"When they consider you, they give you importance, you feel accepted"

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF REINTEGRATION IN MADAGASCAR :

HOW GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN EXPERIENCE   REINTEGRATION

AFTER SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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FOREWORD

The research is part of a wider project, the RISE Learning Network[1] which aims to promote and facilitate learning on Recovery and Reintegration (R&R) approaches that improve outcomes for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation (CSE). It is a project implemented by Family for Every Child, a global alliance of national civil society organisations in collaboration with Retrak and the International Centre: researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking at Bedfordshire University.

The sexual exploitation of children is a global yet still largely hidden problem. It has devastating long-term impacts on children's physical, mental and reproductive health and social wellbeing, as well as their education and ability later to find work and safe relationships in supportive communities. It can leave them stigmatised, ostracised, without support or choices and vulnerable to further exploitation. Improving outcomes for children affected by CSE requires a holistic, flexible and individualised response.

This research is the second of three learning projects co-ordinated by the RISE Learning Network and aims to engage with young people affected by sexual violence to explore their views and recommendations on what makes for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration in order to strengthen policy and practice. The themes identified for the learning project were informed by a thematic report on reintegration 'Connecting the Dots: supporting the recovery and reintegration of children affected by sexual exploitation' by Claire Cody (May 2017) which, effectively, acted as a literature review for the learning project.

This research is also part of the PARLE program, run by ECPAT France in Madagascar and aims at raising children's voices so that these will be heard by authorities and all the actors who take care of children.

ECPAT is an international network[2], which has 109 associations in 96 countries, fighting against Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). ECPAT France[3] is taking action against CSE in France, Madagascar and more than a dozen countries on the African continent. ECPAT France works in Madagascar since 2012 and involves in prevention, protection and advocacy activities.

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[1] https://riselearningnetwork.org/about/
[2] https://www.ecpat.org/
[3] https://ecpat-france.fr/en/home/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SUMMARY

This research aims to promote and facilitate learning on recovery and reintegration approaches that improve outcomes for children and adolescents affected by sexual exploitation. This project engages with girls and young women affected by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) to explore their views and recommendations on what makes for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration, with the aim of strengthening policy and practice in this area.

This research uses an innovative participatory research method whereby young people who had experienced sexual exploitation and are former beneficiaries of a reintegration program, acted as 'youth researchers' and undertook research activities with their peers. This included co-facilitating focus group discussions with adult facilitators and "sense-checking" of initial analysis.

Reintegrated children have endured certain hardships (stigma and discrimination) that create psychological and emotional troubles to them and feelings of hopelessness. However, thanks to the support of all, especially the support of NGOs like ECPAT France, some of them have not given up and have ambition in their lives.

The research questions for this project are :

❖ **How do children and young people, who have been sexually exploited, experience re/integration in the community?**

❖ **What are the key issues that reintegration services need to consider when enabling the re/integration of children, who have experienced sexual exploitation, into communities?**

As the learning project was interested in getting an in-depth picture of reintegrated children's experiences the sample group consisted of 14 children and young people who took part in five group discussions of 2-3 hours over the course of 2 weeks.

During the research, we worked on three major themes that guided our discussions with the participants' reintegration experience, our findings, therefore, relate to these three themes.

Experiences of stigma and discrimination

Girls and young women reported stigma as being labelled as 'prostitutes' by community members who then discriminated against them by excluding them and talking about them behind their back. Girls and young women felt they had brought dishonour to their families, to their husbands. Their exploitation was seen simply as 'bad behaviour' by parents who were often seen as to blame. However, girls and young women were particularly hard on themselves, through self-stigma the girls and young women normalised the belief that they were to blame for their own exploitation. Despite this, some were able to see positives in their situation and were motivated to work hard and look to the future.

Experiences of acceptance and belonging

Belonging was experienced by girls and young women in its most simple form of being talked to and listened to. However, girls and young women also felt respect from others when they were earning an income. Additionally, doing common activities (such as cleaning and social actions) with community members helped girls to feel that they were not rejected and are among the community's members. But it was a connection to the church community that appears to help the reintegrated girls in this study to build relationships, reach their goals, to have a positive attitude and improve their status.

Experiences of support and protection strategies

Although family, teachers and community officials were reported as being supportive to girls and young women it was social workers and peers who were pivotal in the girls and young women's reintegration journey. Girls and young women reported a strong bond and a deep understanding between themselves and peers who have been sexually exploited. Social workers offered emotional and practical support so that girls and young women could change their situation. Girls and young women mentioned a particularly important protection strategy - building self-worth which enabled them to have a better understanding of their qualities and capacities, an ability to manage their feelings, find solutions to their problems and have a positive attitude that ultimately enabled them to reach their goals.

To conclude, girls and young women connected their stigma of being labelled as prostitutes and delinquents with a feeling of shame and 'dishonour' from their families who see their experience of being a victim of sexual abuse simply as 'bad behaviour'.

Girls and young women primarily experience discrimination as rejection and being criticised or gossiped about behind their back, however, young women who are married with children are particularly prone to self-stigmatisation – seeing the community's rejection of them as an acceptable and normal situation.

The rejection and criticism the girls and young women experience means they tend to bear their problems alone and results in feelings of hopelessness consequently, to escape, some girls dream of a 'safe and beautiful' place where no-one knows their past.

