of those who indicated they had received or accessed information about protecting children or youth before or during their trip said they had received this from an NGO operating in the Region and many made reference to having seen posters, billboards, signs (including on the back of tuk tuks) brochures and postcards promoting their work. These included advertisements encouraging travellers to avoid orphanage tourism (which in one case resulted in a group asking their guide to take an orphanage visit off their itinerary), to report child prostitution and to avoid taking photos of children/treating them like tourist attractions.

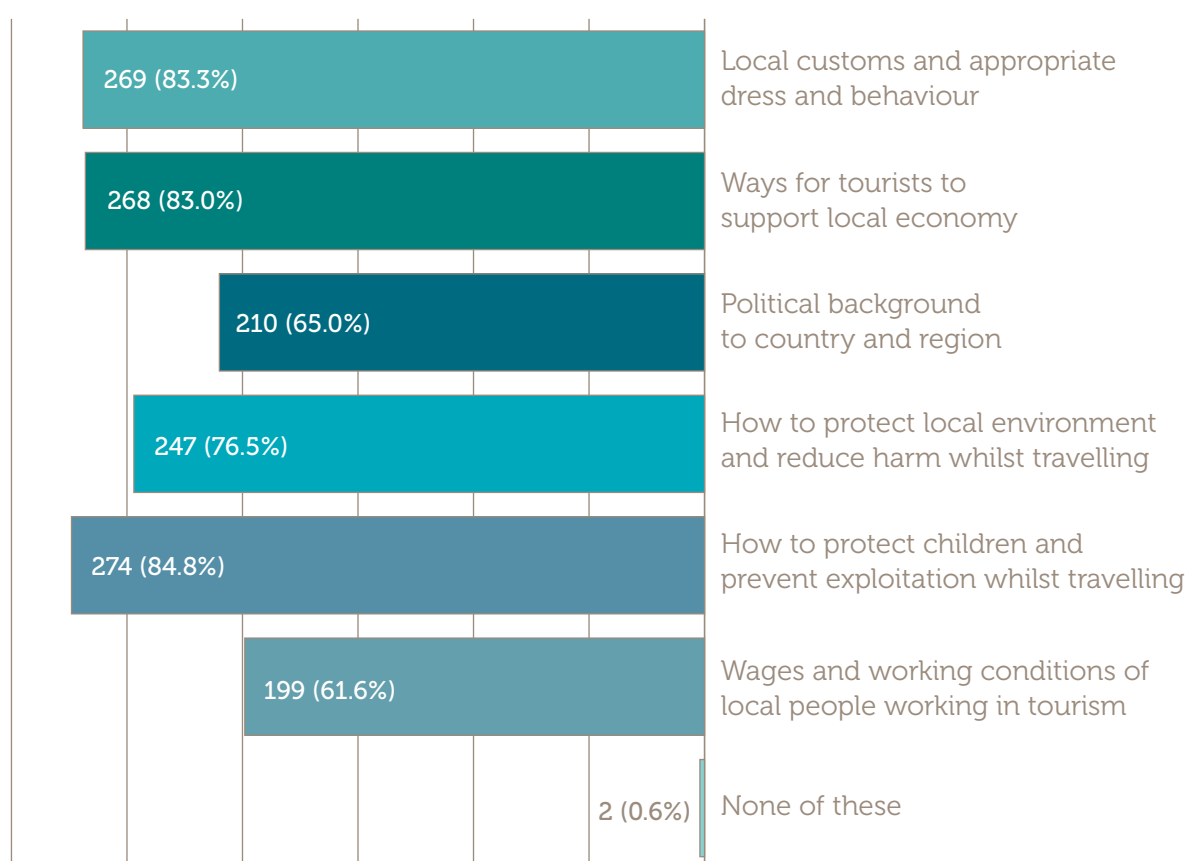
Perhaps as a result of these already effective campaigns, as well as their personal (and often times emotional) experiences in the Region, many participants also expressed a desire to learn more about tourism impacts and a willingness to embrace (where it was coupled with evidence) businesses

