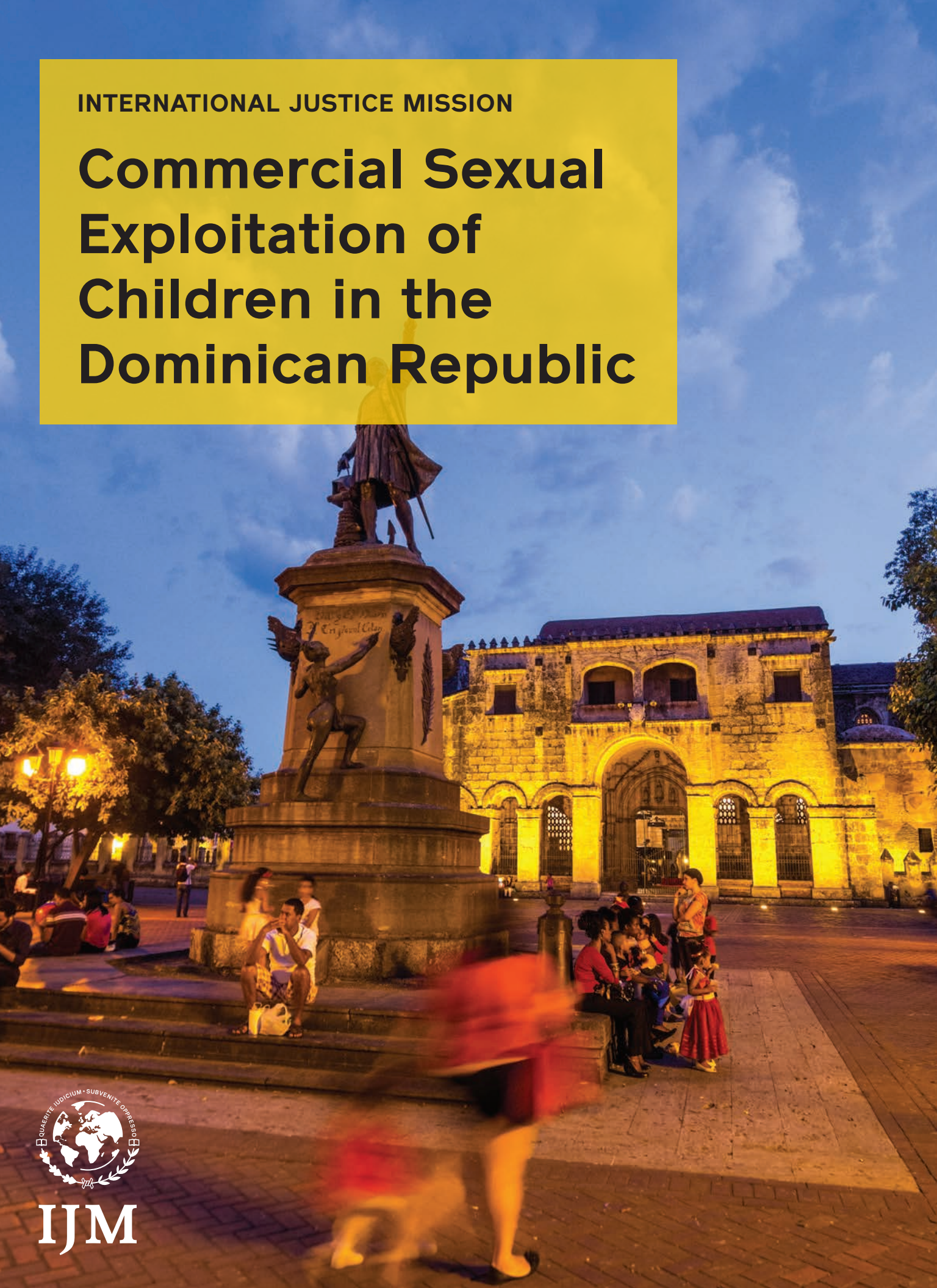


INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

# Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Dominican Republic



IJM



**IJM**

International Justice Mission

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation  
of Children in the Dominican Republic**

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## Acronyms

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>CSE</b>      | Commercial Sexual Exploitation  |
| <b>CSEC</b>     | Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children  |
| <b>CSW</b>      | Commercial Sex Worker   |
| <b>DOP</b>      | Dominican Peso  |
| <b>DR</b>       | Dominican Republic  |
| <b>ECPAT</b>    | Elimination of Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes |
| <b>IJM</b>      | International Justice Mission   |
| <b>ILO</b>      | International Labor Organization  |
| <b>IOM</b>      | International Organization for Migration  |
| <b>NGO</b>      | Non-Governmental Organization   |
| <b>PD&amp;E</b> | Program Design and Evaluation   |
| <b>PJS</b>      | Public Justice System   |
| <b>TIP</b>      | Trafficking in Persons  |
| <b>UNICEF</b>   | United Nations Children's Fund  |
| <b>USD</b>      | United States Dollar  |

### Data Field/Indicator Acronyms:

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>IPMBO</b> | Intermediary, Pimp, Madam, Brothel/Establishment Owner/Manager                 |
| <b>NMC</b>   | 'Niñas Menores Confirmadas'—Young Minors Confirmed (under age 14)              |
| <b>NMO</b>   | 'Niñas Menores Observadas'—Young Minors Observed (under age 14)                |
| <b>MC</b>    | 'Menores Confirmadas'—Minors Confirmed (all under age 18)                      |
| <b>MO</b>    | 'Menores Observadas'—Total Number of Minors Observed (under age 18)            |
| <b>TTS</b>   | 'Número Total de Trabajadoras Sexuales'—Total Number of Commercial Sex Workers |



# Key Definitions

**Commercial sex worker (CSW):** Any individual, male or female, who exchanges sex for money or other valuable goods

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC):** As created and agreed upon by the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, CSEC includes any sexual abuse by an adult of a child, and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. CSEC includes the prostitution of children, child pornography, child sex tourism, and other forms of transactional sex where a child engages in sexual activities to have key needs fulfilled, such as food, shelter, or access to education. CSEC also includes forms of transactional sex where the sexual abuse of children is not stopped or reported by household members, due to benefits derived by the household from the perpetrator. Within the context of the Dominican Republic, this phrase encompasses the legislatively defined crimes of human trafficking, including sex tourism (Law 137-03), commercial sexual exploitation of minors (Law 136-06, Art. 410; *see also* Criminal Code Art. 351-2, ¶ 2), and child pornography (Law 136-06, Art. 25; *see also* Criminal Code Art. 351-2, ¶2).

**Adult:** Any person 18 years old or older

**Minor:** Any person 17 years old or younger

**Young minor:** Any person 14 years old or younger (for purposes of this assessment)

**Older minor:** Any person 15 to 17 years old (for purposes of this assessment)

**Observed:** “Eyes on,” meaning the investigator physically viewed the person

**Confirmed:** Receipt of information or evidence that the individual in commercial sexual exploitation is a minor. Sufficient evidence includes the individual providing date of birth, age, year of quinceñera (15th birthday), or date of graduation; it may also include the intermediary/pimp/madam/brothel owner stating the individual’s age.

**Promised:** A(n) intermediary/pimp/madam/brothel owner has indicated they can “get” or “bring” someone for sexual exploitation; once the investigator physically observes the person, she/he becomes “observed.” Investigators were instructed to consistently ask for ‘many’ girls—without specifying a number.

**Intermediary:** Any third party that offers services between the pimp/madam and the person soliciting sex (the undercover investigator for this assessment). Typically the intermediary offers some added value to the transaction that may not be possible by direct trading or at least receives a benefit for his/her services.

**Pimp:** Any male agent for CSWs who collects part of their earnings

**Madam:** Any female agent for CSWs who collects part of their earnings

**Brothel owner:** The owner or manager of a brothel, which for the purposes of this assessment is defined as any physical establishment that sells sex as its primary business purpose or receives a significant source of revenue from such activity.

**Motoconcho:** Local Dominican term for motorcycle driver; often these drivers are intermediaries or sources of information, such as in which locations commercial sex is sold.

**Evidence indicating third-party exploitation:** Established by observing *any one* of the following conditions: presence of pimp/intermediary/brothel owner/madam, someone other than CSW handles the payment, someone other than solely the CSW makes decision on CSW providing services, evidence of ‘vulnerability,’ works for a brothel/bar/disco/night club with CSE sold from the establishment or within a group of CSWs where one CSW speaks for the group.

**Presence of intermediary/pimp/madam/brothel owner:** One of these four is physically present for the transaction.

**To handle the payment:** To negotiate or approve the transaction or receive a portion or all of the money for the transaction if a CSW does not handle the payment alone.

**To make the decision on providing services:** To decide whether services will be provided or not if the CSW has limited or no decision-making authority as to whether she/he proceeds with the transaction.

**Evidence of vulnerability:** Established by observing any one of the following conditions: evidence of substance abuse (narcotics, injection drugs, alcohol, etc.), testimony from CSW about coercion/deception, evidence of fear, and presence of disabilities.

**Evidence of fear:** Established by observing the CSW looking distressed, afraid, worried, skittish, very alert, etc.

**Disabilities:** Any long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder an individual's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>1</sup> (for the purposes of this study includes deformities, missing limbs, mental illness, deafness, blindness, cognitive impairment, etc.).

**Coercion:** The practice of forcing another person to act in an involuntary manner by use of intimidation or threats or some other form of pressure or force. Coercion involves a set of actions used as leverage to force the victim to act in a way contrary to their own interests. Coercion may involve the actual infliction of physical pain, injury or psychological harm in order to enhance the credibility of a threat. The threat of further harm may lead to the cooperation or obedience of the person being coerced.

**Deception:** Acts to spread beliefs that are not true or are not the whole truth. Deception itself is intentionally managing verbal and/or nonverbal messages so that the victim will believe something that the intermediary/pimp/madam/brothel owner knows is false. The five primary forms of deception are: lies (making up information or giving information that is the opposite or very different from the truth), equivocations (making an indirect, ambiguous, or contradictory statement), concealments (omitting information that is important or relevant to the given context or engaging in behavior that helps hide relevant information), exaggerations (overstatement or stretching the truth to a degree), or understatements (minimization or downplaying aspects of the truth).

**Payment purpose:** The activities or services the payment included (sexual services with the CSW, leaving the premises with the CSW, payment to the establishment or pimp, etc.).

**Presence of foreigners:** Non-Dominican persons are physically observed in the establishment, non-establishment, or close area (if assessing a location or source previously unmapped).

**Presence of police:** Uniformed police are physically observed in or around the establishment, non-establishment, or close area (if assessing a location or source previously unmapped). Intent is to document that police are aware of the exploitation around them.

**Presence of security guards/bouncers:** Investigators physically observed personnel providing security or regulating entry outside an establishment or around a pimp/madam/brothel owner either inside the establishment or within a non-establishment.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined within the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of women and girls in the Dominican Republic (DR) is a substantial problem. Understanding the current nature and scale of this phenomenon is critical to an effective response. An ILO study in 2003 reported that the total number of people in prostitution in the country was between 25,000 and 35,000, an estimated 60% of whom had entered the industry as minors. Other studies over the past 15 years have consistently reported high numbers of children being exploited in this industry; however, there has been no study in recent years measuring real time the prevalence of minors currently engaged in CSE in the DR. In late 2013, International Justice Mission (IJM) began working alongside the Dominican government in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). This study, conducted in 2014, aimed to fill this research gap with a statistically significant measurement, as well as to provide a sound launching point from which to assess the effectiveness of joint interventions to address CSEC by the Dominican government and IJM in the coming years.

## Methodology

After consultation with a variety of government and non-governmental stakeholders, IJM investigators conducted an initial mapping exercise of all locations where commercial sexual exploitation was consistently known to occur across 20 towns in the DR. In total, 233 establishments (bars, brothels, car washes, etc.) and 51 non-establishments (streets, beaches, parks, etc.) were mapped. Due to the nature of CSE in the DR, the study team integrated a traditional establishment-based method and a more innovative, street-based method which involved “catchment areas” around the randomly selected locations. Aiming for a statistically significant sample size, by the end of the study, data collectors had surveyed 206 randomly selected locations, including 150 establishments and 56 distinct non-establishments. Data collectors gathered both quantitative and qualitative information on the nature and prevalence of minors in commercial sexual exploitation, through direct observation and interactions with adults in the commercial sex industry, children in CSE, pimps and madams, and other intermediaries.

## Results

The prevalence of CSEC in the targeted areas of the Dominican Republic was 10.0%. Prevalence of CSEC was higher in parks, beaches, and street areas, where 23.9% —or nearly one in every four individuals—observed were under 18. In

establishments, such as bars, clubs, and car washes, 5.8%—or one in twenty—of all commercial sex workers were under 18. A significant majority (92.8%) of these minors in CSE were Dominican. The overwhelming majority of minors found engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in the Dominican Republic were between the ages of 15 and 17. This study found very few minors below the age of 14 (0.6%).

Overall, compared to the total number of sex workers observed, minors were observed more frequently in non-establishment locations. The majority of minor victims of commercial sexual exploitation observed in streets, parks, and beaches had no observable third party present with them at the time of data collection who was evidently profiting from their activities. An estimated 64.1% of the minors observed in CSE exhibited no observable indications of third-party exploitation. However, pimps, madams, and other intermediaries routinely offered to deliver minors from other locations. In 90% of places where minors could not be observed, investigators were ‘promised’ minors. In terms of establishment-based CSE, the majority takes place informally in bars, clubs, and known ‘meeting places,’ where clients can consistently find and make contact with adult CSWs and minors in CSE.

Both those who exploit and sell minors for CSE and those who buy sex with minors engaged in CSE are perpetrators of crimes under Dominican law. The perpetrators observed selling children for CSE during this study were mostly opportunistic criminals, rather than organized criminal networks. The majority were Dominican. Furthermore, foreigners suspected to be sex customers were present in 23.3% of locations where commercial sex workers were present and in 25.0% of locations where minors in CSE were observed, indicating that the majority of CSE buyers are Dominican as well. The majority (70.5%) of the foreigners were observed in nine locations in the towns of Bavaro, Boca Chica, Cabarete, Juan Dolio, and Sosua. The overwhelming majority of foreigners observed were “white Americans” or “other whites.” Police were present in 12.6% of locations surveyed in the study, and when present, they did not appear to make any efforts to enforce laws against CSEC, even though a reasonable observer could see minors engaging with adults.

## Research Recommendations

The scope of this study leaves room for further research. First, one lacking element surrounding the prevalence figures is a full spectrum understanding of the minors’ circumstances leading up to and around their engagement in commercial sexual exploitation. Second, researchers should investigate whether the sexual exploitation of male children is occurring in the Dominican Republic and if so, should further research the scale and nature of that phenomenon, perhaps using a respondent driven sampling methodology. Third, exploring the circumstances of those minors engaged in commercial sexual exploitation with no observable third party was beyond the scope of this study. More in-depth qualitative research involving interviews with these minors would uncover more information about their situations, the nature and extent of third-party exploitation, and any non-observable psychologically manipulative tactics exerted by pimps, madams, and other intermediaries. All three of these are critical research gaps for both public justice system officials and other service providers in designing and implementing effective prevention, deterrence, and aftercare strategies and programs.

The findings also highlighted parts of the phenomenon that went beyond the remit of this study. First, the results strongly suggest the existence of a robust hotel and cabaña industry that provides rooms for adults to use to engage in sexual activity with minors. Interviews or further investigation with a variety of business owners, targeted particularly towards local, small hotels and cabañas, would help provide information to policymakers and those entities establishing regulations on the business and tourism sector about the connection and involvement of the hotel and bar industries in facilitation or provision of an enabling environment for commercial sexual exploitation. Second, the original scoping and stakeholder assessment indicated a higher number of Haitian girls engaged in CSEC in the Dominican Republic than what the data collectors observed in this study. Further research along the Haitian border would help resolve this discrepancy. Lastly, given the low percentage of foreigners present in places where CSE and CSEC were happening, additional research in the form of interviews of Dominican “johns” should be conducted to better understand the attitudes, motivations, perceptions, and common behaviors of men who buy sex from CSWs and in particular, with minors.

# 1 Introduction

In late 2013, International Justice Mission began working alongside the Dominican government in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children. IJM conducted this study to document the nature and scale of this crime in order to inform strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Dominican justice system's response.