Many girls and young women said that prayer helps them to deal with their problems and the church community appears to be a place where they receive encouragement and good advice that they do not see in their daily lives. In addition, programs that build their self-esteem appear to be key to girls' and young women's reintegration where they no longer blame themselves for their own abuse.

Acceptance was defined by the research participants as 'having good relationships' which meant being included in community projects and respected which they connected to earning a good income. Support from peers who had been sexually exploited was closely connected to the concept of acceptance. Support from officials and NGO personal was quite practical, including extra lessons, help with school fees, counselling and income generating activities.

Girls and young women also talked about acceptance and belonging as 'feeling safe' and said that they feel safe if people consider them as a family or community member – being invited to family weddings or community meetings. Although mothers provide the majority of psychological and material support, girls and young women said that support from friends, family and community enabled them to experience belonging and acceptance because they no longer bear their problems alone.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Child	In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), in this report the term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A child is a victim of sexual exploitation when she/he takes part in a sexual activity in exchange for something (e.g. gain or benefit, or even the promise of such) from a third party, the perpetrator, or by the child her/himself. (ECPAT International - Inter-Agency Working Group, 2016)
Recovery and Reintegration	The term 'recovery and reintegration' is widely used to describe the process following a child's exit from sexual exploitation. Reintegration' refers to the process of moving from an environment or situation of exploitation to one where the child has the same opportunities as other children in the community, such as attending school and socializing with friends. In this report recovery and reintegration are viewed as fluid, long-term processes that do not fit into an established timeframe. Reintegration begins once children leave, or begin to leave, a situation of exploitation and continue through the process of accessing support and services, addressing various concerns and rebuilding their lives.
Stigma	A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person (Oxford English Dictionary).
Discrimination	The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people (Oxford English Dictionary).

RESEARCH METHODS

Participatory research methods are a relatively new concept, promoted in research on and with children as a tool to explain the culture of childhood and children's social relationships[4]. Participatory research involves a degree of collaboration between those who are normally solely the 'subjects' of research and those undertaking research. Participatory research is defined as research where the people whose lives are being studied are involved in collecting and analysing the data[5].

Research Team

The research team is composed of two adult researchers and four youth researchers. Their respective roles are distinct but complementary and change according to the stage of research.

In this research project, adult researchers were mainly staff from the ECPAT France team in Madagascar. Youth Researchers were similar to the sample group in that they had experienced sexual exploitation and had been through a reintegration program – many of the youth researchers were former beneficiaries of the NGO running the research.

 Youth Researchers were involved in all stages of the research project: identifying and refining the "themes" for the FGDs, co-facilitating all themed FGDs and undertaking 'sense-checking' of initial analysis. They will also be involved in dissemination activities.

Adult researchers	Youth researchers
DATA COLLECTION	
▪ Attend research training on data collection ▪ Plan the data collection: review FGD themes, key-questions and facilitation plans for five FGD ▪ Organize consent meetings with research participants and parents ▪ Co-facilitate FGD sessions ▪ Responsible for child protection ▪ Organize de-briefing session after each FGD ▪ Responsible for documentation of FGDs	▪ Attend research training on data collection ▪ Refine themes for FGDs ▪ Co-facilitate FGD sessions ▪ Deliver participatory energizers, icebreakers etc. during FGDs
DATA ANALYSIS	
▪ Make transcriptions of all the FGDs ▪ Undertake level 1 and 2 analysis: coding and categorization of data ▪ Develop key findings (level 3 analysis) ▪ Facilitate workshop with youth researchers to 'sense-check' key-findings and develop recommendations	▪ Validate level 1 and 2 analysis: coding and categories ▪ Undertake 'sense-checking' of key-findings

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[4] (Prout & James, 1997), (Mayall, 2004)
[5] (Beazley & Ennew, 2006)

- **Research Participants and Sampling**

The research made use of purposive sampling[6] where researchers actively selected the most productive sample to answer the research questions, utilizing a criterion sampling system[7].

The main criteria for children and young people in the sample were:

- they have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation
- they are former or current beneficiaries of ECPAT's reintegration program
- they are aged between 15 and 26 years old
- they voluntarily consent and agree to take part in the study
- they are female

The different steps of identification were :

- Consultation of the database of beneficiaries of ECPAT France since 2009
- Selection of participants
- Home visit of potential participants
- Consent meetings with potential participants

Risk assessments were made for all research participants during the process of selection and resulted in the following sample of a total of **14 girls and young women**, seven participants in each group:

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[6] (Marshall, 1996)
[7] (Given, 2008)

Groupe 1	• The first group is constituted of young women (aged 18-26) who were all victims of sexual exploitation for approximately *3 to 5 years*. They are now all married and have children. Even when they have already started a family, they still cohabit with their extended families (nuclear family, family in law, etc.). They are not yet independent and still need support from their family. • All of the young women in group one chose 'professional' reintegration and have undertaken vocational training such as catering, agriculture, hairdressing or computer science. Currently five of the young women are unemployed, one is a hairdresser and one sells fripperies.
Groupe 2	• The second group of girls and young women (aged 15-18) were all victims of sexual exploitation for approximately *3 months to 2 years* and all are attending school. Most of the group were exploited at school and are considered at risk of further sexual exploitation because some of their mothers working in the sex industry. • The girls in group 2 are all single, five are aged between 15 and 16, and as minors are under their parent's responsibility; two are young women (aged 18) but they all currently live with their parents and are, consequently, still under parent's care

▪ Research Sites

For Madagascar, the research was conducted in single location which is the capital, in Antananarivo. Antananarivo has a cosmopolitan population and hosts a large number of the Malagasy population, most of whom are young. In addition, there are contrasts and inequalities from the economic and social point of view because there are certainly areas qualified as "low" neighbourhoods where disadvantaged families are concentrated and where most beneficiaries of ECPAT France participating in this research reside (80% of participants). These places are characterized by large families, a high rate of out-of-school children and poverty.