---

<sup>21</sup> Those specifically mentioned included: Cambodian Children's Painting Project, Mith Samlanh, Friends, Child Safe, World Vision, Bong Pa'Oun, Chab Dai, Hagar.

that adapted child safe tourism policies. For instance, of the 323 survey participants who responded to a question about the type of information they would like to receive prior to travelling, 84.8% stated that they would like to know more about how to protect children and prevent exploitation while travelling (see Figure 7). Almost the same number of participants said they'd like to know more about local customs, appropriate dress and behaviour (83.3%) and about ways in which tourists could support the local economy (83%). In a similar vein, when asked whether a business' policy to protect children would influence their purchase habits 94.8% of participants said that it would. While some of these respondents also indicated that price would also play a role (12.4%) in their decision-making, the responses to this idea were largely positive and many indicated that they had already frequented some tourist establishments/stores over others on this basis.

**Figure 7:** Response to the question 'What type of information would you like to receive before you travel?'



For instance, one participant stated that he *"only ate at restaurants that had child protection/recovery policies [and] stayed at child safe hotels"*. Another woman observed that she had bought *"some goods at more expensive prices from shops which supported local people and provided jobs for parents and safe schooling for children"*. The main caveat that respondents placed on making

such decisions though was whether or not there was evidence that the policy was actually being implemented. Ultimately it seemed most were interested in these sorts of initiatives and would support them but they would want to know that they were being thoroughly audited/vetted by independent agencies.

While some of the survey findings are limited, this highlights a number of key points when it comes to strategising around child safe tourism. Many (though not all) tourists are increasingly discerning about their travel practices and they are willing to spend more for products/services which are unique, authentic and/or demonstrative of being beneficial to the local community. However, even those tourists who are open to such things find it difficult to find sufficient information about such products/services – that is, to determine what is truly beneficial. They are also sceptical to unproven claims to benefit, so want not only information about alternative products but also proof that they do what is promised.

## Conclusion

This survey was administered to approximately 300 travellers from around the world in an effort to find out more about those visiting Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam, the types of travel that they engage in and their attitudes to, interactions with and knowledge about issues facing local children in these destinations. The survey generated a significant amount of information, particularly with reference to these latter topics, but is limited in its capacity to shed light on the demographic of travellers to the Region.<sup>22</sup>

Notwithstanding, the survey results do provide a good starting point for developing strategies regarding child safe tourism. Most importantly, they clearly indicate that travellers (regardless of age, gender or nationality) frequently interact with children in the Region. In many cases, such interactions are an enjoyable and memorable part of the trip (the fact that many travellers could recount specific interactions with children, in some cases 5 years after their journeys having been completed, is testament to this). However, where social interactions with children – talking to them, teaching them English, hearing about local life and playing with them – are often valued, the travellers surveyed in this study also seemed to have distinctly negative memories of children begging, children selling them things or being in other ways, the victims of exploitation.

---

<sup>22</sup> As identified already there are clear biases within the sample in terms of age, gender, nationality and perhaps more significantly, traveller type.



The survey participants from this study reported having quite negative emotional responses (sadness, guilt, anger, frustration, disgust) to seeing children living in impoverished conditions, being made to work, being on the streets (often without adult supervision), being deprived of an education, and ultimately being abused in some way. Tourism industry officials and tourism operators need to be aware then that these are issues which impact visitor experiences and which tourists discuss with their friends and family upon returning home. As such, they have the potential to have a significant impact on destination image.

That said, despite these negative emotional responses to encounters with children experiencing abuse/exploitation and the fact that such encounters would, in some cases, make travellers cut their journeys short or think twice about returning to a destination, very few of them took direct action in response to suspected exploitation or abuse. Most discussed it with friends but few seemed to feel comfortable reporting it to authorities or even to tourism workers. Given that travellers that participated in this survey seemed to have a reasonable awareness (at least broadly) of some of the issues facing local children, this lack of reporting is seemingly the result of three key factors:

1. A lack of detailed information about the relationship between child exploitation and tourism.
2. Uncertainty/ambivalence about what they as tourists could do.
3. Uncertainty about whether reporting their concerns would actually make a difference.
4. Uncertainty about what was actually going on.