## 1.1 Trafficking in the Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic (DR), girls and women are exploited in the commercial sex industry in the bars, streets, and beaches of tourist towns, as well as the main inland towns.<sup>2</sup> Studies over the past 15 years have consistently reported high numbers of children being exploited in the commercial sex industry. In 2003, the ILO reported that the total number of sex workers in the DR ranged between 25,000 and 35,000, an estimated 60% of whom had entered the industry as minors.<sup>3</sup> The same study reported that 20% of CSEC survivors did not have fathers and 60% did not attend school. In 2008, UNICEF published a study examining the reach and characteristics of CSEC in 11 different provinces, concluding that the majority of active adult sex workers entered the industry as minors.<sup>4</sup>

The DR is also a source country for international sex trafficking. A 2013 report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), ranked the DR as the country with the third fastest growth rate in the world of human trafficking. The State Department's 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report cites research claiming that thousands of Dominican women are being exploited in the Caribbean, Europe, South America, the Middle East, and the United States. A 2011 Assessment by Chemonics International concluded that the DR was the world's fourth largest exporter of prostitutes, behind Brazil, Thailand, and the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

CSEC in the DR occurs through both organized networks and individual perpetrators.<sup>6</sup> The latter is fueled in part by a 'self-organizing' sex tourism industry based on "informal services at low cost, friend suggestions and a network of connections mediated by the locals."<sup>7</sup> ECPAT notes that pimps and intermediaries benefit economically by connecting children to the clients, perpetuating an underground form of tourism. Other means of engaging with children for sexual activities include direct contact in public spaces, as well as through internet and social media.<sup>8</sup>

UNFPA and ECPAT report that prevailing cultural attitudes toward CSEC include high levels of tolerance and cultural acceptance, "especially towards teenagers since they can represent a form of income or an image that attracts tourists who bring money."<sup>9</sup> In a 2008 study surveying social tolerance of CSEC in Central America and the DR, 95% of interviewees were aware of the existence of sexual exploitation. A total of 28.1% said they knew of places with child prostitution; however, 24.8% of the people questioned stated that they would not report the situation to authorities due largely to the lack of trust in the judicial system.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Department of State's 2014 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, undocumented or stateless persons of Haitian descent in the country are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>11</sup> The porous border between Haiti and the DR enables the trafficking and smuggling of thousands of undocumented children.<sup>12</sup> Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, IOM estimated that an additional 130,000 displaced and undocumented Haitians had migrated to the DR.<sup>13</sup> Other

migrant groups include *restavèks*—poor Haitian children living with wealthier families—the majority of whom are known to be laboring as domestic servants under harsh conditions.<sup>14</sup>

Reports from the U.S. Department of Labor (2012), USAID (2011), and the U.S. Department of State (2009) find that the lack of access to proper documentation is a critical barrier in combating child labor and CSEC. The Dominican government recognizes citizenship by birth, “except children born to diplomats, to those who are ‘in transit,’ or to parents who are illegally in the country.”<sup>15</sup> Undocumented children face challenges in accessing primary public education and pursuing higher education, making children more vulnerable to labor exploitation. Because undocumented children cannot meet the birth certificate requirement for obtaining a high school diploma, they face “limited access to formal sector jobs at the legal working age, which increases their vulnerability of early entry into the worst forms of child labor.”<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2 The Dominican Government’s Response to CSEC

The Dominican government continues to make incremental efforts in protecting minors against exploitation and abuse. The 2014 TIP Report references the government’s efforts to reduce tourist demands for commercial sex acts.<sup>17</sup> In October 2013, the government implemented a new program training immigration authorities to deny entry to visitors who had been convicted of child sex tourism and other sex crimes.<sup>18</sup> Since 2013, the Dominican government has measurably amplified law enforcement efforts to prosecute and convict perpetrators of human trafficking. During the 2014 TIP reporting period, authorities investigated at least 58 potential trafficking cases, initiated 24 sex trafficking prosecutions and convicted 6 sex traffickers with sentences ranging from 2-15 years.<sup>19</sup>

The Dominican government has both a National Plan to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2006-2016) and an Action Plan for the Eradication of Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents.<sup>20</sup> Programa Progresando (“Making Progress”) is a rights-based program which addresses the Millennium Development Goals at the local level by offering socioeconomic opportunities to the parents of children at risk for CSEC.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the Attorney General’s Office established a public awareness campaign against sexual exploitation and launched a national hotline for reporting human trafficking cases and gender-based violence.<sup>22</sup> In 2013, UNICEF, the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), and the Association of Hotels and Tourism in the DR signed an inter-institutional agreement implementing the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children of Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.<sup>23</sup> Articles within the Code include: supporting police and private initiatives to prevent and eradicate child sex trafficking and requiring personnel to be aware of and act to prevent the exploitation of minors.<sup>24</sup>

## 1.3 CSEC and the Law in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican government has not criminalized commercial sexual activity by minors: the law is silent with respect to adults and, as a result, permits it. Dominican law, however, does criminalize pimping (*proxenetismo*), which occurs when a person financially benefits from the exploitation, commercialization or defrauding of another person in a sexual manner (Dominican Criminal Code, Art. 334). The DR’s domestic legal framework also contains specific provisions through its comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation, Law 137-03, which addresses and prohibits both the smuggling of aliens and trafficking of persons.<sup>25</sup> Penalties for the sexual abuse of children include 15 to 20 years’ imprisonment and fines of several thousand dollars.<sup>26</sup> The DR’s new 2010 Constitution specifically prohibits all forms of “slavery, servitude, human trafficking, and smuggling of persons.”<sup>27</sup> Other laws criminalize the creation, use of, and/or dissemination of pornography of minors.<sup>28</sup>

In the framework of international law, the DR ratified the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. In 2004, the DR adopted a new Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents through Law 136-03 (“Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes”).<sup>29</sup> The Code prohibits compensation for the transfer of a child “for the purposes of forced labor; commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography; or other degrading activities.”<sup>30</sup>

## 1.4 IJM in the Dominican Republic

### 1.4.1 Preliminary Assessment of CSEC in the Dominican Republic

IJM conducted preliminary investigations into the trafficking of minors in the DR in 2012, leading a study in early 2013 to assess the need and viability of an IJM presence in the country. During the assessment, the study team met with key Dominican government officials, as well as NGOs, local business people, and local informants, to gain insights into the prevailing attitudes and contributing factors of CSEC in the DR. All parties stated that minors are commonly trafficked and exploited for sex in the DR. U.S. officials stationed in the DR spoke about the indifference and the lack of police action in the matter. At the same time, DR government officials and police leadership verbally expressed a strong desire to fight CSEC but cited competing priorities and lack of resources, personnel, equipment, and training to adequately address the issue.

The team found that minors involved in commercial sexual exploitation in the DR are not primarily found in brothels, but they could be easily found through pimps and vehicle operators. In the preliminary assessment, IJM found girls being openly prostituted by pimps and intermediaries in streets, parks, and beaches in all assessed locations. The victims ranged between the ages of 14 and 17. Based on conversations with minors and locals, the team found that poverty and financial need were the driving forces for CSEC. Both Dominican and Haitian girls seeking income admitted that they were deceived regarding employment and income possibilities. Others reported engaging in this lifestyle out of financial need.

Inquiries to intermediaries during the assessment led in every case to minors being identified or promised. Intermediaries ranged from casual and seasonal workers to more organized pimps, many of whom were ‘motoconchos’—motor-bike taxi drivers—who consistently offered to provide minors for sexual exploitation.

IJM’s assessment team also found a concentration of ‘cabañas’—auto-motels—in Santo Domingo, Santiago de los Caballeros, and coastal towns, where customers pay by the hour. These motels are used by CSEC perpetrators who take advantage of the lack of law enforcement in these locations. As in most tourist destinations, there are also apartments available for rent by the week in all coastal towns. Interviews confirmed that pimps and sex workers use these apartments and are not monitored by law enforcement.

The team concluded that the prevalence of CSEC in the DR is high and that, given the small areas where CSEC is occurring, rescue operations and arrests would have a relatively swift impact on the trafficking of minors in the country.

### 1.4.2 IJM Dominican Republic

IJM subsequently opened an office in the DR in October 2013 with the purpose of assisting Dominican authorities in combating CSEC by rescuing victims, bringing criminals to justice, and providing longer-term aftercare support to ensure the restoration of survivors. IJM Dominican Republic was granted legal registration to operate as a non-profit in the DR in May 2014.

During 2013 and 2014 the IJM team met with organizations in the DR working to combat CSEC or providing services to victims and survivors, as well as with key government officials. These included the Public Ministry’s Anti-Trafficking Unit (established in 2013), the National Police’s Anti-Trafficking Department, the nation’s Child Welfare Agency (CONANI), and numerous non-profit organizations. These organizations provided valuable information about the nature of CSEC in the country, as well as lists of locations where they believed that minors were being exploited. IJM team members also visited two dozen cities in the country to visit potential sites of exploitation. This information contributed to the mapping exercise prior to this study.



## 1.5 Study Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of victims of CSEC in target areas of the Dominican Republic. To accomplish this, the objectives were:

1. To capture the scale of CSEC in establishments versus non-establishments;
2. To identify the locations where minors are currently being exploited;
3. To determine the ‘modes’ or methods by which trafficking takes place; and
4. To conduct an initial analysis on the perpetrators of this crime.

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<sup>2</sup> Defense for Children, Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism (ECPAT Netherlands, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Bente Sorensen and Maria Cecilia Claramunt, Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Central America, Panama and Dominican Republic. Synthesis Report. (ILO/IPEC, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Estudio Cualitativo sobre Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes en República Dominicana: Resultados Preliminares (UNICEF, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Chemonics International, Assessment Report of Anti-Trafficking in Persons in the Dominican Republic.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF Estudio Cualitativo sobre Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes en República Dominicana.

<sup>7</sup> Bente Sorensen and Maria Cecilia Claramunt, Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Central America, Panama and Dominican Republic. Synthesis Report. (ILO/IPEC, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Defense for Children, Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Tourism.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “ILO and UNICEF reveal tolerance towards sexual exploitation of children in the DR,” Child Protection: Dominican Republic, accessed September 17, 2014

<sup>11</sup> Department of State, 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, Rep. (2014).

<sup>12</sup> COHA, “Combating Human Trafficking in the Western Hemisphere: The Need for Increased NGO Involvement,” Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), last modified July 27, 2010, accessed September 22, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State, 2011 Human Rights Reports: Dominican Republic, Rep. (2011).

<sup>14</sup> Chemonics International, Assessment Report of Anti-Trafficking in Persons in the Dominican Republic.

<sup>15</sup> Department of State, 2010 Human Rights Reports: Dominican Republic, Rep. (2010).

<sup>16</sup> Department of Labor, 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, Dominican Republic, Rep. (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Department of State, 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, Rep. (2014).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Labor, 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, Dominican Republic, Rep. (2011).

<sup>21</sup> Department of Labor, 2008 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, Dominican Republic, Rep. (2007).

<sup>22</sup> Department of State, 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report, Rep. (2014).

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF Annual Report 2013 - Dominican Republic (UNICEF, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> “Member Reports 2013,” The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, accessed September 25, 2014, <http://www.thecode.org/>.

<sup>25</sup> Law 137-03; see also Department of State, 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report, Rep. (2011).

<sup>26</sup> Law 137-03 Art. 2, ¶ 1 (fine of 150 to 250 national minimum salaries); Art. 2, lit. I; Art. 7; see also Department of State, 2013 Human Rights Reports: Dominican Republic, Rep. (2013).

<sup>27</sup> Constitution of the Dominican Republic, Art. 41 (Jan. 26, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Law 136-03, Art. 25.

<sup>29</sup> “Dominican Republic,” Representing Children Worldwide, last modified November 2005, accessed September 26, 2014, <http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/caribbean/dominicanrep/frontpage.htm>; see also Law 136-03, Art. 25; Art. 34; Art. 396, lit. a-c.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Labor, 2012 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, Dominican Republic, Rep. (2011).



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## 2 Methods

IJM investigators used undercover methods to document a real-time measurement of CSEC across 20 towns in the DR. The areas surveyed included outdoor street and beach locations, as well as indoor establishments such as brothels, bars, and discos.



**This report documents the methodology and results** of IJM’s investigative study on the prevalence of CSEC in the DR. The study was conducted prior to the start of IJM operations in the DR, and the results provide baseline data on the nature and scale of CSEC throughout the country. Data collectors gathered both quantitative and qualitative information through undercover investigative methods on the nature and prevalence of minors in commercial sexual exploitation.

## 2.1 Pre-Study Mapping Methodology

In March and April 2014, IJM completed an extensive mapping exercise to determine the areas with the highest prevalence of commercial sex work across the country. A team of investigators conducted undercover investigations in 28 towns in the south, east, and north of the country. This mapping exercise covered all known areas of CSE. This information was gathered during the assessment and through referrals by non-profit organizations and government agencies. Location referrals and prior research into CSE locations were combined with information from online sources such as ‘john boards’ and escort sites (sex tourist chat rooms) to identify specific establishments and non-establishment areas. Investigators also used informants, taxi drivers, ‘buscones,’ and pimps to find CSE locations in each town, until they reached ‘saturation point,’ i.e., when they were referred to names or places already mapped. In this way, for each location mapped, the team was confident they had captured a solid representation of the locations where CSEC occurs.

During the mapping phase, IJM investigators marked any location suspected to be an area of commercial sexual exploitation, and where CSEC was either suspected or confirmed. This included establishments such as bars, brothels, discos/clubs, liquor stores, car washes, casinos, private houses, as well as non-establishment areas where CSE was prevalent such as parks, streets, and beach fronts. Data was collected in the major towns of the DR (Santo Domingo and Santiago), tourist coastal resort areas and inland towns.

The data points for the list of locations gathered during the mapping exercise were:

- Location Name
- Location Address
- GPS coordinates
- Type of location

- a. Establishment—Bar; Brothel; Disco/ Club; ‘Drink’ / Liquor store; Car Wash; Cabaña (auto-motel); Private House (operating as a brothel); Colmado (convenience store); Casino.
  - b. Non-Establishment—Park; Street; Beach.
- Predominant client type—Nationals; Foreigners; Mixed.
  - Size of location—under 10 CSWs = small; 10-20 CSWs = medium; over 20 = large.
  - Identifiable boundaries/borders
  - Photo
  - Description of area
  - Source of information

## 2.2 Target Area and Population

The target areas for this study were determined through a literature review of recent studies and reports of CSEC in the DR, IJM’s site assessment methodology, and initial undercover mapping of CSEC locations conducted in March 2014. Prior to opening a new field office, IJM conducts a three-phase assessment to gather information about the specific human rights abuse the field office would address in order to establish a thorough understanding of the context prior to beginning operations. The locations chosen for this study were randomly selected from a universe of 284 locations identified during the mapping exercise in 20 towns across the country, each of which was labeled as an establishment or a non-establishment. Map 1 shows the target areas included in this study.<sup>31</sup>

**Map 1: Target Towns Assessed in this Study**



The total universe (from which a sample was taken) is shown in Table 1. The ‘Projected Universe’ in Table 1 included the long list of locations compiled during the mapping exercise. All locations included in this study needed to be places where sex was consistently sold. During data collection, 74 initially mapped locations were disqualified from the universe, either because they were permanently closed or because they did not fit this definition.