Data Collection Methods

▪ Research Questions

There were two research questions for the study:

❖ **How do children and young people (who have been sexually exploited) experience re/integration in the community?**

❖ **What are the key issues that reintegration services need to consider when enabling the re/integration of children (who have experienced sexual exploitation) into communities?**

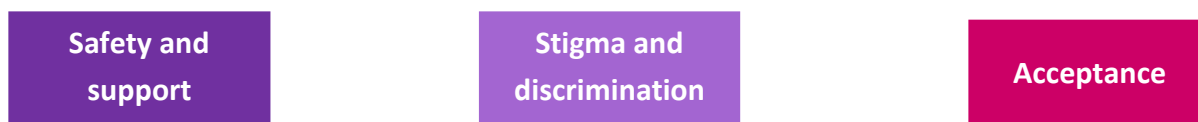## ▪ Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussions are known to be useful for exploring information about which people have a common understanding, for this study the key common denominators were that all the research participants had been

beneficiaries of a reintegration program (after having experienced sexual abuse or exploitation), were of the same sex (female) and were aged between 15 and 26 years old.

In total, five FGDs were held with seven girls and young women in each of the two discussion groups.

Each focus group discussion lasted approximately two hours and was held in Antananarivo at ECPAT France office. All FGDs were digitally recorded and facilitated by a youth researcher and an adult researcher with another adult researcher acting as note taker for the discussion.

The first FGD was a 'getting to know you' discussion to create trust and understanding between research participants and researchers as well as provide background data on the research participants (their stories of reintegration). The three subsequent FGDs focused on different themes of reintegration, these themes were identified by youth researchers during training on data collection in May 2018 and were as follows :

Safety and support	**Stigma and discrimination**	**Acceptance**

In addition, a workshop was organised with research participants on 'Recommendations for Practice' where research participants developed recommendations on how to improve services for other re/integrated children and young people.
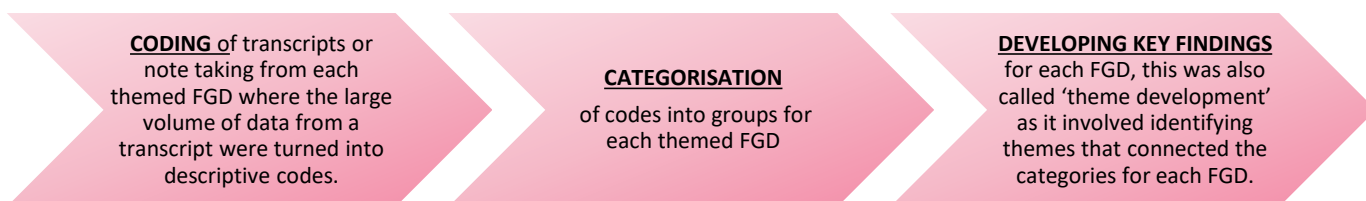
What recommendations do re/integrated children and young people have for effective and lasting recovery and reintegration?

- ▪ **Using Creative Tools**

Working with children requires methodologies that facilitate trust and an atmosphere where children feel relaxed and comfortable. In this research creative and participatory techniques, such as drawing, dance and movement were used in data collection and in workshops to identify recommendations with research participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was undertaken in three stages for the themed FGDs, consequently analysis of each FGD was undertaken separately:

CODING of transcripts or note taking from each themed FGD where the large volume of data from a transcript were turned into descriptive codes.	**CATEGORISATION** of codes into groups for each themed FGD	**DEVELOPING KEY FINDINGS** for each FGD, this was also called 'theme development' as it involved identifying themes that connected the categories for each FGD.

Coding, categorisation and development of initial key findings were undertaken by adult researchers. Youth researchers were involved in analysis through a specific workshop where adult researchers presented the initial analysis (codes, categories and any themes or key findings that were emerging from the data) and youth

researchers undertook 'sense-checking' of initial findings whereby they reviewed the findings with adult researchers to check on the meanings of key concepts, phrases or words in the specific context of their peers (children and young people who are re/integrated after sexual exploitation).

Testing

As part of a process of adapting the tools, the research team proceeded to test the data collection tools, in particular the FGD facilitation plan. For reasons of practicability, it was not possible to pre-test the tool with youth who have exactly the same profile as the participants. However, an in-house workshop was organized in that case. Indeed, we made simulations and adapted the facilitation plan based on feedback from the team, paying particular attention to the Malagasy context and to feedback from the young researchers who have a similar profile to the research participants.

Limitations

Training of youth researchers was undertaken who co-facilitated a three FGDs with research participants from another site, Majunga (a city on the NW coast of Madagascar, known for its sex tourism industry) but, unfortunately due to a break-in at the office in Majunga, the computer holding the data from these FGDs was stolen and the data was lost. It should be noted that, according to the ethical guidelines for this project, the data was kept in locked files so would not be accessible. However, this second research site is not included in the research report.