While the final factor is perhaps difficult to tackle (particularly when one takes into account language barriers), the first, second and third are less so. It was clear that many of the survey respondents had gathered at least some information about children being vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in tourism destinations.<sup>23</sup> Certainly many travellers were conscious of the issue of child sexual exploitation in tourism and many seemed aware that supporting child sellers or beggars for instance was problematic. However, at the same time, even having completed a survey on child safe tourism, respondents still tended to emphasise the environmental impacts of tourism over the socio-cultural impacts, with 44% stating that the impact on the local environment was

---

<sup>23</sup> Most typically this seemed to have come from NGOs and posters/signs/brochures in the destination. Other sources of information included tour guides and tourism professionals, online sources and general media (such as books, news reports, documentaries). Occasionally travellers reported conducting further research into the issue and some also referred to having found out about the problem of child exploitation and how to address it through other travellers, friends and family members.

mostly negative and only 32.5% stating the same about the impact of tourism on children and youth. On top of this ambivalence – which often centres around the idea that tourism brings economic gain to these children and their families – many survey participants also seemed to be less aware or concerned about other exploitative behaviours like giving children food or gifts, taking children's photos, or visiting orphanages (in fact, sometimes these behaviours were offered as strategies for dealing with child sellers and beggars).

As such, any campaign around child safe tourism needs to ensure that detailed information is given to potential tourists about all of the behaviours that can impact children, not just those which are already highly publicised and/or most shocking/controversial. From the survey it seems that some tourists tend to only equate sexual exploitation with child abuse – so by not engaging in this they assume they are travelling responsibly. Likewise, many assume that the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation in tourism are only Western, white men, when again the situation is far more nuanced than this.

Tourists also need information about what exactly they can do to help. Most of the tourists surveyed felt that in order to be able to better help keep children and young people safe, travellers needed more education to know who they could turn to for assistance, what local protocols and procedures for reporting abuse/exploitation were, and the opportunity to assert their spending power effectively. Many supported the idea of child safe tourism policies and wanted to know how to spend their money to better aid children/young people/ the local community but felt that it was not always easy to find this out. To this end, a number of participants expressed a desire for clear guidelines and strategies to help them manage these issues while travelling and said that they would be willing to spend a little more money on products and services manufactured and provided in a child safe environment. This is in keeping with a strong desire, expressed by many participants, to help. That said, one of the most interesting responses to a question about where participants would like to receive or access information about travelling responsibly and/or the local culture/community, was as follows:

*I think it's really important to inculcate a progressive general attitude to travel that can inform individual decisions. Helping people get the information that lets them make the right decisions rather than provide a prescribed list of 'ethical options' [is important]. Though that [a list] can also help, people can be a little blinded to other options. [It's] like the Lonely Planet effect where people miss out on all sorts of great options trying to get to the one place listed in 'the book'. (Male, Cambodia, aged 30)*