Table 1: Universe Size, by Town

| Town                       | Projected Universe |                        |            | Actual Universe |                        |            |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------|
|                            | Establishments     | Non-<br>Establishments | TOTAL      | Establishments  | Non-<br>Establishments | TOTAL      |
| Santo Domingo West         | 27                 | 3                      | 30         | 24              | 2                      | 26         |
| Santo Domingo Central East | 26                 | 8                      | 34         | 19              | 8                      | 27         |
| Bajos de Haina/ Nigua      | 1                  | 3                      | 4          | 1               | 3                      | 4          |
| Juan Dolio                 | 0                  | 2                      | 2          | 0               | 2                      | 2          |
| Boca Chica                 | 5                  | 3                      | 8          | 4               | 3                      | 7          |
| La Romana                  | 14                 | 1                      | 15         | 12              | 1                      | 13         |
| San Pedro de Macoris       | 2                  | 2                      | 4          | 1               | 2                      | 3          |
| Bavaro                     | 8                  | 2                      | 10         | 5               | 2                      | 7          |
| Higüey                     | 11                 | 0                      | 11         | 11              | 0                      | 11         |
| Nagua                      | 9                  | 3                      | 12         | 5               | 2                      | 7          |
| Las Terrenas               | 8                  | 2                      | 10         | 6               | 2                      | 8          |
| Cotuí                      | 15                 | 1                      | 16         | 9               | 1                      | 10         |
| San Francisco de Macoris   | 18                 | 1                      | 19         | 8               | 1                      | 9          |
| Puerto Plata               | 7                  | 3                      | 10         | 7               | 3                      | 10         |
| Sosua                      | 18                 | 2                      | 20         | 11              | 2                      | 13         |
| Cabarete                   | 7                  | 0                      | 7          | 5               | 0                      | 5          |
| Río San Juan               | 11                 | 3                      | 14         | 6               | 3                      | 9          |
| Santiago                   | 15                 | 4                      | 19         | 11              | 3                      | 14         |
| Jarabacoa                  | 15                 | 3                      | 18         | 10              | 2                      | 12         |
| La Vega                    | 16                 | 5                      | 21         | 8               | 5                      | 13         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>233</b>         | <b>51</b>              | <b>284</b> | <b>163</b>      | <b>47</b>              | <b>210</b> |



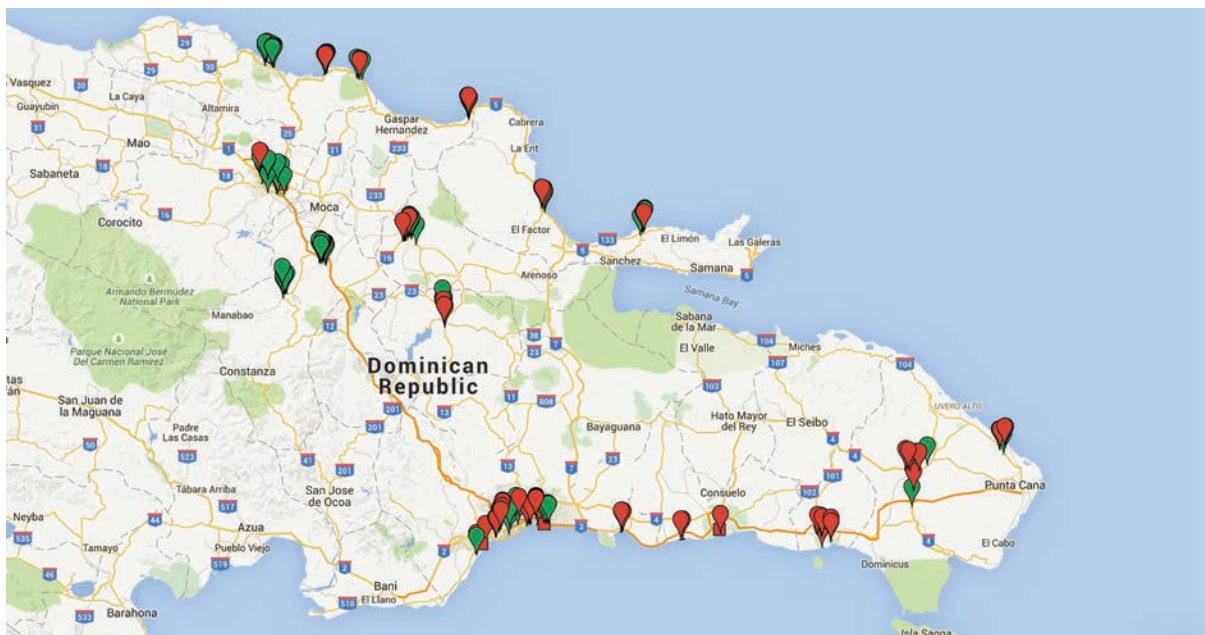
## 2.3 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy was based on a simple random method for each location type: establishments and non-establishments. The pre-mapping exercise resulted in a total of 233 establishments and 51 non-establishments. A statistically significant sample size for the targeted areas, yielding a margin of error of 5%, required surveying 145 establishments to be surveyed and 45 non-establishments to be surveyed.<sup>32</sup>

The methodology for this study was designed to capture the predominantly street-based nature of CSEC in the DR. GPS coordinates for an establishment represented one ‘centroid’ around which a 0.5km radius was drawn on a map (using Google Maps Engine), representing that centroid’s ‘catchment area.’ In essence, this meant that data would be collected not only from the establishment, but also from the entire 0.5km radius, or ‘catchment area.’ Likewise, for a non-establishment area, a radius of 0.5km would be drawn around the mapped beach, park, or street area, to identify a catchment area within which data would be collected. In most cases, the centroid was the exact center of the non-establishment area; however, some were irregularly shaped based on natural geographic features (such as a street, monument, park, beach, etc.).

Map 2 below gives an overall view of locations that fell into the sample (in green), and locations that were in the universe but not in the sample (in red). The locations in red remained important due to the catchment area methodology.

Map 2: Locations in the Sample



The methodology for this study was designed to capture the predominantly street-based nature of CSEC in the Dominican Republic. A total of 206 locations were surveyed by the end of the study.

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### 2.3.1 Locations in Sample

Table 2 depicts the ‘Projected Sample,’ ‘Actual Sample,’ and the ‘Final Sample’ sizes for the study, broken down by town. The Projected Sample lists the number of locations originally selected from the Projected Universe. As mentioned in Section 2.2, upon data collection, there were locations that did not meet the criteria for the study and were therefore removed from the Actual Sample. Locations were removed from the sample when:

- a. The location was closed, but not permanently;
- b. The location was closed but the study team received confirmation upon enquiry that it was a place where commercial sex was consistently sold; or
- c. Data could not be collected for security or other reasons.

In these cases, the location was removed from the sample but kept in the universe of CSE locations. This change was noted by the Study Coordinator, and another location was assigned at random to replace it. Replacements were limited to the towns where data had not yet been collected.

Locations were disqualified from the universe altogether when:

- a. The location did not appear to be a place where commercial sex was consistently sold; or
- b. The location was permanently closed.

Changes to the universe number affected the calculation for the required sample size for the study. Therefore, the data analyst conducted real-time universe and sample size estimation, often reducing the number of locations needed to reach the desired margin of error. Thus, the Actual Sample (without the catchment area locations) was the number of locations randomly selected into the sample—a total of 141 locations. The Final Sample was the actual number of locations surveyed at the end of the study ( $N = 206$ ), capturing those additional locations that fell into the catchment areas of locations in the Actual Sample.

Table 2: Sample Size, by Town

| Town                       | Projected Sample |                    |            | Actual Sample (without catchment area locations) |                    |            | Final Sample (including catchment area locations) |                    |            |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------|--|--------------------|------------|---|--------------------|------------|
|                            | Establishments   | Non-Establishments | TOTAL      | Establishments                                   | Non-Establishments | TOTAL      | Establishments                                    | Non-Establishments | TOTAL      |
| Santo Domingo West         | 18               | 3                  | 21         | 10   | 2                  | 12         | 12  | 3                  | 15         |
| Santo Domingo Central East | 20               | 7                  | 27         | 11   | 7                  | 18         | 14  | 8                  | 22         |
| Bajos de Haina/ Nigua      | 1                | 2                  | 3          | 1  | 2                  | 3          | 4   | 2                  | 6          |
| Juan Dolio                 | 0                | 2                  | 2          | 0  | 2                  | 2          | 0   | 2                  | 2          |
| Boca Chica                 | 3                | 3                  | 6          | 2  | 3                  | 5          | 5   | 3                  | 8          |
| La Romana                  | 8                | 1                  | 9          | 6  | 1                  | 7          | 13  | 2                  | 15         |
| San Pedro de Macoris       | 1                | 1                  | 2          | 0  | 1                  | 1          | 0   | 1                  | 1          |
| Bavaro                     | 5                | 2                  | 7          | 3  | 2                  | 5          | 9   | 3                  | 12         |
| Higüey                     | 6                | 0                  | 6          | 6  | 0                  | 6          | 7   | 1                  | 8          |
| Nagua                      | 6                | 3                  | 9          | 3  | 2                  | 5          | 4   | 2                  | 6          |
| Las Terrenas               | 6                | 2                  | 8          | 5  | 2                  | 7          | 15  | 2                  | 17         |
| Cotuí                      | 11               | 1                  | 12         | 6  | 1                  | 7          | 7   | 1                  | 8          |
| San Francisco de Macoris   | 9                | 1                  | 10         | 3  | 1                  | 4          | 6   | 3                  | 9          |
| Puerto Plata               | 6                | 3                  | 9          | 3  | 3                  | 6          | 3   | 4                  | 7          |
| Sosua                      | 12               | 2                  | 14         | 9  | 2                  | 11         | 15  | 3                  | 18         |
| Cabarete                   | 4                | 0                  | 4          | 5  | 0                  | 5          | 7   | 4                  | 11         |
| Río San Juan               | 4                | 0                  | 4          | 6  | 0                  | 6          | 6   | 2                  | 8          |
| Santiago                   | 9                | 3                  | 12         | 9  | 2                  | 11         | 9   | 3                  | 12         |
| Jarabacoa                  | 5                | 3                  | 8          | 8  | 1                  | 9          | 8   | 2                  | 10         |
| La Vega                    | 12               | 5                  | 17         | 7  | 4                  | 11         | 6   | 5                  | 11         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>146</b>       | <b>44</b>          | <b>190</b> | <b>103</b>                                       | <b>38</b>          | <b>141</b> | <b>150</b>  | <b>56</b>          | <b>206</b> |

## 2.4 Study Preparation and Team Training

The data collectors deployed for this study were IJM employees with over 70 combined years of experience in law enforcement and investigations in the areas of vice and narcotics, drug trafficking, corruption; human trafficking, international peacekeeping; and crimes against children.

### 2.4.1 Study Team Training

The training for this study took place over three days and included the following areas:

- **Study Methodology Training:** The topics covered included all the methods detailed in this report:
  - An overview of the mapping exercise and universe of suspected CSE locations;
  - The final sample of locations to be surveyed;
  - An explanation of catchment areas, strategies, and time limits for establishments and non-establishments;
  - A detailed overview, discussion and collection strategies for each of the 17 indicators;
  - Communication guidelines for all team members, including data recording protocol.
- **Age Verification Training:** This portion of the training was conducted by an IJM senior investigator. Topics covered included factors to consider when assessing ages of women and girls and the difference between the ‘minors observed’ and ‘minors confirmed’ indicators. Training was also given to data collectors on identifying body language and other factors to be considered when assessing the age of a CSW, including specific strategies to confirm date of birth.
- **Security Training:** This training session covered contextual factors about security in the DR for data collectors from other countries and contingency guidelines for emergencies.
- **Pilot Exercises:** The training phase included two pilots: one ‘live’ age verification training (at a mapped location that was not in the sample); and one evening of full data collection to test-run team communication and the data recording protocol.
- **Logistics:** Pre-study training also included an overview of daily schedules, transport, accommodation, and location information.
- **Ethical guidelines:** During the study, data collectors only engaged in conversation with adults and minors in CSE. They did not engage adults or minors in commercial sex services.

### 2.4.2 Data Collection Staff Care Plan

An external de-briefer was present throughout the study, providing daily support to the study team through individual and group debrief meetings, led jointly by an IJM team member and the external de-briefer.

The external de-briefer was also available for individual debriefs upon request. Immediately following the end of data collection, all team members directly involved in data collection participated in a 2-day retreat, led by the external de-briefer and jointly facilitated by the IJM Dominican Republic Field Office Director.

## 2.5 Data Collection Tools and Methods

### 2.5.1 Data Collection Protocol

Each day, data collection teams were assigned a daily docket of locations that included establishments and non-establishments. This list of locations was assigned by the Study Coordinator, with locations in each town divided between teams. The daily docket included GPS coordinates, names, descriptions of locations, and maps of each location. Establishments and non-establishments were noted separately, as the data collection strategies were different for each. The

daily docket also included previously-mapped locations (in the universe, but not in the sample—red points on Map 2) that were within the catchment area and where data would also need to be collected.

### **Establishment-Specific Strategy**

In establishment locations, data collection teams went first to the assigned establishment. Second, they proceeded to any other mapped locations within the catchment area, noted on their daily docket and catchment area map. Third, they proceeded to walk the catchment area to record the level of street-based activity outside their assigned establishment. Data collectors covered both sides of the street within each catchment area. Assessing the entire area for CSEC activity required teams to enquire with CSWs, intermediaries, pimps, and madams for young girls for sex within each catchment area. When an area had been entirely investigated, it was referred to as having reached saturation.

If any pre-mapped establishment was closed at the time of the assessment, data collectors informed their data handler and provided: the unique location number, length of closure (permanent or temporary), and any known reason for closing. Newly identified, “unmapped” establishments were required to meet the definition of ‘a place where commercial sex was consistently sold’ to be recorded as part of data collection within a catchment area. Throughout the course of the study, locations were also disqualified from the universe and sample for not meeting this definition.

### **Non-Establishment-Specific Strategy**

For non-establishment centroids, data collection teams proceeded first to the non-establishment area (beachfront, park, or street), and walked the entire catchment area, as defined by street perimeters. As above, if an establishment (either one that was previously mapped or a newly identified one) was inside the catchment area, data would also be collected from there. The entire non-establishment catchment area would be covered until the team had reached saturation.

To ensure consistency across teams, data collectors did not leave their assigned catchment area, even when a pimp offered to take them to minors. They only proceeded with an intermediary, pimp, or madam if the location was within the catchment area. The intent was to physically observe as many minors as possible and to at least assess the number of minors that were available (or “promised”). Data collection teams were consistent in their request and always asked for “a lot of girls.” While data was captured on number of minors “promised,” “observed” and “confirmed,” only “observed” and “confirmed” were used in the overall combined CSEC prevalence figure.

### **Security Protocol during Data Collection**

The time guidelines provided to data collectors for each location type were as follows:

- **For establishments:** Data collection teams spent less than an hour at each establishment. If there was more than one identified establishment within a catchment area, data collection would continue inside the catchment area until a) the area was saturated, b) security issues required investigators to leave the area, or c) the time spent in that catchment area exceeded two hours.
- **For non-establishments:** No more than 1 hour was spent at a non-establishment catchment area.

For both location types, if the area had not been saturated within the time allocated, data collectors would contact their data handler to request more time and provide a justification. The Study Coordinator made the decision on granting more time to teams, in consultation with the security team, after assessing the progress of other teams in getting through their docket. The security team also notified the Study Coordinator as soon as possible of a security risk.

Data collection teams were required to call their data handler regularly to inform them of their location, and the Study Coordinator ensured the security team was aware of each team’s current and next locations. If a data handler had not had contact with their team after 30 minutes of entering an establishment, a procedure was in place to inform the security team. The security team was always posted close to the team working in the area of highest risk.

## **2.5.2 Data Fields Collected**

After assessing each location, one data collector from each team called their assigned data handler. The data handler collected data on each data field listed below, noting any challenges in collection or security threats:

1. Total number of commercial sex workers (CSWs) observed—‘total de trabajadoras sexuales’ (TTS)
2. Number of minors observed (0-17 yrs)—‘menores observadas’ (MO)
3. Number of minors confirmed (0-17 yrs)—‘menores confirmadas’ (MC)
4. Number of young minors observed (0-14 yrs)—‘niñas menores observadas’ (NMO)
5. Number of young minors confirmed (0-14 yrs)—‘niñas menores confirmadas’ (NMC)
6. How were the MCs confirmed? (*choose one or more options below*)
  - a. Minor stated age
  - b. Pimp stated age of minor
  - c. Minor gave birth date/year
  - d. Minor stated date/year of 15-year old ‘coming of age’ party (‘quinceañera’)
  - e. Minor stated graduation year
7. How were the NMCs confirmed? (*choose one or more options below*)
  - a. Minor stated age
  - b. Pimp stated age of minor
  - c. Minor gave birth date/year
  - d. Minor stated date/year of 15-year old ‘coming of age’ party (‘quinceañera’)
  - e. Minor stated graduation year
8. Number of minors “promised” but not directly observed—‘menores prometidas’ (MP)
9. Length of time in which Intermediary/Pimp/Madam/Brothel Owner (IPMBO) promise they can bring a minor or take the investigator to a minor
  - a. Number of minutes in which IPMBO says he/she can procure a minor for the investigator
  - b. Number of minutes IPMBO states will take to get investigator to a minor
10. Profile of IPMBO, including the ‘type’ (taxi driver, motoconcho, pimp/madam, brothel owner) and demographics (estimated height, weight, age, sex, hair/eye color, remarkable features)
11. Observable evidence indicating third-party exploitation of minors (*list one or more types of evidence type per minor*):
  - a. Presence of IPMBO
  - b. Someone other than minor handles the payment
  - c. Someone other than solely the minor makes decision on minor providing services
  - d. Evidence of ‘vulnerability,’ including:
    1. Evidence of substance abuse
    2. Testimony from minor about coercion/deception
    3. Evidence of fear
    4. Presence of disabilities
    5. Other (specify)
12. Reasons given by minors for engaging in CSEC
13. Observable evidence indicating the third-party exploitation of adults<sup>33</sup> (*list one or more types of evidence per adult CSW*):
  - a. Presence of IPMBO
  - b. Someone other than the individual handles the payment
  - c. Someone other than solely the individual makes decision on the individual providing services
  - d. Evidence of ‘vulnerability,’ including:



1. Evidence of substance abuse
  2. Testimony from the individual about coercion/deception
  3. Evidence of fear
  4. Presence of disabilities
  5. Other (specify)
14. Nationality of CSWs, disaggregated by adults, minors, and young minors
  15. Payment purposes (for sexual services or for permission to leave a specific area with a CSW)
  16. Presence of foreigners, disaggregated by nationality grouping
  17. Number of police and bouncers or security guards present at the location

**NOTE:** If the investigator was unable to call immediately following the assessment, these were the alternative options, in order of preference:

- Text indicators 1-8 for establishments; 1-9b for non-establishments.
- Voice record via cell phone indicators 1-8 for establishments; 1-9b for non-establishments.