The small sample group for this research (14) is not representative of children reintegrated after sexual exploitation in Madagascar.

Ethics

Research ethics are concerned with respecting research participants throughout the project, partly by using agreed standards. Ethics standards are also designed to protect researchers and their institutions as well as the good name of research[8]. The ethics strategy for this study detailed the ethical issues that the research team were expecting to face during the course of the research project, outlining the key ethical issues and the research teams agreed response. Training on research ethics was undertaken in May 2018 with researchers and included some testing of the ethical tools, consequently some new tools were developed (such as a Code of Conduct for researchers) and the ethical strategy and tools were adapted accordingly. The ethics strategy was used systematically throughout the study – particularly in data collection where a trained counsellor was on-hand should children want support.

Please note that, accordingly, all names of research participants in this report have been anonymised by use of pseudonyms.

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[8] (Alderson & Morrow, 2011)

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Statistically, Madagascar does not have official data on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) ; as well as children in care in this domain. Despite of that, ECPAT France in Madagascar has already led a research about sexual exploitation on the internet on 2016 which explored how youth use internet and how abusers approach young people. In Madagascar, CSE takes various forms which are different in the capital from the coastal regions. In the capital, CSE takes place by the side of roads or public places, in bars, discotheques or nightclubs, in the massage rooms ; some children are exploited by older men known as "sugar daddies". In many of the coastal towns, the major form of CSE is sexual tourism as Madagascar is very popular with tourists.

Faced with this situation, various local and international organizations such as NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are joining forces in the fight against the sexual exploitation of children. For example, "VONJY" centre (meaning "rescue" or "refuge") which is based in Antananarivo and in Toamasina offers. Boys and girls who are victims of child sexual exploitation care, free of charge, in a single place which includes medical care by doctors; psychosocial care by social workers and judicial support by the officers of the judicial police. ECPAT France is also working in Madagascar, ECPAT is an international network fighting child sexual exploitation. ECPAT works with other NGOs in Madagascar for the reintegration of victims such as Manda, ManaoDe which take care of street children, SOS Village d'Enfants, Tsinjo (Yamuna). Apart from ECPAT, there are also some associations and community workers in the village who act in several areas including raising awareness to fight CSE and youth information about the dangers of CSE.

In the context of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, legal dispositions and political documents have been elaborated by the Madagascar Government. At the international level, Madagascar ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 19 March 1991. With respect to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child (ACRWC): Madagascar submitted its Initial Report on the application of this Charter in 2014. This was followed by the Alternate Report for the African Committee of Experts on Human Rights and Child welfare by the Malagasy Civil Society Organizations in September 2014. Article 27 outlines the protections for children against sexual exploitation. It is stipulated that "States Parties to the Charter undertake to protect the child against any form of exploitation or sexual abuse".

Concerning national texts, Madagascar has its Constitution adopted on December 11th 2010: in its preamble, it declares "endorsing the Conventions on the Rights of the Child ..." which means that these conventions are integrated in the scheduling of Malagasy law and are applicable to Madagascar. Article 137 of the Constitution recognizes the primacy of ratified international instruments over national laws in stating that "Treaties or agreements regularly ratified or approved have their publication an authority superior to that of the laws ...»

Madagascar has four national laws on children's rights and the sexual exploitation of children that include combatting cybercrime and children in conflict with the law and provisions within the Penal Code to combat trafficking in human beings and sexual tourism.

KEY-FINDINGS

Key-findings consist in identifying the main conclusions for each focus group discussion according to the various questions mentioned in the discussion. Please note that all names of research participants have been changed to pseudonyms in this report.

For this research, we have identified three key-findings which are developed successively :

Experiences of stigma and discrimination

- ▪ **Stigma and discrimination made by friends and community**

Girls and young women in the research reported that they were stigmatised and labelled as "prostitutes" by community members and friends (neighbours) who then discriminate against them by rejecting them and talking about them behind their back:

> *"People in our neighbourhood like to meddle in my life and I do not like that thing. After, they gossip with their friends" Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child.*

Neighbours gossip about them, they do not allow them to participate in community activities as they perceive the girls and young women as 'prostitutes' or 'delinquents':

> *"Community is sometimes hypocrites, if you are unemployed, they gossip you; if you have occupation, they approach you", Sahala, 25 years old, married with child.*

> *"About community's trust, they never not trust you even if you are already changed" Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child.*

Friends stigmatize them by giving them stigmatized names: those names always come back when there are small conflicts between them, Chantal, 18 years old and married with a child reports that her friends say *"You're just a bum, a prostitute, a crab"*, likewise 25 year old Tanjona says the following:

> *"No one trusts you even if you have already changed because they always find your dark part. Stereotypes spread around the community and it emphasizes the discrimination made by society. For example, when we are going here for this research, along the way, people stare at us and have afterthoughts about us. It means that stigma and discrimination are always present everywhere we go"*

Tanjona, goes on to explain how the stigma she experiences from being sexually exploited translates as 'dishonour' and a 'lack of dignity' and how, sadly, she is then discriminated by her family, community and even her husband who rejects and isolates her:

> *"I was victim of discrimination made by family (my parents, my siblings and the extended family). If they organize an event, they do not inform me ever because I dishonour the family. If there is a family meeting, I am scolded in front of everyone. It is always like that …. Family members try to hide me because I dishonour them. So, I decided to live my own life and to let life goes on but It increases my problems. Everyone ignores me; I do not know where to live because my family rejects me. Consequently, I date with a delinquent [now her husband] because what I have in mind is to find where I can live and to find how I can get some food. Unfortunately, my husband rejects me too because he knows from society that I am victim of child sexual exploitation. So, I do not have my dignity nor in my family or in the community."*

Many of the girls and young women stated that they are victims of discrimination made by their family because parents are ashamed of the girls' sexual experience, which they see simply as 'bad behaviour' rather than

exploitation. In turn, parents are discriminated by the community who see the girls 'bad behaviour' and think that the parents do not educate their children properly and that is the reason why their children became deviant. As a Malagasy proverb says: *"Zaza ratsy taizan'izay Ray aman-dreniny mihitsy"* translated literally "Children poorly educated by their parents".

