



Excerpt from the book:

Fondation Scelles, Charpenel Y. (under the direction of), *Sexual Exploitation: New Challenges, New Answers (5th Global Report)*, Paris, 2019.

© Fondation Scelles, 2019

Cautionary note: The terms 'child prostitution' and 'prostituted children' are used in this text to denote children that are sexually exploited and sexually trafficked. The connotative manner in which these definitions are perceived and analyzed may differ due to linguistic, cultural, and perceptual differences.

ZAMBIA

	POPULATION 17,1 million		GDP PER CAPITA 1,509.8 USD
	POLITICAL SYSTEM Multi-Party Republic with Presidential Regime		HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX 139 th rank among 187 countries
	GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX 124 th rank among 147 countries		CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 96 th rank among 180 countries

In July 2012, the World Bank identified Zambia as a middle-income country due to the rise in copper prices in recent decades and the international aid it receives. The country thus benefits from relative political stability and economic benefits from tourism, with more than 956,000 tourists visiting the country in 2016 (*Le Point Afrique*, August 19, 2014; *PopulationData.net*). However, Zambians face extreme poverty, with 60% of the population living below the poverty line and 42% living in extreme poverty (*Central Statistical Office of Zambia*). Zambia is a country of origin, transit and destination for prostitution, an increasingly worrying evil that affects women and children, but also, to a lesser extent, men. Prostitution takes place in particular, in the Lusaka and Solwezi regions. Human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes is particularly prevalent in Livingstone, Chirundu, Chipata, Kapiri-Mposhi, Kasumbalesa and Nakonde, all of which share borders with Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana. There are currently no official

figures on national prostitution and no recent official reports. However, it is estimated that there are nearly 9,285 people involved in prostitution in Lusaka. They are mainly found in bars, clubs, hotels, brothels, streets and universities, including the University of Zambia-UNZA, the National Institute of Public Administration-NIPA and the University of Lusaka.

Child prostitution

In Zambia, there is a strong link between child marriages and the traditions of certain ethnic groups (among the 72 existing groups) on the one hand, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children on the other. In April 2015, research conducted by UNICEF confirmed the existence of child marriage in at least six regions (Katete, Lusaka, Luwingu, Mufulira, Mwinilunga and Senanga). This practice is motivated by families' desires to escape poor living conditions and extreme poverty. The marriage rate for women

aged 20 to 24 who were married at the age of 18 is at 31% (UNICEF, 2017; Panos Institute Southern Africa-PSAf, *Media Brief on Ending Child Marriage in Zambia*, 2014). Zambia has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world: reaching 60% in the eastern region of the country, and up to 28% in the capital, Lusaka. Child marriage is for some an integral part of a survival economy. The groom's family pays a sum, or "lobola", to the bride's family before the ceremony. The amount of the sum depends on various factors, such as the young woman's level of education. In the book "Nightlife", Wezi Ngwenya recounts the lives of some prostituted persons in Lusaka. One of her stories follows Lulu; a 17-year-old girl who fled her parent's arranged marriage with an old man. After defying her parents, she had to find a way to provide for herself. Lulu's story is not uncommon. Many people who escape arranged marriage later find themselves forced into prostitution. Despite a lack of current reports, the NGO *ECPAT International* determined in 2014 that nearly 500 out of 100,000 children were involved in prostitution. In recent years, there has been an increase in internal child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, within the context of sex tourism. Both local residents and foreign tourists take advantage of these phenomena, including Chinese investors who are involved in the mining and construction sectors. According to a 2015 *ECPAT International* survey, sex tourism involving children is common within Zambia, most notably in Livingstone, the tourist capital, but also in Nakatindi and Solwezi. Most children involved are just 10-years-old. While many are involved due to financial hardships, some children are pressured into prostitution. Local hotel owners often encourage sex tourism, who not only offer private rooms, but also act as

intermediaries between sex buyers and young people involved in prostitution. The *ECPAT International* study shows that the lack of information on this subject is partly due to the reluctance of these intermediaries to testify.