### 2.5.3 Data Collection Tools

The data handlers each recorded data on an individual Data Collection Tool for each team. We would be happy to share this Data Collection Tool. Please email [contact@ijm.org](mailto:contact@ijm.org) and include “Data Collection Tool–Prevalence Study 2014-IJM Dominican Republic” in the subject line.

Data handlers received information from their corresponding team after each location had been visited. As much information was transferred as possible at this stage, depending on the location of the data collection team. If they were in a secure location, or traveling to the next location, all of the mandatory and debriefing information was transferred over the phone. At other times, only the mandatory data was recorded, and the remainder collected by the data handler during debriefing. Data collectors did not assess more than two establishments or two separate interactions at a time without providing information on indicators 1-8 to their data handler.

Data for each establishment was recorded on a separate line, including additional mapped or unmapped establishments within a catchment area. The latter would be numbered #1, #2, etc., using the same unique location number. For non-establishments, data handlers added a line for each interaction within each catchment area, e.g. #1 pimp, #2 motoconcho, etc. This ensured information from the catchment areas could be consistently recorded. Data handlers submitted the data collection tool for their team to the Study Coordinator at the end of each night of data collection.

The Study Coordinator also used a number of data collection tools to ensure compliance to the above methodology, to assign locations for each team, and to implement required changes to the sample or universe if sampled locations were disqualified.

The Assignment Master Sheet included the list of all locations in the sample, as well as all mapped locations in the universe that fell into catchment areas and thus also included in the daily docket. The Assignment Master Sheet included the list of all locations in the sample, as well as all mapped locations in the universe that fell into catchment areas. The Study Coordinator used this sheet to assign the daily dockets to data collectors and to update data handlers on their teams’ assignments each evening. These would be updated and, where necessary, changed to adapt to security conditions and data collection team findings, e.g. if one team was assigned to an area of low CSE activity and completed their task in less than the time assigned, they would be re-deployed to another area to assist in completing another team’s docket.

## 2.6 Data Storage Techniques, Data Cleaning, and Analysis

After debriefing with the data collectors, data handlers would clean the data. The following day, the data collectors would resolve any inconsistencies or needed clarifications that the data handlers found during cleaning.

Each night, the data handlers saved the individual Data Collection Tools on a secure site. This site could only be accessed by the study team members. At the end of data collection, the Study Coordinator cleaned each team's Data Collection Tool and then combined all the team's data onto one datasheet. The data analyst conducted additional cleaning in advance of analysis, including codification of particular narrative data fields and searching for inconsistencies, errors, misspellings, and inaccurate classifications. The data analyst used Microsoft Excel for the analysis.

## 2.7 Data Quality Assurance Techniques

The study employed three data quality assurance (DQA) techniques: age verification, recording, and data audits.

Data collectors participated in age verification training as well as an exercise with 50 female volunteers between the ages of 12 and 30. This DQA technique's purpose was to establish confidence in the data collectors' reporting of minors in the study. Data collectors estimated each volunteers' specific age and whether she was a minor (under 18) or young minor (14 and under). The average score for the data collection team in determining minor vs. adult in this exercise was 76% accuracy.

Data collectors recorded conversations with sex workers and any intermediaries, pimps, madams, brothel/establishment owners/managers. Additionally, in most cases, the data collectors recorded the mandatory data as well as the debriefing data on a notepad, phone, or voice recorder. These DQA techniques enabled teams to go back and cross-check if there were discrepancies between what was delivered via phone and what was recorded on the Data Collection Tool.

Lastly, data collection teams conducted a 10.0% audit on the original sample, which involved repeating assessments of 18 centroid sample points and their respective catchment areas, resulting in a total of 25 individual locations or interactions. In total, the teams audited 15.6% of all interactions in the final sample: 13 of the 56 (23.2%) individual non-establishment interactions; and 12 of 150 (8.0%) the individual establishments. The sample points for audit were randomly selected, but were replaced with purposive selections if the need arose during data collection. Instances where the Study Coordinator used purposive audit selection included when:

- A team felt they were unable to saturate a catchment area;
- A team felt they were unable to view all rooms in an establishment;
- A team felt they entered an establishment or non-establishment at a non-peak hour;
- A team reported data that was not trending with other team findings from the area.

The majority of data recorded by auditing teams matched that of the team assigned to that location. For establishments where an establishment owner could be identified, both the assigned team and the auditing team reported either a description of the person or his/her name. Likewise, both teams provided similar descriptions of establishments and lists of prices for services—though there was some discrepancy in the level of detail recorded for differing levels of services. Both teams noted evidence indicating third-party exploitation of minors for the same location, and in another location both teams noted the establishment 'rules'—for example, at one car wash no CSWs could leave the location until 1:00am.

Some minor differences in data recorded for each team can be attributed to the time of data collection. For instance, in three out of the 18 audited centroid sample points, teams provided contradictory data on the presence of CSWs. Two of these three centroid points were non-establishments, and all three were visited by assigned and auditing teams at different times of the evening, ranging from half an hour between data collection to almost three hours. One of these non-establishments was a walking street where data was collected at 8:00pm and then 11:45pm, resulting in contradictory numbers of minors being reported. The establishment location was a brothel, visited by the auditing team one hour and fifteen minutes after the assigned team. The availability of CSWs inside brothels can vary throughout the evening, which may account for this discrepancy.

In the remaining 15 of 18 audited centroid sample points, auditing teams reported confirming information on the presence of minors. In 11 of these 15, both the auditing team and the assigned team reported exactly the same number of minors observed. In two of the 15 audited centroid points, both assigned and auditing teams reported similar numbers of minors observed. Minor discrepancies can be attributed to the time each centroid point was visited. In the remaining two of 15 centroid points, assigned and auditing teams reported significantly different numbers of minors observed. These locations were visited originally and audited at different times of the evening, with up to a two-hour delay between collections. In these two cases, the discrepancy was due to the fact that the locations were non-establishments, visited at different times of the evening. One of these was a walking street in a tourist town where the original data recorded a total 87 CSWs and 31 minors observed at 8:00pm in the evening, whereas the audit—which took place at 11:30pm that same evening—recorded a total of 19 CSWs and 2 minors observed. This is likely due to the peak activity times in this area rather than a difference in data collection strategies by each team.

Another key difference between data collected by auditing teams and assigned teams was the quality of data provided for catchment areas. For instance, at one location the assigned team identified a previously unmapped location that was not found by the auditing team. At another location, the auditing team talked to the security guard of one of the sampled locations and were promised three minors, whereas the assigned team did not record having spoken to this individual and did not record numbers for ‘minors promised.’ In all of these listed discrepancies, the original data collected was used for analysis.

## 2.8 Limitations

The study methodology has six main limitations:

1. This was the first time IJM conducted a prevalence study in a new country prior to the start of casework operations by a field office. The mapping process for this study was conducted in a three-week period prior to IJM Dominican Republic having an established team. This limited the number of locations that could be included in the universe. However, conducting a study prior to the start of operations is also a key strength of this study, as it provides as close to a true assessment of prevalence of CSEC in the country as possible for a baseline.
2. The data collection portion of this study was conducted over the course of 22 days in 20 towns and cities across the south, east, center, and north of the DR. Data was collected in some towns/villages on what prior research had indicated were non-peak days, i.e., Tuesdays or Wednesdays, in order to ensure all locations were covered within the time allotted. This could have affected the total number of sex workers observed.
3. IJM has information relating to trafficking cross-border networks, but the study team concluded that measuring CSEC around the border with Haiti was beyond the remit of this study for various reasons. The porous nature of the border area, and thus the phenomenon itself, would require a different methodology and more resources than budgeted to effectively research the prevalence and nature of CSEC in these areas. Therefore, the statistics presented in this report reflect only the targeted towns in the study and cannot be extrapolated to encapsulate any exploitation occurring along the Haitian-DR border.
4. IJM suspects CSEC also takes place in the many cabañas (auto-motels) located on the outskirts of most of the towns in the study. However, the study team decided to exclude cabañas from the study for the following reasons:
  - a. Minors are not secured for sexual exploitation in cabañas; rather, they are taken there.
  - b. Due to the private entrances to rooms in these motels (individuals can secure a room without any interaction with a location manager), these locations are difficult to access and investigate.
5. Private residences and brothels that are unmarked from the outside were also largely excluded, though the initial mapping included a few of these and data collection teams came across a few more. The private residences operating as brothels identified by data collectors are an indication of the prevalence of this mode of CSE. This study includes some private residences and unmarked brothels in the target areas, but the scope and timeframe of the study did not allow for a comprehensive investigation into these types of locations.

6. The study gathered data from locations deemed by data collectors to be “places where commercial sex was consistently sold,” and therefore did not capture data from locations where CSWs were found individually. Instead, data was collected only from locations that fit this definition. The study methodology also favored towns and locations that were known to have minors present at some point in time.

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<sup>31</sup> The criteria applied to the final target areas/towns was the identification of at least four suspected CSE locations per town during the mapping exercise. The towns that were excluded on this basis were: Bonao, Guayacanes, Punta Cana, Miches, Sabana de la Mar, Samana, Juan de Herrera, and Dajabon.

<sup>32</sup> These figures are calculated based on Krejcie and Morgan's formula:  $X^2 \frac{NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$ , where  $s$  = required sample size;  $X^2$  = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level

(3,841);  $N$  = the population size;  $P$  = the population proportion (.05); and  $d$  = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

<sup>33</sup> This data field was included in order to allow data collectors to document this phenomenon if it was observed; however, given that it was not the purpose of the study, data collectors did not attempt to gather this information from every location or interaction with CSWs.

# 3 Results

This study found that 1 in 10 individuals in commercial sexual exploitation in the Dominican Republic is under the age of 18. In 90% of towns surveyed, local third parties affirmed their ability to locate and deliver a minor for sexual exploitation.

**This report defines Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)** as any sexual abuse by an adult of a minor and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons.<sup>34</sup> CSEC includes the prostitution of children, child pornography, child sex tourism, and other forms of transactional sex where a child engages in sexual activities to have key needs fulfilled, such as food, shelter, or access to education. Within the context of the Dominican Republic, this phrase encompasses the legislatively defined crimes of human trafficking, including sex tourism (Law 137-03), commercial sexual exploitation of minors (Law 136-06, Art. 410; *see also* Criminal Code Art. 351-2, ¶ 2), and child pornography (Law 136-06, Art. 25; *see also* Criminal Code Art. 351-2, ¶2).

The results of this study are divided into five main sections: the scale of CSEC in the DR, Demographics, Key Modes of exploitation, Presence of Foreigners, and Law Enforcement Response and Views. The findings presented here include both the quantitative capture from the data collectors, as well as more qualitative data collected from sex workers, third-party intermediaries, and others in the locations targeted.

### 3.1 The Scale of CSEC in the Dominican Republic

#### Key Findings

- This study found a 10.0% overall prevalence of CSEC in the targeted areas of the Dominican Republic.
- The prevalence of minors in CSE is substantially higher in streets, parks and beach areas, where the prevalence of CSEC is 23.9%.
- In bars, night clubs, brothels and other establishments, the prevalence of CSEC is 5.8%.

#### 3.1.1 The Prevalence of CSEC

The overall prevalence of CSEC in the areas surveyed in the study is found to be 10.0% (181/1816). The prevalence between non-establishments and establishments, however, is quite different.<sup>35</sup> The prevalence of CSEC within establishments is 5.8% (81/1397), but within non-establishments is 23.9% (100/419).

A distinction was drawn in this study between all minors under 18, young minors (14 and under), and older minors (15 to 17). This was based on IJM's experience of other countries in Latin America, where the response by the public justice

## This study found a 10.0% prevalence of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the targeted areas of the Dominican Republic.

system to older minors differs from the response to young minors. This distinction was also made due to the cultural context of the Dominican Republic, where ‘quinceañeras’ (15-year olds) and older are generally accepted to be ‘adolescentes’ (teenagers), a distinct category separate to ‘niños/niñas (children). Table 3 shows that the majority of minors observed were in fact ‘older’ minors, defined by the study criteria as 15-17 years old. Of the ten young minors observed in the study, all were recorded to be within four different non-establishment locations in four different towns.

**Table 3: Prevalence of CSEC, by Location Type**

| Location Type     | Total # CSWs (TTS) | % Total CSWs (TTS) | Total # Minors Observed, 0-17 yrs (MO) | % Total Minors Observed/ Total CSWs (MO/TTS) | Total # Young Minors Observed, 0-14 yrs (NMO) | % Total Young Minors Observed/ Total CSWs (NMO/TTS) |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Establishment     | 1397               | 76.9%              | 81                                     | 5.8%   | 0   | 0%  |
| Non-Establishment | 419                | 23.1%              | 100                                    | 23.9%  | 10  | 2.4%  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>1816</b>        |                    | <b>181</b>                             | <b>10.0%</b>                                 | <b>10</b>                                     | <b>0.55%</b>  |

In order to consistently and accurately achieve confirmation of a minor’s age, the study team pulled from prior work experience and concepts from other CSE studies and investigations, conducted across multiple country and cultural contexts, to propose various strategies. After the age verification training and exercise, the data collectors adapted the strategies to the Dominican context, allowing the team to administer the techniques and record ‘confirmed minors’ in a consistent manner. These confirmation strategies involved a determination by the data collector of the minor’s actual age through a series of questions to her and/or her friends or to an intermediary. The pre-study training on this topic had included strategies to identify cues from body language and other factors before recording a minor as ‘confirmed.’

In as many cases as possible, data collectors attempted to confirm the age of the women and girls suspected to be minors that were observed to be engaged in CSE. The purpose of confirmation was more to validate the data collector’s classification of adult/minor/young minor than to contribute data into the overall prevalence figure, as it was not possible to interact with 100% of all minors observed. The confirmation methods used for each minor and young minor confirmed are elaborated in Table 4 for establishments and in Table 5 for non-establishments. For both establishments and non-establishments, the primary method for confirming that a commercial sex worker was in fact a minor was the minor herself actually stating her age to the data collector. For non-establishments specifically, where all of the young minors were observed, all five confirmed young minors were confirmed by the intermediary/pimp/madam stating the girl’s age as 14 years or younger. “Confirmation” was only recorded (as sufficient) if these methods matched what the experienced data collectors determined to be credible and accurate. In both tables, the “other” classification was most frequently the minor’s inability to accurately determine her year of birth based on the age she stated or her age based on the year of birth she gave. The percentage of minors observed that were actually “confirmed” to be younger than 18 years old was 37.0% (67/181). The number of minors confirmed was higher in non-establishments, with a percentage of 41.0% (41/100), compared to establishments (32.1%, 26/81). Furthermore, the percentage of young minors “confirmed” to be 14 years old or younger was 50% (5/10).



**Table 4: Confirmation Methods for Minors Confirmed (MC) in Establishments**

| Confirmation Method   | # of MCs confirmed with this method | % of MCs confirmed with this method (N=26) |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Minor stated age  | 19                                  | 73.1%                                      |
| Intermediary/pimp/madam/establishment owner/manager stated age              | 5                                   | 19.3%                                      |
| Minor gave birth date/year  | 4                                   | 15.4%                                      |
| Minor stated date/year of 15-year old 'coming of age' party ('quinceañera') | 0                                   | 0.0%                                       |
| Minor stated graduation year  | 0                                   | 0.0%                                       |
| Someone else stated age of minor  | 9                                   | 34.6%                                      |
| Other   | 3                                   | 11.5%                                      |

\*The percentages do not add up to 100% since more than one confirmation method could be listed for each minor confirmed.

**Table 5: Confirmation Methods for Minors Confirmed (MC) and Young Minors Confirmed (NMC) in Non-Establishments**

| Confirmation Method   | # of MCs confirmed with this method | % of MCs confirmed with this method (N = 41) | # of NMCs confirmed with this method | % of NMCs confirmed with this method (N = 5) |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Minor stated age  | 34                                  | 82.9%  | 1                                    | 20.0%  |
| Intermediary/pimp/madam stated age  | 9                                   | 22.0%  | 5                                    | 100.0%                                       |
| Minor gave birth date/year  | 18                                  | 43.9%  | 0                                    | 0.0%   |
| Minor stated date/year of 15-year old 'coming of age' party ('quinceañera') | 0                                   | 0.0%   | 0                                    | 0.0%   |
| Minor stated graduation year  | 0                                   | 0.0%   | 0                                    | 0.0%   |
| Someone else stated age of minor  | 1                                   | 2.4%   | 0                                    | 0.0%   |
| Other   | 21                                  | 51.2%  | 0                                    | 0.0%   |

\*The percentages do not add up to 100% since more than one confirmation method could be listed for each minor/young minor confirmed.