Girls and young women said that their parents often do not trust them or their motivation to move on with their lives as, Victoria, 15 years old explains:

> *"I was victim of discrimination made by father. He does not accept that I join ECPAT because he thinks that if I go to ECPAT, there is a special motivation and not really the activities. He said that I follow one boy here and that is why I go here every time when I do not go to school"* Victoria, 15 years old, 7th class.

Girls and young women reported that only the children who are community leader's relatives benefit from income generating activities if opportunities are offered to children. According to research participants, this form of discrimination has bad repercussions on their reintegration because due to their vulnerability and their negative reputation in society; they are seen as 'bad people'. Hence, they and their families are sometimes considered perpetrators of crimes or offenses within the society.

In addition, girls and young women, in our discussions, said that some community leaders ignore their needs while at the same time discriminate against them, in one case, flirting with them instead of helping them

▪ Self-stigma

Young women and girls also reported that they stigmatize themselves especially the young women who are married with children. They are conscious of their perceived faults (disobedience to parents, alcoholism, drug taking, gambling) and thought that because of this kind of behaviour that they have adopted, the community's rejection of them is a normal situation. They reported that they do not study well so they failed their exams; they do not focus on their future, they do not trust God's mercy because they have already done bad things and do not deserve it:

> *"It's a normal situation if I'm rejected by the community because I did something wrong and I do not have any value"* Viviane, 20 years old, married with child.

Girls and young women have also spoke about the effects of stigma and discrimination on their life.

▪ Negative effects of discrimination

The discrimination experienced by young women who were married, particularly from their parents and husbands, had a negative effect on their lives, creating hopelessness and pushing them back into risky behaviour:

> *"I love lottery because I have no activity to do. I go to the bar, I sell sex there because I can find many customers in that place and I can have more income to satisfy my needs (food, clothes…). When I and my husband were separated, I joined the bar to have fun, to forget my worries and to make money."* Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child.

Participants who are already married with children, said they need more support because only their family members accept and understand them. Most of the time, they bear alone their problems because their married life is not stable and their husbands are not aware of their responsibility as father. Consequently, they have to resolve themselves their problems and as a solution they approach NGOs like ECPAT France in Madagascar. As mothers, they feel a responsibility to take care of their children and make an effort to search for money.

- **Positive effects of discrimination**

On the contrary, girls and young women who were studying said that their experience of stigma and discrimination had a positive effect on their lives. Despite of the discrimination they face, they think about ambition in their life: it pushes them to work harder in their alternative income generating activities such as food seller, seller of clothing, hair dresser. Their mentality and behaviour are changed: they preferred to have independent life:

> *"Despite the discrimination I had, I try to live my life, not to depend on anyone"* Princia, 16 years old, 4th class.

They looked for some persuasive strategies to fight against stigma and discrimination: they convinced people to host them because they are able to do good things and they have talents too.

Although the main cause of stigma and discrimination is the girls' and young women's experience of sexual exploitation, they also experience wider forms of stigma and discrimination based on economic situation, based on parent's status (separated parents), based on their level of education or based on social status (orphan).

Since the majority of participants come from underprivileged families and their families are almost all victims of discrimination by extended families based on their standard of living: "My father's family does not love me anymore because we are poor and my father is already dead" Princia, 16 years old, 4th class.

Experiences of acceptance and belonging

Having good relationships is the main sign of belonging and acceptance according to the girls and young women in our discussions. Yet, building a good relationship requires the efforts of themselves and the social workers.

Acceptance was defined by the research participants as "having good relationships", which include the following notions :

- **Being included/belonging to the group**

Girls and young women reported that if people talk to them and listen to them, it means that they belong to the group, that they have their place and that they want the relationship to be maintained:

> *"Sometimes, people do not listen to you or do not look at you anymore. It hurts! But when they consider you, they give you importance, you feel accepted"* Onja, 20 years old, married with child.

According to the girls and young women if people do not allow them to take part in some activities, it means that they do not trust them, that they are not belonging to the group:

> *"Taking part in different activities is really a sign of acceptance and belonging because there was a moment and even until they do not trust me and they do not allow me to participate in activities like a family meeting yet this is not a big party. Everyone is invited, but me I'm not invited"*, Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child*.