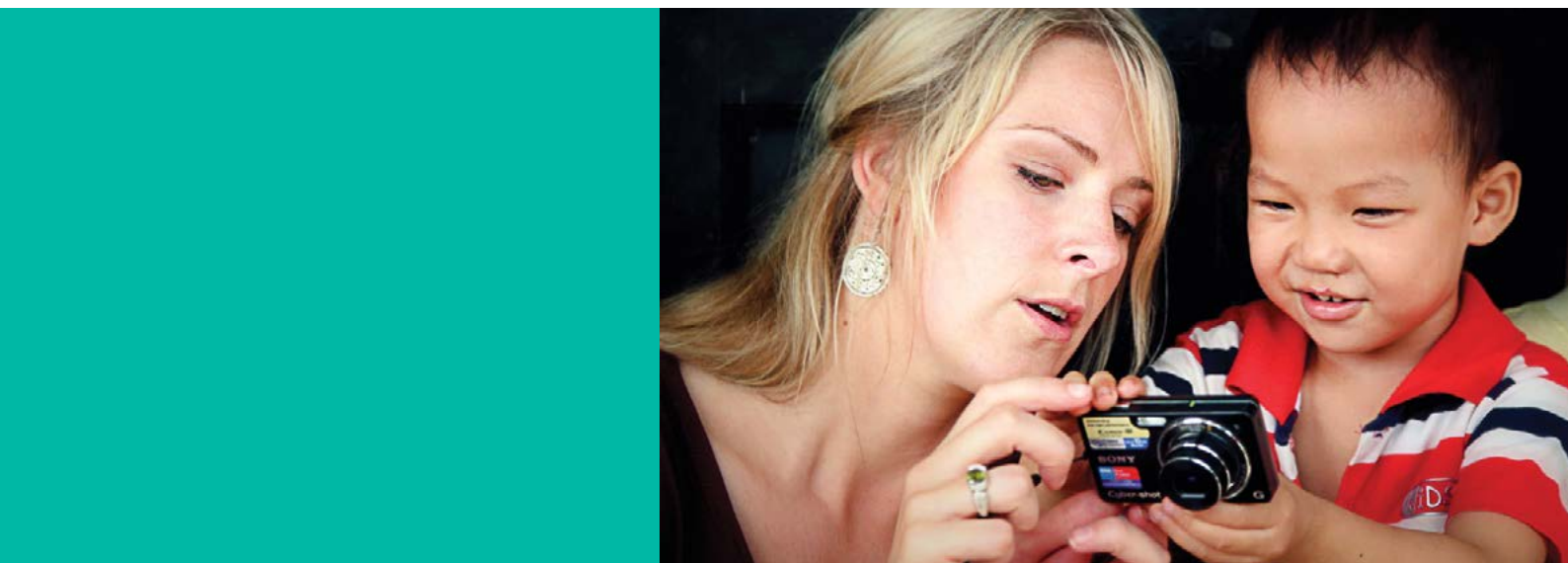
Certainly, guidelines are helpful to tourists and many of the tourists surveyed in this study feel they would be beneficial. However, as this participant has hinted, it seems that educating tourists and empowering them to take responsibility for their decisions and to act in an ethical manner is likely to have the longest lasting impact when it comes to child safe and responsible travel. Of course, some tourists are more likely to be open to this education than others (and those in the survey are perhaps more open to such ideas than most) so any strategy needs to be multi-faceted: more detailed for those who want it, and less detailed for those who do not. To this end, it is also clear that any campaign that seeks to raise awareness of child safe tourism needs to operate in the destination countries as well as in tourist's home countries. Thus a broad network of tourism industry officials, tourism businesses, and tourism-related media must be utilised in order to disseminate information and raise awareness of any child safe tourism campaign that is developed. A number of survey participants indicated that by only finding out about problems of child exploitation in country it was already too late (i.e. they had already engaged in problematic behaviour). Given the diversity of traveller types that exist (and that not all of them were captured by this study) and the diverse information sources that tourists utilise, information about child safe tourism needs to be provided via a variety of online and offline media, including social media, websites, posters, brochures, guidebooks, signs and pamphlets (some participants even suggested the latter should be issued with visas).

In conclusion, it is clear from this survey that many tourists are keen to travel in a positive fashion and have a real desire to help alleviate poverty and other social issues (such as a lack of schooling, inadequate housing or unemployment) in the countries that they visit. Many of the tourists that were surveyed were significantly affected by their encounters with children in the Region and in particular by what they perceived to be situations involving exploitation and abuse. However, tourist knowledge about how best to respond to such situations is limited and many expressed doubts about how issues of child exploitation and abuse were dealt with by the local community. Countering such doubts, as well as the negative images of local communities and local authorities that accompany these uncertainties, should be a key priority not only for those involved in Project Childhood but also for tourism operators, members of the global tourism community and for local and national governments in the destination countries. Furthermore, child safe tourism strategies can be one means by which government and industry can contribute to the development of more positive tourist destination images and cultures and, by extension, a more socio-culturally and economically sustainable tourism industry.