While prevalence is not statistically significant by type of place, Table 6 depicts the total number of commercial sex workers observed by type of place, as well as the number of minors by type of place. Bars, streets, brothels, and disco/night clubs had the highest number of commercial sex workers observed. However, in line with the higher prevalence of CSEC found among non-establishments, streets had the highest proportion of minors in CSE in comparison to total sex workers observed. The 181 minors documented in the study were observed across 54 distinct locations (33 establishments and 21 distinct non-establishments locations), meaning that 70.2% of distinct locations surveyed had no minors.

**Table 6: Number of Minors Engaged in CSE Observed, by Type of Place**

| Type of Place               | Total # of CSWs (TTS) | Total # Minors Observed (MO), 0-17 yrs | Total # Young Minors Observed (NMO), 0-14 yrs |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Bar                         | 509                   | 36                                     | 0   |
| Beach                       | 30                    | 14                                     | 6   |
| Brothel                     | 378                   | 16                                     | 0   |
| Car Wash                    | 184                   | 8                                      | 0   |
| Colmado [Convenience Store] | 12                    | 1                                      | 0   |
| Disco / Night Club          | 273                   | 16                                     | 0   |
| Hair Salon                  | 3                     | 0                                      | 0   |
| Malecon [Beach Boulevard]   | 1                     | 1                                      | 0   |
| Park                        | 56                    | 4                                      | 1   |
| Private Residence           | 26                    | 4                                      | 0   |
| Restaurant                  | 12                    | 0                                      | 0   |
| Street                      | 332                   | 81                                     | 3   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>          | <b>1816</b>           | <b>181</b>                             | <b>10</b>                                     |

Data collectors were granted access to all the above types of locations in all towns and, in their capacity as potential customers, had freedom to interact and negotiate with minors. Data collectors were not denied entry at any of the locations surveyed. This was also true for the locations that were disqualified from the sample or universe for other reasons—at no time during the study were data collectors unable to gain access to any establishment. This is even more notable given the level of security present at some of the establishments. Fifteen of the 33 establishments with minors observed in CSE (45.5%) had 1 or more security guards.<sup>36</sup> Not only did these individuals often provide valuable data on CSE/CSEC in the area and at their establishment, they also acted as the gateway into the facilities for both sex customers and for CSWs and minors engaged in CSE who were unassociated with the establishment. A few examples from the data collectors’ notes that highlight the influence of these security personnel include:

*“The security guard indicated that minors [engaged in CSE] are in the area on weekends and that they are welcome in this establishment. He claimed, ‘it’s all up to me.’”*

*“We visited at 6:53 PM on Thursday. There was a locked gate, which they locked behind us, and a security guard they called for when we arrived, who didn’t want to let us in at first, but we talked our way in...”*

Consistent anecdotal evidence from data collection teams points to the determining factor for gaining access being money, rather than ethnic origin or language spoken by ‘johns.’ Whether the establishments charged for entry or not, the ability of potential clients to demonstrate they had money to spend determined their level of access.

CSEC was present in all but two towns surveyed. However, it seems to be geographically concentrated. Of the total number of sex workers observed, the highest numbers of minors being sexually exploited were in Bajos de Haina, Nigua Cabarete, Cotui, Rio San Juan, San Francisco, and Sosua. In Table 7, the number of total sex workers observed is detailed by town. The most sex workers were observed in Sosua by far, but other towns with a high number (over 10%) of minors in commercial sexual exploitation compared to the total number of sex workers observed include Bajos de Haina, Nigua, Cabarete, Cotui, Juan Dolio, Las Terrenas, Rio San Juan, and San Francisco. At one Haitian bar in Sosua, data collectors observed 42 Haitian adult workers, but the 4 minors observed were Dominican.

Table 7: Number of Minors Engaged in CSE Observed, by Town

| Town                       | Population Size <sup>37</sup>                 | Total # of CSWs (TTS) | Total # Minors Observed (MO), 0-17 yrs | Total # Young Minors Observed (NMO), 0-14 yrs | Day(s) of Data Collection |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| Bavaro                     | 43,982  | 151                   | 12                                     | 0   | Wed                       |
| Boca Chica                 | 78,882  | 69                    | 2                                      | 1   | Sat                       |
| Bajos de Haina, Nigua      | Haina: 83,582<br>Nigua: 30,268                | 79                    | 18                                     | 6   | Thurs, Fri                |
| Cabarete                   | 14,606  | 56                    | 10                                     | 0   | Wed                       |
| Cotui                      | 64,133  | 45                    | 8                                      | 0   | Fri                       |
| Higuey                     | 168,501                                       | 94                    | 0                                      | 0   | Wed                       |
| Jarabacoa                  | 40,556  | 48                    | 2                                      | 0   | Sat, Sun                  |
| Juan Dolio                 | 2,488   | 23                    | 2                                      | 0   | Sat                       |
| La Romana                  | 130,426                                       | 138                   | 1                                      | 0   | Tues                      |
| Las Terrenas               | 18,829  | 126                   | 14                                     | 0   | Sat, Sun                  |
| La Vega                    | 202,864                                       | 46                    | 3                                      | 0   | Fri                       |
| Nagua                      | 40,611  | 19                    | 1                                      | 1   | Sat                       |
| Puerto Plata               | 128,240                                       | 54                    | 1                                      | 0   | Tues                      |
| Rio San Juan               | 15,168  | 21                    | 5                                      | 0   | Wed                       |
| Santiago                   | 591,985                                       | 181                   | 3                                      | 1   | Thurs                     |
| Santo Domingo Central East | 965,040                                       | 141                   | 8                                      | 0   | Fri                       |
| Santo Domingo West         |   | 110                   | 2                                      | 0   | Thurs                     |
| San Francisco de Macoris   | 149,508                                       | 17                    | 6                                      | 0   | Thurs                     |
| Sosua                      | 29,653  | 398                   | 83                                     | 1   | Tues, Wed                 |
| San Pedro de Macoris       | 195,307                                       | 0                     | 0                                      | 0   | Tues                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>(target area population)<br/>2,994,629</b> | <b>1816</b>           | <b>181</b>                             | <b>10</b>                                     |                           |

Since data collection occurred all throughout the week, some towns were only surveyed during a weeknight. In some towns, locals cited this as the main reason for the low frequency of commercial sex workers (and even minors engaged in CSE) available at certain establishments and non-establishments. Across all surveyed locations in the study, 20.0%

(50/206 distinct locations) had no commercial sex workers present (22 establishments and 28 distinct non-establishment locations). Furthermore, data collectors recorded in 18 of these 50 (36.0%) locations that locals, managers, or intermediaries told them to “come back later” or on a different day (usually a weekend). However, when reviewing Table 7, which also lists the days of the week when the town was surveyed, and Table 8, the number of sex workers observed in total compared to the number of locations surveyed, the data does not support this trend, i.e. the average number of sex workers encountered per location did not significantly increase on weekends.

**Table 8: Number of Locations Surveyed and Individuals Observed, by Day of Data Collection**

| Day of Data Collection | # of Locations | Total # of CSWs (TTS) | Total # Minors Observed (MO), 0-17 yrs | Total # Young Minors Observed (NMO), 0-14 yrs |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Sunday                 | 5              | 19                    | 0                                      | 0   |
| Tuesday                | 35             | 349                   | 43                                     | 1   |
| Wednesday              | 45             | 563                   | 69                                     | 0   |
| Thursday               | 43             | 416                   | 29                                     | 7   |
| Friday                 | 41             | 219                   | 19                                     | 0   |
| Saturday               | 37             | 250                   | 21                                     | 2   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>206</b>     | <b>1816</b>           | <b>181</b>                             | <b>10</b>                                     |

While any situation involving a minor is exploitative by law, an estimated 35.9% (65/181) of the minors engaged in CSE observed in the study were visibly controlled, coerced, or influenced by someone else or exhibited indications of third-party exploitation. Six of the ten young minors exhibited these indications. Table 9 outlines the evidence documented as indications of third-party exploitation. Data collectors observed these 65 minors across 34 different interactions, spanning 19 establishments (40 minors) and 11 distinct non-establishment locations (25 minors).

**Table 9: Evidence of Indications of Third-Party Exploitation among All Minors Observed**

| Visible, Identifiable Evidence   | # of Minors Exhibiting this Evidence (N = 65) |
|--|---|
| Presence of intermediary, pimp, madam, establishment owner/manager             | 69.2%<br>n = 45                               |
| Works for a brothel/bar/disco/night club with CSE sold from the establishment  | 58.5%<br>n = 38                               |
| Someone other than minor handles the payment                                   | 50.8%<br>n = 33                               |
| Someone other than solely the minor makes decision on minor providing services | 40.0%<br>n = 26                               |
| Within a group of CSWs where one CSW speaks for the group                      | 26.2%<br>n = 17                               |
| Evidence of 'vulnerability': Evidence of fear                                  | 20.0%<br>n = 13                               |
| Evidence of 'vulnerability': Evidence of substance abuse                       | 10.8%<br>n = 7                                |
| Evidence of 'vulnerability': Testimony from minor about coercion/deception     | 6.2%<br>n = 4                                 |
| Evidence of 'vulnerability': Presence of disabilities                          | 3.1%<br>n = 2                                 |

\*Note: The percentages do not total to 100%, as more than one type of evidence could be recorded for each minor observed.

During the overwhelming majority of interactions with minors engaged in CSE, data collectors were only able to talk briefly with the girls, focusing on the data fields necessary to achieve the study's objectives. However, below are two cases where the data collectors were able to attain a deeper understanding of individual stories, highlighting more of the unobservable vulnerability behind these girls' narratives of exploitation:

In one town, the data collectors talked with one adult Haitian CSW, and she told her story. She came to the DR to work in a cafeteria. She was "defrauded" by a woman and was sent to another place which was a brothel. She lost her virginity for DOP 3,000 (USD \$65). She had been in the commercial sex industry for 11 years.

In one inland town, a data collection team entered a small bar that was relatively empty and did not have loud music playing. Upon entering, a young girl took one of the data collectors by the hand; a female adult was standing behind her prompting her to act. The young girl told the data collector she could go with him to another location for sex. When he asked about prices and services, she did not seem sure about the answer, and twice had to go and ask a woman working behind the bar for confirmation. The price was a fixed amount to the establishment of DOP 1,000 (USD \$23), and DOP 2,000 (USD \$45) to her. She later told the data collector that it was her first night of working in the commercial sex industry; this explained why she had not known what prices to quote. She told the data collector: "I'm supposed to tell clients that I'm 18 because minors are not allowed to be in the bar or involved in this activity." She then told him she was 16—and gave her real date of birth. She told him that she was doing this to earn money for her family, saying "This is all I can do."



### 3.1.2 Number of Minors Promised

#### Key Finding

- In 90% of the towns surveyed, pimps, madams, motoconchos, and other intermediaries gave positive responses to being able to bring minors for CSE in response to enquiries by data collectors. In total, 119 minors were ‘promised’ by third-party negotiators.

The nature of commercial sex work often involves negotiations with an intermediary/pimp/madam without any sex workers present. Instead of choosing one who is present, as in most traditional settings, the intermediary/pimp/madam “promises” to bring a sex worker that meets the specifications negotiated. While much less frequent, this scenario can also happen in establishments, if the sex workers physically present do not meet the desired specifications by the “john.”

In order to capture these non-observed individuals in the study, the data collectors recorded interactions where an intermediary/pimp/madam gave a positive response to being able to bring a minor to be sold for sexual services. Additionally, the data collectors captured the number of “minors promised” by these negotiating third parties (see Table 10). None of these minors promised were observed by the data collectors. Within those establishments where third-party negotiators promised to bring minors who were not on the premises, the difference between the actual number of minors observed and minors promised was quite distinct; the difference between these two numbers for non-establishments was negligible.

Table 10: Number of Minors Promised, by Location Type

| Location Type     | # of interactions* where a positive response was given by third-party negotiator for bringing minors for sex | Total # of minors promised (MP) by third-party negotiator | Total # of CSWs (TTS) | Total # Minors Observed (MO), 0-17 yrs | Total # Young Minors Observed (NMO), 0-14 yrs |
|-------------------|--|---|-----------------------|--|---|
| Establishment     | 23   | 57  | 236                   | 5                                      | 0   |
| Non-Establishment | 26   | 62  | 113                   | 15                                     | 2   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>49</b>  | <b>119</b>  | <b>349</b>            | <b>20</b>                              | <b>2</b>                                      |

\*Note: Data on “minors promised” was not incorporated into the overall prevalence figures, as these minors were not observed.

In total, 119 minors were ‘promised’ by a third-party negotiator. Approximately 42.9% (24/56) of these third parties negotiating and offering to bring minors for sexual exploitation were female, with the majority being male at 57.1% (32/56). The data collectors identified nearly all of these persons as Dominican with 6 exceptions: 4 were Haitian and 2 were “Hispanic.”

Interestingly, more minors were promised in certain places over others. Bars and streets were the two most common settings where this type of CSE occurred. Table 11 shows the number of interactions and total number of minors engaged in CSE promised by type of place.

**Table 11: Number of Minors Promised, by Type of Place**

| Type of Place      | # of interactions where a positive response was given by third-party negotiator for bringing minors for sex | Total # of minors promised (MP) by third-party negotiator |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Bar                | 13  | 24  |
| Beach              | 1   | 2   |
| Brothel            | 4   | 4   |
| Car Wash           | 2   | 8   |
| Colmado            | 2   | 10  |
| Disco / Night Club | 5   | 6   |
| Hair Salon         | 1   | 4   |
| Malecon            | 1   | 4   |
| Park               | 3   | 8   |
| Restaurant         | 1   | 1   |
| Street             | 23  | 48  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>56</b>   | <b>119</b>  |

Data collectors were promised minors for sex in 18 out of the 20 towns surveyed, with the number of interactions that received positive responses per town remaining relatively consistent. However, the numbers of minors promised by pimps or other intermediaries in every town varied substantially, with the highest numbers of minors promised in Bajos de Haina, Las Terrenas, La Vega, and Santo Domingo Central East. See Table 12 for the breakdown of minors promised by town.

Table 12: Number of Minors Promised, by Town

| Town                        | # of interactions where a positive response was given by third-party negotiator for bringing minors for sex | Total # of minors promised (MP) by third-party negotiator |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Bavaro                      | 5   | 11  |
| Boca Chica                  | 2   | 4   |
| Bajos de Haina              | 4   | 13  |
| Cabarete                    | 2   | 3   |
| Cotui                       | 2   | 3   |
| Higüey                      | 3   | 6   |
| Jarabacoa                   | 2   | 6   |
| Juan Dolio                  | 2   | 4   |
| La Romana                   | 2   | 2   |
| Las Terrenas                | 5   | 10  |
| La Vega                     | 5   | 10  |
| Nagua                       | 1   | 6   |
| Puerto Plata                | 3   | 8   |
| Rio San Juan                | 0   | 0   |
| Santiago                    | 3   | 6   |
| Santo Domingo Central East* | 8   | 12  |
| Santo Domingo West          | 2   | 4   |
| San Francisco               | 3   | 8   |
| San Pedro                   | 0   | 0   |
| Sosua*                      | 2   | 3   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>56</b>   | <b>119</b>  |

\*In SDCE, the 8 interactions were across only 5 locations. In Sosua, the 2 interactions both occurred in the same location.

In addition to the numbers in Table 12, there were also seven additional locations where minors were promised, but the third party did not give specific numbers:

At one location in La Romana, a CSW said she could get minors to “come and hang out in the area but not in the establishment.”

At another location in Las Terranas, the CSW acting as a madam told data collectors that “*there are minors in the town, but they come from other locations/towns outside of where we are.*”

One bouncer in Bavaro offered to bring minors from Nigua, stating he could bring “*hundreds.*”

A pimp in the Santo Domingo Central East area offered to take the data collectors to a private house in San Vicente about three minutes away from where they were interacting. He promised minors would be at the house. At another location in Santo Domingo Central East, a pimp said he could bring minors within about 20 minutes.

In Juan Dolio, the data collectors spoke with three CSWs who indicated that for minors, the team should go to La Vega. They said, “*we can bring as many as you want from La Vega,*” telling the data collection team that La Vega has minors “*por costal*” (“*by the bag full*”) and that the parents knew and allowed their daughters to engage in the activity.