Prostitution and precariousness

As previously mentioned, prostitution is above all linked to a precarious economic situation. Faced with rising food prices, a low human development index, rising fuel and transport prices, inequalities continue to widen. Suffering from these hardships, Zambians are ready to resort to extreme measures. Some groups are particularly vulnerable: students, single mothers, street children, the homeless and the unemployed. Many students are involved in prostitution to pay for their tuition fees. Indeed, corruption does not allow disadvantaged students to obtain scholarships. University dormitories can thus be transformed into brothels. Some students play the role of "Madams", they communicate with sex buyers and recruit young girls. The sex buyers, who are mostly men, are called "Sugar Daddies". Prices depend on the time at which the trick takes place and the physical appearance of the young woman. The price of a girl who is considered to be within a so-called 'superior category' is ZMW 500 (USD 42). In some cases, young women are classified into categories ("high", "medium" or "low"), based on their physical appearance. "Connection" fees vary between ZMW 50 to ZMW 150 (USD 4 to USD 13).

An ineffective law confronting the prostitution system

Despite condemning the acts of procuring and managing a brothel, Zambian legislation does not provide an exact definition of prostitution. The law penalizes those who are living off incomes that are based on prostitution, soliciting

and the trade of sexual acts. In addition, the Criminal Code defines and punishes child prostitution, procuring, and commercial exploitation of children. Despite the law stating that any individual involved in child prostitution shall receive a prison sentence ranging from 20 years to life, Zambia's law remains weak and ineffective. Inadequate legislation and the absence of prosecutions of sex buyers do not highlight the alleged fight against the prostitution system. In regard to the convictions of child sex offenders, several witnesses are needed due to a lack of material evidence. While this provision prevents false accusations, it also makes it impossible to convict criminals. The country's legislation allows criminals to escape their sentences and allows for corrupt law enforcement officials to encourage and maintain the prostitution system. While sanctions are relatively rare, they are applied when given. Corruption is very prevalent in the country (*Transparency International*, 2017). Some witnesses claim that police officers protect brothel owners in exchange for money or favors. The police officers are then accomplices of the crimes committed. The Penal Code does not penalize sex buyers, as the act of buying a sexual act is not illegal. Without the criminalization of demand, the fight against prostitution is difficult to envisage. In the case of adult prostitution, however, the laws do not seem to be enforced. Prostitution does not only stem from the economic difficulties experienced by the most disadvantaged, but also from the corrupt system that seems to favor its existence.

Technologies and the growth of online demand

The upsurge of new technologies has improved the daily lives of many Zambians. Unfortunately, at the same time, it has favored the development of the prostitution system. According to the 2015 *ECPAT*

International report, social networks have facilitated communication between prostituted persons and sex buyers. With regards to child prostitution, Facebook remains the main platform used due to its free nature and lack of oversight. Nowadays, Internet is much more accessible thanks to the abundance of Internet cafés found everywhere. In an Internet café, one only has to pay ZMW 0.2 (USD 0.02) per minute for Internet access. For many students, WhatsApp and Facebook groups are also used to connect people involved within prostitution and sex buyers. The trade of photos and videos is equally widespread. Some people send sexual photos of themselves in exchange for sums ranging from ZMW 10 (USD 0.84) to ZMW 50 (USD 4), while videos make ZMW 100 (USD 8). Surprisingly, these practices are often openly shared on social networks, rather than secretly as one would imagine. In some cases, the "Madam" publicly posts victims' phone numbers on Facebook, an act similar to soliciting, which is punishable under the Criminal Code. In fact, many of these intermediaries seem unaware that their actions are considered to be a crime, and often do not realize they are encouraging child prostitution. According to an interview conducted by a journalist from the Zambia Daily Mail at UNZA and NIPA universities, "Madams" often think there is nothing wrong with recruiting women and men who are just 17-years-old.

Prostitution: an active struggle?

Does the government realize the extent of this phenomenon and its impact on Zambia's economy and society? Despite significant gaps in legislation, the phenomenon has not raised any questions or debate from the government. Only non-profit organizations seem to be actively fighting against prostitution, such as

Tacintha, based in Lusaka. The NGO's mission is to promote the rehabilitation and development of certain tools that enable concerned individuals to exit prostitution. These organizations depend on the support of donors and volunteers. The *Tacintha* team walks the streets of Lusaka, to talk to prostituted people and inform them about their program, but also to provide them with opportunities to change their lifestyles. Unfortunately, these organizations are threatened by a lack of resources.