## Recommendations for further research

To build upon this early start to examining tourist perspectives, further surveys should be carried to capture a broader, more inclusive sample; such as the voices of those engaged in resort-based or package tours to the Region (in other words, 'mass tourists'), older travellers, the voices of men (or at least more male voices) and of those who do not speak English. Different methodologies such as focus groups or interviews (which often capture more detail than surveys) could also be used with tourists while they are in the destination rather than once they have returned home. This prevents there being any issues with regards to recollection and can also assist in developing a more specific and immediate picture of what is going on. Likewise, observations of tourist behaviour are also useful in balancing research methods which only capture reported behaviour.

"I think it's really important to inculcate a progressive general attitude to travel that can inform individual decisions. Helping people get the information that lets them make the right decisions rather than provide a prescribed list of 'ethical options' [is important]."







# Annex: Questionnaire

**1. Have you travelled to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and/or Vietnam ("the region") in the last 5 years (including for an extended stay)?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No

**2. Which of the following countries have you travelled to in the last 5 years? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Cambodia      ☐ Lao PDR  
☐ Thailand      ☐ Vietnam

**3. What was the main reason for your visit/s?**

☐ Business  
☐ Holiday  
☐ Visiting family/friends  
☐ Religious reasons  
☐ Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. How did you travel for the majority of your trip/s? (e.g. as an independent traveller, backpacker, part of a tour group, part of a family group, etc)**

**5. What media did you use to plan your trip/s to the region? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc)  
☐ Guidebooks (*Lonely Planet*, *Rough Guides*, *Time Out*, etc)  
☐ Travel websites and apps (TripAdvisor etc)  
☐ Travel blogs  
☐ Other outlets:

If you found a helpful travel blog or resource, please let us know which one here: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. How long was your average stay in each country? (Please select N/A if you did not visit the country in the last 5 years)**

Cambodia:

☐ Under 1 week  
☐ Between 1-4 weeks  
☐ Between 1-3 months  
☐ Between 3-6 months  
☐ Over 6 months

Lao PDR:

☐ Under 1 week  
☐ Between 1-4 weeks  
☐ Between 1-3 months  
☐ Between 3-6 months  
☐ Over 6 months

Thailand:

☐ Under 1 week  
☐ Between 1-4 weeks  
☐ Between 1-3 months  
☐ Between 3-6 months  
☐ Over 6 months

Vietnam:

☐ Under 1 week  
☐ Between 1-4 weeks  
☐ Between 1-3 months  
☐ Between 3-6 months  
☐ Over 6 months

**7. Which of the following did you do while in the region? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Visited an orphanage  
☐ Taught English to adults  
☐ Volunteered on an environmental project  
☐ Toured through slums and/or other marginalised communities  
☐ Taught English to children or youth  
☐ Purchased goods or services from a business that benefits the local community  
☐ Volunteered in a child-related organisation

- ☐ Donated money to a charity that benefits children or youth
- ☐ None of the above

**8. Did you see children or youth (under 18 years) doing any of the following in the region? (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Street performing
- ☐ Working in a restaurant or hotel
- ☐ Collecting rubbish
- ☐ Working in the sex industry
- ☐ Working as a tour guide
- ☐ Selling souvenirs
- ☐ Begging
- ☐ None of the above

Comment (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**9. While in the region, did you buy anything from a child or youth vendor?**

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/can't recall

If you did not, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**10. While in the region, did you give money to a begging child or youth?**

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/can't recall

If you did not, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Did you have any other interactions with local children and youth while in the region?**

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/can't recall

If you did not, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**12. While in the region, did you see anything that made you think a child or youth (under 18 years) might be experiencing or at risk of abuse/exploitation?**

- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/can't recall

If you did not, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Who did you share your concerns with?**