In Puerto Plata, during the scouting of their daily docket locations, a man approached the data collectors offering minors without the team asking. He offered 4 minors of 12, 13, and 15 years old.

In comparison to minors visibly observed, San Pedro was the only town where minors were neither observed nor promised. Moreover, there were 95 establishments (63.3% of total surveyed) and 32 distinct non-establishment locations (57.1% of total surveyed) where minors were neither observed nor promised.

## 3.2 Demographics

### Key Findings

- Of all the minors engaged in CSE identified in this study, 94.5% are between 15 and 17 years old, whereas 5.5% are 14 and younger.
- A significant majority (92.8%) of the minors engaged in CSE observed in this study were Dominican. A small minority (7.2%) were Haitian.
- 64.1% of minors engaged in CSE did not have an observable third party present at the time of data collection who was clearly profiting from their activities.
- 59.4% of the third parties exploiting minors for sex were female. 40.6% were other commercial sex workers. Of those that could be assessed, the overwhelming majority were Dominican.

The three sections below describe the demographics of all minors engaged in CSE observed in this study, as well as the persons who sell the services of minors engaged in CSE. The minors engaged in CSE observed are divided into two main groups:

- a. Minors engaged in CSE with no observable third party who was present at the time of data collection.
- b. Those who were observably working under the control, coercion, or influence of someone else.

### 3.2.1 Demographics of Minors Engaged in CSE with No Observable Third Party

An estimated 64.1% (116/181) of the minors engaged in CSE observed in the study exhibited no indications of third-party exploitation at the time of data collection.<sup>38</sup> In these locations and/or interactions, the negotiations for services occurred with the sex worker directly and payment was given only to her. In all but three interactions of this nature, the sex workers were Dominican. The data collectors recorded 8 Haitian minors and 1 who was half-Dominican/half-Haitian.

Payment for services in these locations was given directly to the sex worker and ranged from Dominican Pesos (DOP) 2,000-3,000 (USD \$45-65) for 1-2 hours to DOP 3,000 (USD \$65) for the entire night. In three locations, the data collectors were told to “*pay whatever you want for anything you want.*” Payment was noted in one location as DOP 3,000 per hour for adult sex workers and DOP 2,500 (USD \$55) per hour for minors engaged in CSE. In many cases, the data collectors asked the minors why they were engaging in sexual exploitation. The reasons given included: paying for school/wanting to go back to school, taking care of their children or young siblings, wanting to drink and party, and more generally, “needing money.” One minor from Cabarete told data collectors she “*didn’t like the work, but needed the money.*”

### **3.2.2 Demographics of Minors Engaged in CSE with Indications of Third-Party Exploitation**

Out of all minors observed, 35.9% (65/181) exhibited observable indications of third-party exploitation, and data collectors documented these minors across 34 different interactions. Nearly all of these minors were Dominican, with three identified as Haitian and one as half-Dominican/half-Haitian. The minors or their pimps negotiated higher payments than the amounts quoted by minors engaged in CSE who did not have a third party present. Payments ranged from as low as DOP 1,000 (USD \$23) to USD \$200 for the whole night and from DOP 500 (USD \$12) to over DOP 4,000 (USD \$89) for one hour with the girl. Many interactions involved discussion of payments to the establishment or to the intermediary/pimp/madam in order to take the girl out of the establishment with an additional payment required for sex. While some establishments facilitated sex on premises, there were slightly more interactions noted where the third party did not allow sex within the establishment or “did not have rooms available.”

Minors with indications of third-party exploitation gave similar reasons for engaging in sexual exploitation as those who did not have an observable third party. This could indicate that the fundamental reasons that minors engage in sexual exploitation are the same in both situations; it could also be a generic response to any inquiries. The main reasons given included “needing money” (most common response), taking care of their children, and paying for school. Only once did the data collectors record a minor as “interested in and/or under the influence of drugs.”

### **3.2.3 Demographics of Persons Selling Services of Minors Engaged in CSE**

Data collectors also recorded the demographics of those observable third parties who were controlling, coercing, or influencing the minors observed to be engaged in CSE. A total of 325 adult sex workers and 65 minors engaged in CSE (20.0% of total) were observed in the 34 interactions. Of those interactions, 59.4% of the negotiating third parties were female, and 40.6% were other commercial sex workers. See Table 13 for the exact breakdown of profiles across the various types of places surveyed where minors were observed.

Of those third parties exploiting minors who could be assessed or observed, the overwhelming majority were Dominican (light and dark skinned). Two profiles were identified as Haitian, one other as “white,” and another as “light-skinned Hispanic.” The data collectors identified the age range of 17 of the persons selling minors for sexual exploitation: 2 were 17-19 years old, 9 were between 24-30 years old, and 6 were estimated to be between 35-50 years old.

**Table 13: Profile of Persons Selling Sex, by Type of Place**

| Type of Place      | CSW*      | Bouncer  | Establishment Owner | Manager  | Madam    | Pimp     | Taxi driver Motoconcho | Not captured | Total     |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Bar                | 2         |          |                     |          | 1        |          |                        | 2            | 5         |
| Brothel            | 1         | 2        | 1                   | 1        | 2        |          |                        |              | 7         |
| Car Wash           | 1         |          |                     | 1        |          |          |                        |              | 2         |
| Disco / Night Club | 1         | 1        |                     | 2        |          |          | 1                      |              | 5         |
| Street             | 8         |          |                     |          | 1        | 3        | 2                      |              | 14        |
| Beach              |           |          |                     |          | 1        |          |                        |              | 1         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>13</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>1</b>            | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>3</b>               | <b>2</b>     | <b>34</b> |

\*These commercial sex workers (CSWs) negotiated services for the whole group and/or each individual, including her own services sometimes. In these interactions, there was no other visible, identifiable controlling party over the CSW, and it was not possible to determine if these CSWs had worked their way up to a recruiter/middle-woman role or if they were actual ‘madams.’

### 3.3 Key Modes of Exploitation

#### Key Findings

- The top three modes of exploitation within establishments were: CSE meeting places, businesses profiting from CSE with no rooms available on the premises, and CSE establishments with rooms available on the premises.
- The top four modes of exploitation within non-establishments were minors in street-based CSE, motoconchos (motorbike taxis), adult CSWs operating as madams, and street pimps.

The results of this study revealed the various methods by which commercial sexual exploitation of minors takes place in the DR. These methods, or ‘modes,’ are presented below in two major groups. The first section (3.3.1) shows the modes of exploitation found within establishment-based locations and their catchment areas (i.e., the 0.5km radius that included streets, as well as other establishments). The second section (3.3.2) presents the modes identified within non-establishment locations and their catchment areas.

#### 3.3.1 Modes of Exploitation in Establishments

This section presents the main methods by which CSEC occurs in establishments. As shown in Table 14, the top three modes of exploitation within establishments were: CSE meeting places, businesses profiting from CSE with no rooms available on the premises, and CSE establishments with rooms available on the premises. Each of these modes is discussed in detail below. The first two modes were most commonly observed in bars, whereas CSE establishments with rooms available on the premises most frequently occurred in brothels.



**Table 14: Modes of Exploitation in Establishments, by Type of Place**

| Mode                                      | Bar       | Brothel   | Car Wash | Colmado (store) | Disco / Night Club | Hair Salon | Private Residence | Restaurant | TOTAL      |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| CSE Meeting places                        | 28        |           | 3        |                 | 8                  |            |                   | 1          | 40         |
| Businesses profiting from CSE, no rooms   | 18        | 2         | 5        | 1               | 2                  | 1          |                   | 1          | 30         |
| CSE Establishments with rooms on premises | 1         | 13        |          |                 | 4                  |            | 3                 |            | 21         |
| Independent adult CSWs                    | 7         | 2         | 2        | 1               | 3                  |            |                   |            | 15         |
| CSE establishments, no rooms              | 3         | 5         |          |                 | 1                  |            | 1                 |            | 10         |
| No CSWs identified                        | 5         |           |          |                 | 3                  |            |                   | 1          | 9          |
| Minors in street-based CSE                | 6         |           |          |                 |                    |            |                   |            | 6          |
| Businesses profiting from CSE, with rooms | 1         | 3         |          |                 | 2                  |            |                   |            | 6          |
| Security Guards                           | 3         |           | 1        |                 | 1                  |            |                   |            | 5          |
| Motoconchos (motorbike taxis)             | 4         |           |          |                 |                    |            |                   |            | 4          |
| Adult CSWs as madams                      | 1         |           | 1        | 1               |                    |            |                   |            | 3          |
| Street pimps                              | 1         |           |          |                 |                    |            |                   |            | 1          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>80</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>3</b>        | <b>25</b>          | <b>1</b>   | <b>5</b>          | <b>3</b>   | <b>152</b> |

**Establishments Mode #1: CSE ‘Meeting places’**

Data from this study reveals that the majority of establishment-based CSE in the targeted areas of DR takes place in ‘meeting places’—locations that facilitate but do not directly profit from CSE. These locations are known ‘go-to’ places for CSE and include bars, disco/clubs, car washes, and restaurants, accounting for 26.7% (n=40) of all CSE activity in the establishments surveyed.

The majority—70.0% (n=28)—of all ‘meeting places’ were bars, including what are known locally as ‘drinks.’ The other establishments in this mode were night clubs—accounting for 20.0% (n=8) of all CSE meeting places; car washes—accounting for 7.5% (n=3); and one restaurant. Minors were present in these locations despite the age restrictions on establishments selling alcohol in the country (admittance is legally restricted to persons aged 18 and over).

These establishments were distinct from other bars and brothels that were found to be profiting from making the connection between CSWs and clients. At these ‘meeting places,’ CSE is tolerated and even facilitated, but no direct link could be established during data collection that would incriminate the owner of the establishment for profiting from CSE. For instance, at a bar in a tourist town, data collectors were told by a security guard that there would be 150 CSWs in the establishment that evening, all of whom charged prices individually and worked independently from the bar. In another bar, data collectors identified 15 white men and counted 75 CSWs, three of whom were minors. One of the minors

told data collectors she was 17 and that she was nervous of being caught by the police—she was with an adult CSW, but there was no evidence that she was working for the establishment. Of a total 389 CSWs in this mode, 28 were minors, either on their own or accompanied by a pimp or adult CSW.

### **Establishments Mode #2: Businesses profiting from CSE**

The second most common mode of establishment-based CSE is business ‘fronts,’ in many cases legitimate businesses that are also profiting from CSE. These businesses account for 20.0% (n=30) of all CSE activity and are an illustration of the widespread nature and cultural acceptance of sexual exploitation in the DR. None of the establishments in this mode have rooms for sex available on premises, but all charge a percentage, a fine, or a fixed fee for the off-premises services provided by CSWs to clients. For all establishments in this mode, a separate payment would be made directly to the CSW.

The majority of the establishments in this mode were bars—60.0% (n=18). At one location, no CSWs were identified, but a cashier told data collectors she could bring four minors the following day or within an hour “*if they wanted them today.*” At another bar, the bouncer told data collectors that the girls lived in the establishment and were provided room and board, but that sex with clients was performed off-premises.

A smaller yet significant 17% (n=5) of the establishments identified as profiting from CSE were car washes. The majority of car washes included in this study do not have rooms on premises but are places where CSE is facilitated. One example of this was a car wash in an inland town, described by a data collector as “*a large bar at the front with approximately 200 chairs and a big dance floor, and a car wash at the back.*” Data collectors spoke to a minor at this location, who told them that a total of 20 CSWs worked at this location, but the numbers of those working varied throughout the week. This establishment did not have rooms on premises. The cost of taking a CSW away from the establishment was DOP 500 (USD \$12), and a separate payment was then made directly to the CSW. Data collectors confirmed two minors engaged in CSE at this location, both of whom said they did not want to work there but needed the money. They both had young children, despite being minors themselves. Of the total of five CSWs identified at this car wash, two were identified as minors in CSE.

In another interaction, data collectors identified a hair salon owner who also operated as a pimp. Three 19-year-old women worked at the hair salon; at least two of them also worked at the betting shop next door, and all three worked as CSWs for the owner of the salon. The owner asked for a tip to be given to him and payment to go directly to the women. He told data collectors the cost would be DOP 2,000 (USD \$45) for “*a haircut, a large beer, and sex.*” This establishment owner also said he could bring four minors (“*under 18, no problem*”), that same evening, within the hour. The pimp confirmed he could secure minor girls and strongly conveyed that this would be easier than sourcing drugs (though this information had not been solicited). Another unusual location where CSE was identified was a seafood restaurant, where there were CSWs present. A payment to the establishment of DOP 300 (USD \$7) was required to take a CSW away from the premises. There were no rooms onsite.

Bar fine rates and payments to CSWs varied by location. At one bar, the bar fine requirement to engage a CSW was either to buy CSWs a drink or pay the establishment DOP 1,000 (USD \$23). Bar fines to establishments in this mode varied between DOP 300 (USD \$7) and DOP 500 (USD \$12), with further payments to CSWs for sex quoted between DOP 1,000 (USD \$23) and DOP 3,500 (USD \$77).

Of the 296 CSWs identified in this mode, 13 were minors in CSE. Further, 40% of bar owners and cashiers inside these establishments gave positive responses to being able to secure minors, promising between them to bring 24 minors engaged in CSE. Time required to bring minors ranged between 20 minutes and one hour. In bars where no CSWs were identified, data collectors were told by a cashier or establishment owner that the CSWs would be available at a different time in the evening—hours of CSE activity varied but were generally between 9:00pm and 1:00am.

### **Establishments Mode #3: Businesses Providing Sex on Premises**

The third most common mode of CSE for establishments is businesses exclusively dedicated to providing sex services on premises. These locations, where the full payment for sex services is given to the cashier, manager, or owner, accounted for 14.0% (n=21) of all establishment-based CSE. The majority—61.9% of establishments in this category—are brothels (n=13). However, 19.0% (n=4) are night clubs that operated in this mode with rooms on premises, 14.3% (n=3) are private residences that operate as brothels, and one is a bar.

In 54% of brothels operating in this mode, data collectors did not find any minors. The lower prevalence of minors in brothels may be due to a greater awareness of laws prohibiting minors, as these businesses gain their income exclusively through the provision of on-site sex services. Data collectors did identify minors at the remaining 46% of brothels, despite being frequently told by bouncers that no minors were allowed to work there.

Data collectors noted evidence of forced adults in this mode, ranging from control over payments and services to evidence of fear and substance abuse. In at least three cases, data collectors found evidence that adult CSWs were living on premises—in all three there were security guards present:

*“Bouncer said there were over 100 women working here. ‘Majority’ reside at brothel, room and board provided by brothel owner.”*

*“We think they might live there, because there were rooms and apartments also inside the gate.”*

All brothels in this mode had security measures in place. Only two of the 13 brothels did not have security guards. Many of the brothels had locked gates, guarded by security guards who allow customers to come in and out but lock the gate behind them. Data collectors noted the higher levels of security at these establishments:

*“They have video cameras in front and glass doors in the front.”*

*“There was a locked gate, which they locked behind us, and a security guard they called for when we arrived, who didn’t want to let us in at first.”*

In addition to brothels, data collectors also encountered a small number of private residences where CSWs lived (both gated houses and apartments) that were operating as brothels. In one such location, data collectors encountered minors on the street who lived and worked from a nearby apartment. Two of the CSWs were sisters, and the older sister appeared to be exerting control over the younger sister’s prices and services offered. They told data collectors that they were not willing to go anywhere but their apartment. Data collectors discovered another private residence when a minor told them that she lived in an apartment with her friend, who was an adult CSW. This adult CSW appeared to be operating as a madam for the minor and offered to bring more minors from elsewhere—she said that many minors come from outside the town to work as in the sex industry.

Of the 345 CSWs identified in this mode in brothels, private residences and night clubs, 15 were minors.

### **3.3.2 Modes of Exploitation in Non-Establishment Locations**

Prior assessments of CSEC in the DR by IJM as well as other organizations have identified the ‘street-based’ nature of this crime as the primary route for sexual exploitation. Data from this study confirms this assessment, with 100 minors being exploited observed of a total of 419 CSWs in non-establishment areas. This section presents the main methods by which CSEC occurs in non-establishment areas. As shown in Table 15, the top four modes of exploitation within non-establishments were: street-based minors engaged in CSE, motoconchos, adult CSWs operating as madams, and street pimps. In line with data presented in Section 3.2, all of these modes were most commonly observed on streets in comparison to other non-establishment ‘types of places.’