- **Being loved and respected**

Girls and young women reported that in a loving relationship, there is no hypocrisy, more consideration and full of love:

> *"Me and Chantal, we are real friends. And if I say being accepted by friends, the relationship must be a relationship between sisters. No hypocrisy and help each other especially in hard times"* **Onja, 20 years old, married with child.**

Girls and young women reported that if people give them respect, it means that they have their value and their dignity; they connect respect with earning an income:

> *"When I work, everyone respects me and comes to visit me, I feel accepted in this case"* **Sento, 26 years old, married with child.**

■ Getting a good job

According to the girls and young women, their reintegration depends on their efforts and, in particular finding a way of earning an income or getting a job which will give them respect from others:

> *"I make efforts to integrate myself into the community. I work hard and look for money so that I become like others"* **Mijoro, 23 years old, married with child.**

■ Acceptance and belonging to a church community

In the research in Madagascar, we noticed a special importance given to the prayers and the church community

Girls and young women in both groups said that prayer helps them to deal with life problems such as discrimination, financial problems and stigma:

> *"During the discrimination that I have encountered, I did not behave badly, I put my life in God's hands because I am Christian"*, **Sento, 26 years old, married with a child.**

As all the research participants were Christians, they appeared to have a strong belief in God. All participants mentioned that they went to the church at least once a week; with one girl mentioning that she is going there every day. They pray and participate in all the cultural and religious activities and this allows them to build relationships with others, to increase their trust in God and to show everyone that they have changed their lives. The girls and young women state that only God controls everything, he can change even judge impossible cases. He does miracles. Therefore, with God, no discouragement; if we put our life in God's hand, he can do things greater than we want:

> *"I strongly believe in God and His miracle"* **Sento, 26 years old, divorced with children.**

Prayer and a connection to the church community appears to help the reintegrated girls in this study to reach their goals, to have a positive attitude and improve their status. They also said that what they can see in their neighbourhood is usually dangerous but in the temple of God, they feel safe and receive a good education, encouragement and good advice that they did not see in their daily lives. They are convinced that religion does not influence young people to do bad things and many things in the world are beyond their control:

> *"I choose Temple of God as safe place because there is nothing bad there. People who are there are very welcoming, they do not do discrimination; they allow me to participate in all activities. They gave me advice"*, **Irinah, 18 years old, in senior high school.**

■ Belonging through helping each other and doing common activities

Girls and young women said they feel safe if people consider them as a family and community member and if they can participate in community activities. Family events include weddings funerals and family meetings:

"We visit our family when there is a party or funerals, we like each other", *Saholy, 16 years old, 1st class.*

Doing common activities help children to feel that they are not rejected and they are among the community's members. With neighbours, they have cleaning and social actions:

"Social action, if there is funeral or if someone got sickness. Also, I do cleaning with them" *Mijoro, married with child, 23 years old.*

With friends, they study together, make a joke, walk around together, look for a job and take a picture together:

"I have two friends (girl and boy), we write poems, we send messages (we talk with friends and the big family via message, we wonder about news, how they are doing), no conflicts" *Princia, 16 years old, 4th class.*

Helping each other facilitates children to experience safety because they do not bear alone their problems. They received much kind of supports from different group of people. For example, if some people are getting sick or hospitalized, their neighbours have to help them according to their needs. They received advice and encouragement from neighbours and friends; they got financial, psychological and material support from family.

Experiences of support and protection strategies

Reintegrated girls experienced support from community leaders, teachers, family and NGOs that enabled them to feel safe. In addition, girls make personal efforts to have a peaceful life; as strategies, they protect themselves and avoid going to dangerous places in the community.

▪ Support from community leaders

Half of the research participants reported being treated well by community leaders who they identified as elected officials and the police (who are usually men, aged between 40 and 60 years old). The girls and young women defined 'being treated well' as officials supporting them in their personal development and their reintegration, allowing them to participate in any community projects such as a vaccination programs and health awareness campaigns. As girls and young women are from disadvantaged families, community leaders gave them the opportunity to participate in state-sponsored income activities such as cleaning up the canals, leaders also facilitated birth registration for their children or other official documents the young women needed. Young women who were married with children of their own found that the official papers really helped them to complete the administrative processes required for work or marriage. They do not have to go back and forth to get those documents:

"If I have to prepare administrative paper, I just go to the office, stand in line and wait for my turn. I finish it once, no need to come back" *Chantal, 18 years old, married with a child.*

A minority of participants reported that community leaders are not so supportive when they cannot see a direct interest for them or their community.

▪ Support from family

According to the discussions we had with them, children received more support from their family than community: nearly two thirds of children got advice from their family because family members are emotionally closer to them than neighbours. Girls reported that nuclear family such as parents or siblings are more supportive than extended

families as they do not reject them even if they do mistakes. When asked about who accepts them most, 15 years old *Mahatony e*xplains her answer:

> *"I choose my mum because she always loves me even if I do something bad. She gives me advice and never scolds or rejects me."*

- ## **Support from peers**

Young women who are already married expressed that they are not able to develop friendships or intimate relationships with others, they stated that only those who have been sexually exploited can understand them. There is a strong bond between themselves and their friends who have been sexually exploited due to their shared experience of exploitation and marginalization and because of having similar living arrangements:

> *"I do not develop a friendship with other people except those who have the same case as me because they listen to me and understand me"* Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child.

> *"The psychological support that my friends give me relieves my suffering and allows me to say that I am not rejected by them, that I belong to their group, that I am not different"*, *Viviane, 20 years old, married with child.*

The girls reported that they told each other their secrets and did not trust others. This type of treatment makes it difficult for reintegration because girls and young women do not trust people anymore.