- ☐ No one
- ☐ Other travellers
- ☐ Hotel staff
- ☐ Tourist police
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**14. Why didn't you communicate your concerns?**

- ☐ It's not my business
- ☐ I was afraid I would make the situation worse for the child/youth
- ☐ I believe reporting the situation would make no difference
- ☐ I was afraid for my own safety
- ☐ I was not certain enough to take action
- ☐ I did not know who to speak to
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**15. How did you communicate your concerns?**

- ☐ Face-to-face
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Social media (Twitter, Facebook etc)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**16. Was there any response to your communications?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Don't know/can't recall

If you did not, please describe why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**17. Did you receive or access any information on how to protect children and youth (under 18 years) from abuse/exploitation in tourism destinations? (If you have more than one answer, please comment)**

☐ Yes before arriving in the region

☐ Yes while in the region

☐ Yes after leaving the region

☐ No

☐ Don't know/ can't recall

If you did receive or access information, please describe the media, source and content here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**18. Which of the following do you think is tolerated by or acceptable to the local community in tourism destinations in the region? (Youth = under 18 years) (If you have more than one answer, please comment)**

☐ Children or youth selling souvenirs

☐ Children or youth working in the sex industry

☐ Children or youth begging

☐ Children or youth performing for tourists

☐ Children or youth collecting rubbish

☐ Children or youth working in restaurants or hotels

☐ Children or youth working as tour guides

☐ All of the above

☐ None of the above

Comment (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**19. What impact do you believe tourism has on local environments, communities and children and youth (under 18 years)?**

Local environment:

☐ Mostly negative

☐ Neutral

☐ Mostly positive

Local community:

☐ Mostly negative

☐ Neutral

☐ Mostly positive

Local children and youth:

☐ Mostly negative

☐ Neutral

☐ Mostly positive

**20. "When I travel, I feel a sense of responsibility towards local children and youth in public places."**

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

Comment (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**21. "When I travel, I feel I have enough information to protect local children and youth in public places."**

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral ☐ Agree

☐ Strongly agree

Comment (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**22. What do you think travellers and tourists can do to help children and young people keep safe from abuse/exploitation?**

-----  
-----

**23. If a business had a policy to protect children, would this positively influence your decision to purchase their services/goods? (If you have more than one answer, please comment)**

- ☐ Yes but only if the price was still competitive
- ☐ Yes even if the price was more expensive
- ☐ Yes but only if I could see evidence of action to support the policy
- ☐ It would make no difference to my decision
- ☐ Don't know

Comment (optional): -----  
-----  
-----

**24. What type of information would like to receive before you travel? (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Wages and working conditions of local people working in tourism
- ☐ Ways for tourists to support local economy
- ☐ Political background to country and region
- ☐ Local customs and appropriate dress and behaviour
- ☐ How to protect children and prevent exploitation whilst travelling
- ☐ How to protect local environment and reduce harm to environment whilst travelling
- ☐ None of these

**25. Where would you like to receive or access this information? (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Travel and tourism blogs and websites
- ☐ Brochures at my destination
- ☐ Inflight information (magazine, video, etc)
- ☐ Guide books
- ☐ Destination airports and other transportation terminals (e.g. train, bus stations, etc)
- ☐ Tour guides at my destination
- ☐ Travel agents in my home country
- ☐ Other (please specify):  
-----

**26. What is your country of residence?**

-----

**27. What country are you in right now?**

-----

**28. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Please specify why:

-----

**29. In what year were you born? (enter 4 digit birth year; for example, 1976):** -----

**30. How did you find out about this survey?**

- ☐ Social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc)
- ☐ Email from friend/colleague
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Intrepid Express newsletter or other Intrepid publication
- ☐ Other (please specify):  
-----







[www.childsafetourism.org](http://www.childsafetourism.org)

Child Safe Tourism: The Tourist Perspective

ISBN: 978-0-9874441-0-3

Copyright © 2012 World Vision Australia

[childsafetourism@wvi.org](mailto:childsafetourism@wvi.org)