**Table 15: Modes of Exploitation in Non-Establishments, by Type of Place**

| Mode                           | Beach    | Malecon  | Park      | Street    | TOTAL      |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Minors in street-based CSE     | 1        |          | 1         | 20        | 22         |
| Motoconchos                    | 1        | 1        |           | 17        | 19         |
| Adult CSWs operating as madams | 1        |          | 4         | 11        | 16         |
| Street pimps                   |          | 2        | 1         | 12        | 15         |
| CSE meeting places             |          |          |           | 1         | 1          |
| Independent adult CSWs         | 1        |          | 3         | 7         | 11         |
| No CSWs identified             |          | 4        | 5         | 7         | 16         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>4</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>75</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Non-Establishments Mode #1: Minors in Street-Based CSE**

In non-establishment areas, the most common form of CSEC observed by IJM data collectors was of minors in street-based CSE who did not have an observable controlling third party present. This accounted for 22% (n=22) of all interactions in street-based catchment areas. Data collectors observed a total of 57 minors in this mode. The majority of these interactions with minors took place on streets or pedestrian town centers (n=20), one took place in a beach area (n=1), and another took place in a park (n=1). The number of minors recorded operating in this mode is distinct from the ‘minors in CSE with no observable third party’ recorded in Section 3.2.1. The current section refers only to non-establishment locations and presents minors in street-based CSE as the most common mode of CSE recorded by data collectors in these locations.

In interactions with those who were confirmed as minors, all made initial attempts at concealing their age and eventually either stated their real age, gave an incorrect date of birth, or produced falsified identification documents. The majority of minors in CSE operating in this mode were Dominican, though a small number (n=3) were Haitian.

For each of the 22 observations of this mode of CSE, no pimp or intermediary could be identified who was controlling payment—instead the minors identified in this mode were negotiating both the price and services to be provided. Neither were data collectors able to confirm through observation alone that these minors were being manipulated through psychological fear or threats of violence. However, there were signs of vulnerability or presence of circumstances that had led them to engage in CSE and put them at risk of future exploitation. Many of the confirmed minors told data collectors that they had children themselves, or younger siblings to support. Many expressed a desire to return to school, and some displayed a clear wish not to engage in sex work but told data collectors they felt they had no choice. Clear evidence of a lack of control over the circumstances of their own life was shown in the statement frequently given to data collectors: that they could pay “whatever they wanted.”

Although data collectors did not observe third-party intermediaries in the interactions recorded in this mode, these minors were frequently working with or accompanied by older CSWs. Distinct from the mode ‘Adult CSWs operating as pimps,’ the older CSWs identified in this mode did not appear to be profiting from the minors’ engagement in CSE.

A notable theme within this mode of CSE was the normalized reaction to inquiries for minors engaged in CSE among the local population, as well as with sex tourists. In some cases, adult CSWs provided positive responses to data collectors as to where to find minors engaged in CSE and offered to bring them on the same day. Data collectors also encountered many groups of tourists who frequently provided information on where to find minors.

### **Non-Establishments Mode #2: Motoconchos**

Motoconchos (motorbike taxis) are one of the most common forms of in-city transport in the tourist areas of the DR. Motoconchos operating as pimps accounted for 19% (n=19) of all CSE activity identified in non-establishment areas. Of the 19 motoconchos encountered by data collectors, 17 were in street areas, one was on a 'malecon' (beach road), and the other was on a beach.

Motoconchos provided information to data collectors on when and where minors engaged in CSE could be found. They also frequently stated that more girls are available for CSE on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and that demand in non-tourist areas increased during the typical payday of the 15th and 30th of each month. In street areas where CSWs congregate, data collectors were offered girls periodically throughout the study:

*"Motoconchos are constantly stopping and calling out to you offering to take you to girls or to bring them."*

*"There are motoconchos going constantly up and down [the street] offering to take you to girls, or to go get girls."*

Data from this study shows that motoconchos operate as CSE intermediaries in towns across the DR. They often know the 'lay of the land' and are forthcoming about how to engage or navigate the commercial sex industry:

*"The motoconcho indicated to us that if a girl is standing alone, then she is likely to be available for CSE, but if she is standing with a boyfriend, she is not available."*

They also contribute to both the demand for minor girls and the supply of minors engaged in CSE due to the way in which they cultivate relationships with minors engaged in CSE and their friendship networks to profit from their exploitation. They are primarily motivated by money and are taking advantage of the higher demand for minors engaged in CSE to charge higher tips for minors than adults. Data collectors identified three ways in which motoconchos operate:

- a. They are opportunistic—they will bring minors from a nearby street where they know minors are and seek a tip for this service.
- b. They cultivate relationships in nearby neighborhoods where girls live in groups in residential areas close to areas of CSE.
- c. Some motoconchos cultivate relationships with girls from poorer neighborhoods outside towns in order to lure them into CSE.

Data collectors identified two methods of CSE used by motoconchos—pimping girls in person and offering to bring girls from elsewhere. Of the 34 CSWs observed in person attached to motoconchos, 10 were minors in CSE. One of the minors observed in person was 14 years old. In interactions with data collectors, motoconchos promised to bring an additional 17 minors. The amount of time it would take to bring a minor varied, but all those who promised minors said they could arrange it at the very latest by the following day. One motoconcho told data collectors he could bring them two minors "in one minute." In another interaction, the motoconcho "did not give a specific number of minors but said that he could get some in 20 minutes."

### **Non-Establishments Mode #3: Adult Commercial Sex Workers Operating as Madams**

The third most common method of CSEC data collectors encountered in non-establishment areas was adult female CSWs who were pimping minors to customers. Interactions with adult sex workers who were exploiting minors—some of whom were relatives—accounted for 16% (n=16) of all interactions in street areas. Data collectors encountered this mode of CSE in streets (n=11), parks (n=4) and on a beach (n=1).

In one interaction outside a house within a catchment area, an adult CSW stood in front of two minors, who data collectors determined were between 15 and 17 years old. The adult CSW told data collectors she was the mother of one of the minors engaged in CSE and that they could negotiate prices and sex services directly with her daughter. The other minor CSW was her cousin, and when the data collectors talked to the minors, they said they could also bring another two minors in five minutes, more cousins that were working in the beach park area nearby. In another similar interaction, an adult CSW was pimping four young minors aged 14, two of whom were her relatives.

In another interaction, data collectors encountered a minor with mental disabilities who was being exploited. She was 16, half-Dominican/half-Haitian. An adult CSW was controlling the payment and the sex services offered.

In this mode, 20 minors were being exploited by adult women. Four of these minors were under the age of 14. Additionally, adult CSWs operating as pimps or madams promised to bring an additional 13 minors for CSE. In one interaction, three adult CSWs told data collectors they could bring minors—‘as many as they wanted’—from a nearby town. These CSWs also stated that the parents of the minors were aware of the CSE activities their children were engaging in and had given them permission. In a similar interaction, data collectors noted:

*“The CSW we talked to promised to bring two girls: one 14-year-old and a 15-year-old. The park was a very dangerous area.”*

#### **Non-Establishments Mode #4: Street Pimps**

A fourth method of CSEC revealed by the study data was street pimps. Pimps (and madams) who profit from the exploitation of both adults and minors outside establishments in parks, streets and beach areas accounted for 15% (n=15) of all CSE. The majority of these interactions were in street areas (n=12); two were on a ‘malecon’ beach road; and one was in a park.

Data for street pimps was collected in seven cities on days ranging from Tuesday to Saturday, with most of the data collection taking place between the hours of 8:30pm and 11:00pm. On one street in a coastal town, data collectors found a total of 87 CSWs, 31 of whom were determined to be minors, accounting for 36% of all CSE in the catchment area. Of the 31 minors observed, 14 of these were confirmed as such, either by the minors stating their age or giving their date of birth or by the pimp stating their age. Data collectors noted that most minors would initially say they were 21, but that they would either give their real age or give an incorrect date of birth when questioned. Others would state their real age from the start. Of the 31 minors observed, eight minors were observed with older white men—either in the open bars on the side of the street, engaged in conversation on the street or walking together.

During another interaction in a coastal town, a street pimp offered to bring a 15-year old within 10 minutes and returned with a girl in five minutes. This street pimp, who confirmed the CSW was a minor, controlled the price and sex services to be offered and did not allow the girl to speak for herself (this minor was recorded as a ‘minor confirmed’). She also showed signs of fear. The pimp also told data collectors that CSWs in that area would ask for \$100 for sex, but that they could pay \$60 instead and give the pimps a tip. This same pimp promised to bring an additional 4 or 5 minors.

Of the 110 sex workers observed in non-establishment areas that were working for a street pimp, 41 minors were observed in person. Street pimps in non-establishment areas also offered to bring 26 minors for CSE, all within half an hour. One street pimp in a busy town center area offered to bring six minors within 10 minutes.

### **3.4 Presence of Foreigners**

#### **Key Findings**

- Data collectors observed non-Dominican customers in 23.3% of locations where commercial sex workers were present. Foreigners were in 25.9% of locations where minors were present who were engaged in CSE.
- The majority (70.5%) of the foreigners (suspected to be sex customers) were observed in nine locations in Bavaro, Boca Chica, Cabarete, Juan Dolio, and Sosua.

While surveying establishments and non-establishments, data collectors observed both Dominicans and non-Dominicans. Given the environment and nature of the locations, any foreigner present would be a suspected sex



customer; on the other hand, Dominicans present could not be blatantly assumed as suspected sex customers in all locations targeted. Thus, data collectors documented only the presence of foreigners suspected to be soliciting sex, not the total number of foreigners present. Across all locations, data collectors observed 268 non-Dominicans. There were also nine different locations where the teams were unable to determine the exact numbers and profiles of the foreigners present (across Rio San Juan, Nagua, Santiago, Bavaro, Cabarete, and Santo Domingo Central East). Of those foreigners that were specifically counted, 52.6% were seen in establishments, and 47.4% were seen in non-establishment locations.

In total, foreigners were observed in establishments and non-establishments that had minors present in the following towns surveyed: Boca Chica, Bajos de Haina, Cabarete, Las Terrenas, Rio San Juan, Santo Domingo Central East, and Sosua. Two locations where young minors (n = 7) were observed also had foreigners present: Bajos de Haina and Boca Chica. The beach in Boca Chica, where 1 minor was observed, noted 30-35 white men present. The street in Bajos de Haina, where 6 minors were observed, noted “only about 2 foreigners (white) among 200-400 people.”

### 3.4.1 Presence of Foreigners in Establishments

There were a total of 128 establishments surveyed that had at least one commercial sex worker present. In 28 of these establishments, the data collectors observed foreigners (21.9%) or non-Dominicans. There were 33 establishments surveyed that had at least one minor sex worker observed, and in these establishments, 9 had foreigners present (27.3%). The foreign presence in these 10 establishments included 39 white Americans, 23 “other white” foreigners, 4 Germans, at least one “European,” 1 Asian, and 1 Austrian (3 locations did not have specific numbers of foreigners noted). The data collectors observed the majority of these foreigners in three specific establishments throughout Bavaro, Cabarete, and Sosua.

While it is not firmly conclusive that all foreigners present in the targeted establishments are sex customers (or furthermore, were in the place to secure minors for CSE), data collection notes from several establishments indicate that foreigners were in these locations for that purpose:

*“The team saw foreigners, who they believed to be Italians. The Italians seemed to be looking for minors, as they paid no attention to the older sex worker, but would look at some of the younger girls in the area (who paid the Italians no attention and who were not apparently engaged in CSE).”*

*“Walked up to the bar at the back entrance to the hotel where we were staying. There is a bar on the corner, directly to the right of the back entrance. Talked to an American from New York who said we should check out the ladies in the back. 8 of them sitting there...”* Data collectors identified two as minors engaged in CSE.

### 3.4.2 Presence of Foreigners in Non-Establishments

There were a total of 35 distinct non-establishments surveyed that had at least one commercial sex worker present. In 10 of these, the data collectors observed foreigners suspected to be soliciting sex (28.6%). There were 21 distinct non-establishments that had at least one minor sex worker present, and in these locations, five had foreigners present (23.8%). The data collectors noted 94 “white men,” 2 Black Americans, and some other Caribbean (1 location did not have specific numbers of foreigners noted). Most of these foreigners were observed in two non-establishment areas in Sosua and Boca Chica, both of which had a high concentration of CSE activity. In one location where 30-35 “white men” were observed, data collectors recorded that a few of these men volunteered information to the data collectors about how to engage minors for CSE, indicating their familiarity with the environment.

### 3.4.3 Presence of Dominican Customers in Establishments and Non-Establishments

Of all interactions where at least one minor engaged in CSE was observed, only 22.1% were documented to have foreigners. This alone indicates that the vast majority of locations were supported by Dominican customers, as even most of the locations with foreigners observed also had Dominicans present. While the study team did not set out to capture the total number of customers in each location, the data collectors did record notes which indicate the overwhelm-

ing presence of Dominican customers. Here are three examples of notes from establishments where data collectors observed minors engaged in CSE:

*“We visited at 7:47 pm on Thursday. We saw 10 CSWs, all Dominican. The female manager/boss said there were more. We saw 14 customers, all Dominican. There were four sex rooms on the premises. The place was small and packed - lots of customers at this time (just before 8:00 pm)...”*

*“There were four other customers there while we were in there. No sex rooms on the premises. The whole street has lots of street pimps and taxi drivers out front that make money by taking you into these places, and they are always hustling you to go in.”*

*“We visited at 10:51 pm on Thursday, place was packed. There were 50 CSWs...The establishment has sex rooms on the premises.”*

The latter example mentioned the establishment was “packed,” but the data collectors recorded no foreigner presence in any of these places. Additionally, the notes from locations where no minors were observed to be engaged in CSE pointed to a much larger ratio of Dominican vs. non-Dominican customers:

*“They have video cameras in front and glass doors in the front. There were maybe 12 private sex rooms on the premises. Several of the rooms were locked and in use. There was a swimming pool in the middle of the establishment. There were 12-15 customers there. It’s a busy, hopping place.”* Data collectors recorded 2 to 3 Venezuelans at this site. All others were Dominican.

*“10 customers. One of the U.S. Americans said that around 11:00 PM lots of girls come, and also hang out on beach.”* Data collectors recorded five Americans at this site. The other five were Dominican.

*“8 customers. It is a car wash and bar.”* All customers at this location were Dominican.

*“Super loud inside. 20 customers there. This establishment is the kind of place where customers walk in and start seductively dancing with the CSWs. It is too loud to talk inside. At this establishment, Westerners do not fit in.”* All customers at this location were Dominican.

*“3 security guards out front, were friendly and smiled at us. 10 customers in there when we visited. Very loud place.”* All customers at this location were Dominican.

*“...The bar is a small place located upstairs. It’s a karaoke bar. There were 12 customers there, including 3 US American. The other customers were Dominican.”*

*“We visited at 8:20 PM on Thursday. There are six sex rooms on the premises. The establishment has a camera surveillance system. There were 2 customers inside, both Dominican.”*

*“We visited at 9:07 PM on Thursday. Establishment was pretty friendly. No sex rooms on the premises. Establishment is a dance bar. There were 10 customers, all Dominican.”*

Even the “high-class” establishments showed that Dominicans were the main customers: *“We visited at 10:43 PM on Thursday. They have sex rooms on the premises. You can also take CSWs out...The establishment is a very professional, high-dollar place...There were 3 customers inside, Dominican.”*

### 3.5 Law Enforcement Response and Views

#### Key Finding

- Police were present in 12.6% of the locations surveyed and did not appear to be proactively preventing the exploitation of minors occurring in those locations or enforcing the laws against CSEC and pimping.

In total, data collectors noted 26 locations (12.6%,  $n = 26/206$ ) throughout the target areas to have either national or tourist police (over 118 officers) present in or around the locations surveyed. One location (a street in Bajos de Haina) was actually in front of a police station and had a strong presence of officers. Only seven of these locations were establishments. Eighteen of these 26 locations had commercial sex workers present, eleven had minors present, and two had young minors present. Ten of these 26 locations also had foreigners present.

Table 16 shows the breakdown of police presence across the various towns surveyed, specifying whether the observance was in/around establishments or non-establishments. Given the number of locations surveyed, Sosua by far had the greatest police presence, with 15 police officers observed around just 2 establishments and 18 officers observed around 1 non-establishment location.