- ## **Support from teachers**

Research participants, who are all attending school, reported that teachers help them to solve their problems at school, including: lack of school fees and school supplies. Some teachers continue to teach girls even if they have not paid their school fees, give lessons to them if needed:

> *"Yes, I like our teacher of life and earth science, a gentleman, he teaches well. Sometimes if I cannot attend class, he gives me lesson and try to explain what I missed"*, *Saholy, 16 years old, 1st year of high school.*

This kind of support facilitates the reintegration of children into school because, in principle, students who do not pay the fees at the right time should leave school, but thanks to the teacher's extra support, they can continue their studies despite this problem. This situation can lead to discrimination at school, but teachers play the role of peacemaker to avoid it:

> *"I speak to my teacher if I argue with my classmates and it is her responsibility to build peace"*, *Victoria, 15 years old, 7th class.*

Teachers explain the lesson in detail so the child victims can understand like the other pupils because, in general, reintegrated children have low education level. Teachers as educators remind parent's responsibility to their children:

> *"If I have problem at school, I go to the office and talk to the supervisor, for example about the school-fees, they summon my parents and seek solutions together"*, *Irinah, 18 years old, in senior high school.*

- ## **Support from social workers**

The girls and young women said that social workers help them to improve their lives: they change their behaviour through education, counselling and training provided by social workers. Research participants

reported that, as a result, family members trust their daughters. That they have really changed because they have income-generating activities or, are busy with a training program. Before, family members were ashamed of the girls and young women but thanks to this process, their success is a pride for the family. As a result, the girls and young women will have their dignity and value. Family and community give them respect.

Social workers give advice and affection as *Tanjona* explains when asked to choose a person who accepts her most:

> *"I choose our educator as accepting person because she is very welcome and gives me affection, she can replace my mother. When I talked something to her, I cried but she is very empathic and she feels what I bear, she became very close to me. The things that I never got from my mum, she gives it to me. And when I had problems, I always come to her."*

Different protection strategies have been identify in this research :

- ## **Building self-worth**

Girls and young women, who were attending school, participated in programs to build their self-esteem and reported feelings of self-love and self-worth so that they do not blame themselves of being sexually exploited and of having no dignity:

> *"Thanks to the program on self-esteem, I know my personality and I know others. I can develop relationship with them"*, Saholy, 16 years old, 1st year in high school.

Consequently, they know themselves better: their qualities and capacities and can develop their talents. They can develop stronger friendships and are able to give advice to their friends. They develop goals for their lives and adopt a positive attitude that enables them to reach their goals (for example: to get diploma). They are able to manage their feelings, find solutions to their problems themselves and are able to keep self-control even during complex situations:

"Thanks to the self-esteem program, I can master my feelings", Princia, 16 years old, 4th class.

- ## **Avoidance**

Girls and young women from both groups said they adopted strategies to protect themselves. They avoid going to places that can be dangerous for them or young people in general (in the corridors, bars, railways, ghettos, undergrowth, public places, secret places where people cultivate drugs). In these places, there is a lot of abuse and delinquency because most of the persons who are there are boys. They emotionally, sexually and physically abuse girls by kissing them or touching the intimate parts of their bodies. In addition, children avoid going to these places because if they go, the police can accuse them of doing something wrong and finally arrest them, they are treated as bad people as the aggressors. Most of them underline that if they go there, they will be influenced by someone's bad behaviour (prostitution, lotteries that lead to a thief, sexual exploitation and sexual diseases).

- ## **Find a safe place to have a peaceful life**

To have a peaceful life, far from discrimination and stigma, children sought a safe and beautiful place to relieve their suffering from discrimination and stigma. They think that there is no discrimination and stigma in this place because no one knows their past, their history and does not stigmatize them.

"I choose Majunga as safe place because the people who are there are very welcoming and do not discriminate. They do not know anything about me: my past and all of my life. They taught me a lot of things because I went there for a work. I did not feel marginalized anymore. Everyone is kind and helps me to progress in life. Not like what I saw here in Tana [Antananarivo]" **Tanjona, 25 years old, married with child.**

CONCLUSION

Girls and young women explained that they are stigmatised by their experience of sexual abuse and exploitation by being labelled as prostitutes and delinquents who translated for their families in particular as 'dishonour' and a 'lack of dignity'. Consequently, many of the girls and young women report that their parents seem to be ashamed of them, and see their experience of being a victim of sexual abuse simply as 'bad behaviour'.

In some situations, girls and young women said they experienced wider forms of stigma and discrimination based on their economic situation, their parent's status (as separated), on their level of education or on their status as an 'orphan' - which may be connected with the fact that many of the girls have been rejected by their family. In addition, young women who are married with children are particularly prone to self-stigmatisation – seeing the community's rejection of them as an acceptable and normal situation.

The rejection and criticism the girls and young women experience means they tend to bear their problems alone and results in feelings of hopelessness and, in some cases, has pushed them back into risky behaviour. Alternatively, to escape, some girls dream of a 'safe and beautiful' place where no-one knows their past. Many girls and young women said that prayer helps them to deal with their problems and church communities made the girls and young women feel safe. The church community is a place where they felt they receive encouragement and good advice that they do not see in their daily lives.

In addition, programs that build their self-esteem appear to be key to girls' and young women's reintegration where they report that through feelings of self-love and self-worth they no longer blame themselves for their own abuse. For some girls and young women, their experience of discrimination has galvanised them to be more ambitious, pushing them to work harder in their income generating activities.