Table 16: Police Presence in Survey Area Across Each Town

| Town                       | # of Establishments Surveyed | # of Police Present In Establishments | # of Distinct Non-Establishments Surveyed | # of Police Present In Non-Establishments |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Bavaro                     | 9                            | 0                                     | 3   | 5   |
| Boca Chica                 | 5                            | 0                                     | 3   | 12  |
| Bajos de Haina             | 4                            | 0                                     | 2   | 0   |
| Cabarete                   | 7                            | 0                                     | 4   | 4   |
| Cotui                      | 7                            | 2                                     | 1   | 0   |
| Higüey                     | 7                            | 0                                     | 1   | 0   |
| Jarabacoa                  | 8                            | 2                                     | 2   | 2   |
| Juan Dolio                 | 0                            | 0                                     | 2   | 3   |
| La Romana                  | 13                           | 0                                     | 2   | 1   |
| Las Terrenas               | 15                           | 2                                     | 2   | 6   |
| La Vega                    | 6                            | 1                                     | 5   | 14  |
| Nagua                      | 4                            | 0                                     | 2   | 5   |
| Puerto Plata               | 3                            | 0                                     | 4   | 2   |
| Rio San Juan               | 6                            | 3                                     | 2   | 0   |
| Santiago                   | 9                            | 0                                     | 3   | 0   |
| Santo Domingo Central East | 14                           | 0                                     | 8   | 7   |
| Santo Domingo West         | 12                           | 0                                     | 3   | 0   |
| San Francisco              | 6                            | 0                                     | 3   | 6   |
| Sosua                      | 15                           | 15                                    | 3   | 18  |
| San Pedro                  | 0                            | 0                                     | 1   | 8   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>150</b>                   | <b>25</b>                             | <b>56</b>                                 | <b>93</b>                                 |

Data collectors documented a few specific instances which shed light on law enforcement’s response or view of CSE in these areas:

*In Bavaro: “We saw a couple of National Police trucks driving around on patrol, and some police on motor-bikes. There was 1 tourism police officer. The police did not seem particularly interested in what was happening there. Just on normal patrol.”*

In Las Terrenas: *“There is a police station across the street from the park. Police don’t seem to care about prostitution in the area. Several people told us that.”*

In Juan Dolio: *“The three police officers were Politur [tourist police], and they did nothing to intervene with activity.”*

In Santiago: *“A restaurant security guard informed us that police showed up yesterday and picked up 10-15 CSWs.”*

In Sosua, the tourist police seemed to want CSWs off the street and thus invisible to tourists walking the main street: *“We saw about 20 police total along the walking street. The tourist police were concerned about some establishments in the area but didn’t care about others. Saw around 8 tourist police walking around. Their primary concern seemed to be to ensure women were in the clubs and not on the streets. This was in the main section of the walking street...North of [a certain] street, the police didn’t care if the CSWs were in the street.”*

In Boca Chica, police officers actually went as far as pointing the data collection team in the direction of brothels: *“When we left we saw the cops were talking to our driver. The police did not appear to be associated with the establishment. We think they saw our SUV and assumed we had money and stopped us for some money...[they] said we’d have no problems, but said there were only three brothels in Boca Chica that have girls. They also came right over to the door of a brothel in Boca Chica and had friends there.”*

In San Francisco: *“The manager Julio told us they have 4 minors: one 15-year old, a 16-year old, and two 17-year olds. Julio said we shouldn’t worry about the police. ‘They don’t worry about those things here, and they are not going to bother,’ he said.”*

There were many indications that intermediaries, establishment owners, and even commercial sex workers themselves knew of ‘protocols’ about sex workers and minors in certain establishments and non-establishment locations. While some responses and witnessed scenarios clearly indicate knowledge that the activity is illegal, others do not point undoubtedly to one purpose, limiting the ability to make generalized conclusions about the targeted locations without more qualitative research. These protocols could be implemented due to fear of law enforcement or some other legal action, or simply as a business preference. Quotes below highlight some of these protocols the data collectors were informed of or witnessed:

In Cotui: *“Very young crowd; P.A. announcement at 8:30pm telling all minors to leave; I.D.s being checked; waitress said that management adamant about no minors being at location after 8:30.”* In this location, however, the data collectors were able to meet the minors engaged in CSE in the parking lot.

In La Vega: *“A man from the neighborhood who knew some girls said CSWs worked independently, as establishment doesn’t tolerate ‘women hanging around’ so they usually congregate on street.”* On the other hand, at another establishment, that security guard said, *“Minors [engaged in CSE] are in the area on weekends and they are welcome in this establishment...”*

In Sosua: *“A CSW said that minors weren’t allowed, but that this was not enforced by the security guard.”*

In Juan Dolio: *“The receptionist told them that they could bring women to the hotel, but that the hotel did not facilitate CSWs. The receptionist also said that if they brought a CSW, the CSW had to bring their I.D. The team interpreted that statement as meaning that the hotel wanted the accompanying CSW to prove major status.”*

In Higüey: *“Data collectors were told that 15 girls usually work, but only four were working when this location was visited. CSW showed pictures of girls posing, including the minor (17). Data collectors told they would have to meet the girls in the parking lot, because establishment would not let minor enter.”*

In Jarabacoa: *“Security guard stated that minors [engaged in CSE] would be present on the street, but not allowed in bar. CSE activity happens between midnight and 4am.”*

In La Romana: *“The establishment is an open air bar/restaurant...one CSW said she could get minors to come and hang out in the area, but not to come inside the establishment. We saw motoconchos coming back and dropping off MOs in the area...”*

At a non-establishment location (park) in Boca Chica, the data collectors noted, *“The motoconchos are very leery of discussing minors.”*

In Cabarete near a beach, data collectors recorded, *“Several police in the area, which is the reason the pimp did not want to bring the 2 minors here. He followed us later on and met us again...where he delivered one of the minors—she was confirmed as 16 years old.”*

In Santo Domingo Central East, the data collectors talked with six different taxi drivers along one street. They reported, *“Taxi drivers #3-6 all said they couldn’t get us minors because it was illegal. Note that Taxi drivers #1-2 said this at first also, but after further conversation/persuasion taxi drivers #1-2 then said they could get us minors, while #3-6 did not.”*

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<sup>34</sup> As created and agreed upon by the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

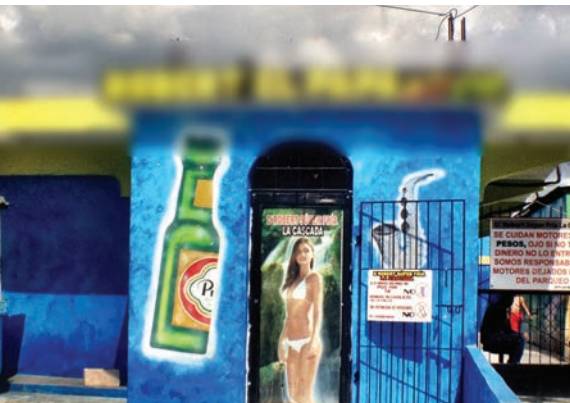
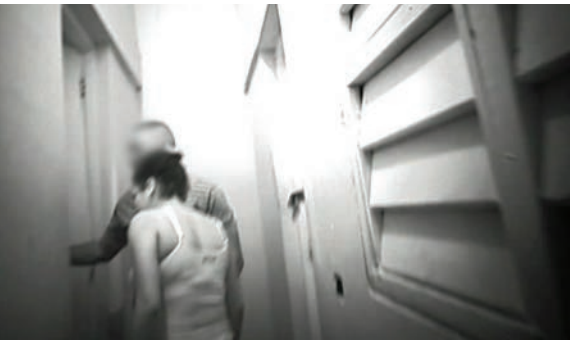
<sup>35</sup> This report calculates the prevalence of CSEC as the total number of children (0-17 years) observed (MO) in commercial sexual exploitation in the targeted areas over the total number of commercial sex workers (minors and majors) observed in the targeted areas.

<sup>36</sup> Of all establishments surveyed in the study, 37.6% (68/150) had security guards present.

<sup>37</sup> IX Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda ([http://censo2010.one.gob.do/resultados/Resumen\\_resultados\\_generales\\_censo\\_2010.pdf](http://censo2010.one.gob.do/resultados/Resumen_resultados_generales_censo_2010.pdf))

<sup>38</sup> ‘Minors engaged in CSE with no observable third party’ is used in this report to describe those minors who showed no signs of visible control, coercion, or influence by another person at the time of data collection. However, the data is a snapshot in time and thus cannot provide information on the actual control or influence exhibited by another person or how the minor entered the sex industry.







# **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

These conclusions and recommendations are intended both to inform strategies for combating CSEC in the Dominican Republic, as well as to identify areas for further research on the nature and scope of the crime.

## 4.1 Prevalence of Victims of CSEC in the Dominican Republic

The overall purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of victims of CSEC in target areas of the DR. Data from this study found the prevalence to be 10.0% in the target areas. Prevalence of CSEC was higher in parks, beaches and street areas, where 23.9%, or nearly one in every four individuals observed, were under 18. In establishments, such as bars, clubs, and car washes, 5.8%, or one in twenty individuals, were minors in CSEC. A significant majority (92.8%) of these minors in CSEC were Dominican.

The study differentiated between young minors (0-14 years) and 'older' minors (15-17 years) for both cultural and enforcement reasons. The majority of minors (94.5%) working in the commercial sex industry in the Dominican Republic were between the ages of 15 and 17. This study found very few minors below the age of 14 (5.5%).

### Recommendations

One lacking element surrounding the prevalence figures is a full spectrum understanding of the minors' circumstances leading up to and around their engagement in commercial sexual exploitation. This is a critical gap for qualitative research to fill in order to design effective prevention and deterrence strategies and programs. Furthermore, while the methodology and locations targeted in this study were designed to capture CSEC of primarily women and girls, data collectors did not observe any minor males engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. This might suggest a different methodology and data collection strategy would be necessary or that the occurrence of this is not common. Nevertheless, additional research in this area, perhaps using a respondent driven sampling methodology, should explore whether the sexual exploitation of male children is occurring in the Dominican Republic and if so, should seek to further understand the scale and nature of that phenomenon.

Additionally, the original scoping assessment and interviews with key stakeholders identified the location types most commonly hosting or facilitating commercial sexual exploitation. Private homes were, in most cases, impenetrable with the chosen methodology; thus, the scale and nature of sexual exploitation occurring within these more hard-to-access places is unknown.

## 4.2 Modes of CSEC in the Dominican Republic

The study found that modes of CSEC were differed based on whether the sex work was being sold from a non-establishment (street areas, parks, beaches, etc.) or an establishment (bars, brothels, meeting places, etc.). Overall, compared to the total number of sex workers observed, minors were observed more frequently among non-establishment locations.

The majority of minors observed in CSE within non-establishments did not appear to have a controlling third party (pimp, madam or other intermediary) present who was profiting from their activities. Across all minors observed, 64.1% were noted as not exhibiting observable indications of third-party exploitation. These minors negotiate their own prices, and services are provided directly with clients, though no firm conclusions can be established as to whether or how much of their financial intake is passed on to a third party. The second most common mode within non-establishment locations was ‘motoconchos’ (motorbike taxi drivers) operating as pimps for minors, either pimping girls in person or offering to bring minors from elsewhere. Other common modes of CSE are adult CSWs operating as madams and street pimps exploiting minors either in person or offering to bring minors from elsewhere.

The majority of establishment-based CSE takes place informally, in bars, clubs, and known ‘meeting places,’ where clients can consistently find and make contact with adults and minors engaged in CSE. Bars, clubs, and even car washes in the DR also profit directly from CSE through charging ‘bar fines’ to clients to engage with sex workers who are loosely connected or working for these establishments. Adults and minors are also sexually exploited in brothels that have rooms on premises. In this mode, brothel owners directly control and profit from CSE.

Throughout the study, a common method that was used by pimps, madams, and intermediaries was offering to bring a minor from elsewhere. In these interactions, data collectors received positive responses for being able to secure minors in 90% of the towns surveyed.

Interestingly, the payment requested for services between minors and adults was on average the same, as in many cases the minors engaged in CSE were also in the company of adult CSWs. There were no interactions where the services for the minors exceeded the payment for a nearby adult CSW’s services, but there were a few instances where the minor’s services were quoted as less than the adults. This comparable pricing for services from minors and majors could simply be given in order to hide the minority status. However, given the nature of the phenomenon and the observed lack of deterrence, comparable pricing for services from minors and majors could also indicate that, with improved enforcement, the prevalence of CSEC could be reduced through an increase in the “cost” associated with the activity, leaving little economic incentive for exploiting minors. While this would not deter or substantially affect actual pedophiles who plan to engage in sexual activity with children, by increasing the risk of legal action, this would at least make it harder to get a pimp/madam/intermediary to offer a minor. If enforcement does improve, it is plausible that the services of minors would increase in price to offset the higher “costs” associated with engaging in CSEC.

## Recommendations

Exploring the circumstances of those minors engaged in commercial sexual exploitation with no observable third party was beyond the scope of this study. More in-depth qualitative research involving interviews with these minors would uncover more information about their situations, the nature of third-party exploitation, and any ‘hidden’ nature of non-observable psychological manipulation exerted by pimps, madams, and other intermediaries. This is critical for both public justice system officials and other service providers in their respective implementation of interventions (for instance, in sensitized investigative techniques needed to uncover coercion or deception in CSE of minors that is not immediately observable and in tailored prevention and care programs for vulnerable and/or exploited children and youth).

Most criminals did not provide rooms to engage in sexual conduct with minors. In other words, the criminals sold minors for sex, but the customer took the minor to a nearby hotel or cabaña. While beyond the scope of this study, the results strongly suggest the existence of a robust hotel and cabaña industry that provides rooms for adults to use to engage in sexual activity with minors. Interviews or further investigation with a variety of business owners, targeted particularly towards local, small hotels and cabañas, would help provide information to policymakers and those entities establishing regulations on the business and tourism sector about the connection and involvement of the hotel and bar industry in facilitation or provision of an enabling environment for commercial sexual exploitation.

## 4.3 CSEC Locations in the Dominican Republic

Commercial sexual exploitation of children was present in all but two towns surveyed. However, there are also clear hotspots of higher concentrations of minors engaged in CSE in both tourist locations and inland towns. Of the total number of sex workers observed, the highest numbers of minors being sexually exploited were in Bajos de Haina,

Nigua, Cabarete, Cotui, Rio San Juan, San Francisco and Sosua.

Given the predominantly street-based nature of CSE in the Dominican Republic, the study also captured data on the number of minors promised, an indicator of motivation, ease, and accessibility in securing minors for sexual exploitation. In all but two towns, minors were promised; furthermore, the numbers of minors promised by pimps or other intermediaries were highest in Bajos de Haina, Las Terrenas, La Vega, and Santo Domingo Central East.

No data collection team was denied access into any establishment. The level of access of potential clients to engage in CSEC was determined not by ethnic origin or language spoken, but by money. This finding is an indication of the high levels of demand for, and supply of, CSE as a whole in the country.

### **Recommendations**

The original scoping and stakeholder assessment yielded the twenty towns for targeted data collection in this study. This assessment also indicated a higher number of Haitian girls engaged in CSEC in the Dominican Republic than what the data collectors observed in this study. This data gap could be the result of a misperception among stakeholders of the prevalence of sexual exploitation of Haitian children or a hidden group missed through the limitations of the methodology and/or choice of locations. A first step would be to conduct further research along the Haitian border.

## **4.4 Perpetrators of CSEC in the Dominican Republic**

When CSEC flourishes, both the supply and demand sides are present. Buyers of CSEC as well as those exploiting children for commercial sexual exploitation are considered perpetrators of this crime. Motoconchos, adult sex workers, street-based madams, and pimps represent a ready threat for vulnerable minors. These men and women observed in this study who are exploiting minors in the commercial sex industry seem to be mostly opportunistic criminals rather than organized criminal networks. The majority were Dominican. These perpetrators exploit minors by profiting from their sex services to clients and by controlling prices and services provided.

While it was not an objective of the study to document the customers looking to buy sex, data collectors did record the presence of foreigners, as non-Dominicans in these locations would be more easily suspected as sex customers (and potential buying perpetrators). Foreigners were present in 21.9% of establishments and 28.6% of non-establishments surveyed where there was at least one CSW. The overwhelming majority of foreigners observed were “white Americans” or “other whites.” Within establishments, the majority of foreigners were observed in three specific establishments throughout Bavaro, Cabarete, and Sosua. Moreover, most of the foreigners observed in non-establishments were in two specific locations in Sosua and Boca Chica.

### **Recommendations**

Given the low percentage of foreign presence in places where CSE and CSEC were happening, additional research in the form of interviews of Dominican “johns” should be conducted to better understand the attitudes, motivations, perceptions, and common behaviors of men who buy sex from CSWs and, in particular, from minors. Interviews with non-Dominican “johns” would also be helpful in understanding any differences between the two groups of “johns” in regards to their behavioral patterns, knowledge of the laws surrounding CSE and CSEC in the country, any perceptions of risk, or mentions of deterrence.

Finally, police were present in 12.6% of locations surveyed in the study, and when present, they did not appear to make any efforts to enforce laws against CSEC, even though a reasonable observer could see minors engaging with adults. Preventing CSEC will require a significant and proactive law enforcement presence. Supplementary qualitative research with law enforcement officials, studying their will and perceptions of the CSEC, as well as their knowledge of the relevant laws, would shed light on how to effectively engage these ‘first responders.’

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