Acceptance was defined by the research participants as "having good relationships" which meant being included, being loved (by peers) and being respected which they connected to earning a good income. Having good relationships also appears to be connected to the support received by the girls and young women from community leaders that enabled them to participate in community projects such as a vaccination programs, health awareness campaigns or income generating community activities. Support from peers who had been sexually exploited was closely connected to the concept of acceptance as the girls and young women talked about this group as the only ones who can understand them.

Support from officials and NGO personal was quite practical. It includes teachers giving extra time or lessons to the girls who had fallen behind in their studies or continuing to teach them even if they had not paid their school fees. Social workers helping them to improve their lives and change their behaviour, offering counselling and training on income generation activities. And also, community leaders, such as elected officials and police, who facilitate birth registration for their children or other official documents the young women need.

Girls and young women also talked about acceptance and belonging as 'feeling safe' and said that they feel safe if people consider them as a family or community member. This appeared to be achieved when girls and young women took part in community activities such as cleaning or social action campaigns, neighbours would start to give them advice and encouragement. With family, the girls and young women explained that they felt accepted when they were invited to family weddings, funerals or meetings and that it was family, parents and siblings in general but particularly mothers, who provide the majority of psychological and material support. Girls and young women said that this support – from friends, family and community enabled them to experience 'safety' (and acceptance) because they do not bear their problems alone.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A workshop with research participants identified a number of challenges that need to be overcome to improve and facilitate children's reintegration, recommendations have been formulated for each stakeholder according to the challenges mentioned by the participants. It should be noted that during the recommendations workshop, we also tried to identify what actions should be taken for each challenge.

CHALLENGE 1   **Problems at School: lack of school fees, school supplies and discrimination at school**

Reintegration programs, in collaboration with parents, should include regular payment of school fees and provide school supplies to reintegrated children.

Reintegration programs should include provision of dietary supplements to fight against undernourishment, specially, for children or youth in vocational training.

Reintegration providers should intervene, talking to teachers, and directors, to fight against discriminatory practice at school...

Reintegration services, should mobilize community leaders in order they run sensitization programs with parents of reintegrated children to reinforce the importance of sending their children to school.

CHALLENGE 2 **Lack of support from family regarding stigma and discrimination**

Reintegration practitioners should make a home visits to inform the victims' families about their rights and dignity and how to avoid discrimination, to explain how the reintegration program works, in particular how families can support children with their education.

Reintegration practitioners should run workshop on education and parenthood towards parents.

CHALLENGE 3 **Child sexual exploitation victims' bad behavior or difficulties in reintegration**

Reintegration practitioners must give psychological support to the victims of child sexual exploitation

Reintegration practitioners must provide children's care: give advice, encourage them, give affection and trust them, listen to them, give them responsibility and let them to participate in all the activities

Reintegration practitioners must supervise children in their daily life and keep a follow up after reintegration (home visit, etc.)

Reintegration program should include moral education, self-esteem program, and life skills to help victims to build good relationship between them and educators, and others.

State should help reintegration practitioners with standards of reintegration of child sexual exploitation victims

Reintegration practitioners should organize multidisciplinary meetings in order to discuss about cases and provide adequate services.

CHALLENGE 4 **Stereotypes, social prejudgment lead to social mistrust, stigma and discrimination from communities and self-stigma**

Sensitization programs and campaigns (Radio or TV) should be organized at school and in communities to fight against discrimination and stigma of children victims of child sexual abuse. Those programs should inform community leaders, and population about child sexual exploitation and change their belief about it;

Reintegration practitioner should encourage Child victims to involve in reintegration program by participating in event on sensitization, speak and share their own experience to their peers, through creative and adapted tools (dance, testimonies, etc);

Reintegration practitioners must advise the victim: do not focus on their past but to think about their future, do not do self-stigma because they are already received support and education, follow self-esteem program to be able to formulate a new challenge in their life.

Reintegration practitioners should orient children in order they can choose a project suitable for them, and accompany them in adequacy professional reintegration and training

They should do regular supervision to follow up their training evolution, their needs, and/or their problems and intervene towards the training place, if necessary

Reintegration practitioners should also help the youth to look for a safe and good place to set up their business or find a job. They should help the child to sign a contract, according to the social law and underline the importance of respecting confidentiality of the child's story (to avoid stigma and discrimination and predjugment and emphasize equal treatment of all workers). They can share safe place, which whom they have already worked with.

Reintegration practitioners must propose an income activity to the children: give them funds to set up a project about sales because most of them are not followed school reintegration but professional reintegration and they do not master the activity that employees ask them to do. Sales activity is a rapid income activity, no need more preparation, young people can be with their children every time.

Reintegration practitioners must supervise children in their income activity: 3 years after the project was set up, keep the contact with the youth and define respective engagements (contract or other forms). Practitioners should specially follow up the funds, or materials provided for the youth in order to check their utilization, they can provide budget management trainings. Micro-credit projects could be a really good opportunities for the youth.

Reintegration practitioner should keep a follow up, once the youth is in a job or a business, and they should help them financially for the 3 first months.

Reintegration practitioners should train the staff members about the discrimination and stigma at the place of work; it should be held in the company because the victim is found there and secret must not be published, develop children's rights/human dignity/ laws about child labour, reserve 2hours per month during the period of the children's training, the workshop should be facilitated by the director of the company and ECPAT Team.

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