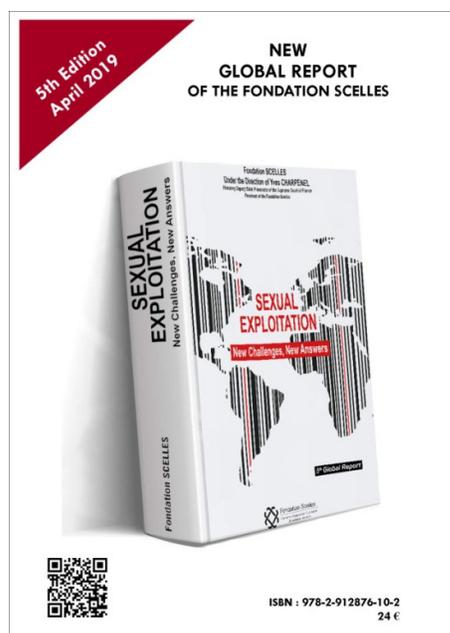
In conclusion, the shortcomings of the Zambian government and its lack of involvement in the fight against prostitution make it difficult to effectively fight this phenomenon and to strengthen its legislation, instead allowing for corruption among officials. Despite the authorities' indifference towards the issue, the presence of several NGOs proves that civil society is aware of the need to act. It is absolutely essential for the government to amend the existing laws, and to criminalize those who purchase sexual services. The government must include NGOs in this fight, and allocate a larger budget. If officials become more active in the fight, corruption within the law enforcement sector and public bodies may disappear. In regard to the prostitution that occurs within universities, scholarships should be provided to students who need them most.

Sources

- Bansal S., « *Tacintha* sets Zambia sex workers on a better path », *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 9, 2012.
- Diawara M., « *Zambie* : bientôt un pays à revenu moyen », *Le Point Afrique*, August 19, 2014.
- ECPAT International, Children in Need Network Zambia, Defence for Children-ECPAT Netherlands, *Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, Country specific report: Zambia*, June 2015.
- Kalalanda V., « *Omela Mumba*: A walk through a fleshpot », *Lusaka Star*, March 20, 2017.

- Ngwenya W., *Nightlife: Real life stories about women working the streets of Lusaka, Zambia*, April 14, 2017.
- Panos Institute Southern Africa (PSAf), *Media brief on ending child marriage in Zambia*, 2014.
- Republic of Zambia, *Penal Code Act, Chapter 87 of the Laws of Zambia, Chapter XV, Offences Against Morality, Section 136-150*, 2002.
- Saluseki J., Mwizabi G., Sang'andu E., « Brothel Ramparts in Markets », *Times of Zambia*, June 20, 2014.
- UNICEF, *UNICEF Annual Report 2016 – Zambia*, 2016.
- imba M., « Is curbing prostitution on the demand side the answer? », *Times of Zambia*, February 13, 2014.

- PopulationData.Net (Zambia): <https://en.populationdata.net/countries/zambia/>
- World Bank, *Data profile: Zambia, 2018* : <https://data.worldbank.org/country/zambia>
- Central Statistical Office of Zambia, Index Mundi, « Zambia Population below poverty line – Economy »: https://www.indexmundi.com/zambia/population_below_poverty_line.html
- Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2017: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017



The Global Report is produced by the International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation, in collaboration with internal and external experts (magistrates, lawyers, social workers, NGO leaders...), and the support of local NGO correspondents or international researchers.



The **Fondation Jean et Jeanne Scelles**, recognized as a public utility since 1994 and as a consultative status with ECOSOC, is an independent, non-profit organization based in Paris (France) dedicated to fight the system of prostitution and the exploitation of prostituted persons, through information, analysis, advocacy, trainings, awareness initiatives and legal actions. The **Fondation Jean et Jeanne Scelles** is a co-founding member of the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP International) which was launched in 2013 and today brings together 28 abolitionist NGOs from 22 countries.

The **International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation** (Observatoire international de l'exploitation sexuelle) is a worldwide hub which allows for information exchange on the system of prostitution. The hub is regularly consulted by French and foreign experts including NGOs, institutions, journalists, lawyers, researchers and those involved in the defense of human rights. The goals of the **International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation** are:

- to analyze all the aspects of the phenomenon: prostitution, sex tourism, procurement, child pornography, sex buyers, human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation...
- to encourage reflection and to take a stand
- to inform the public who are interested in these issues

CONTACT

Sandra AYAD, Head of the International Observatory on Sexual Exploitation
sandra.ayad@fondationscelles.org

14 rue Mondétour
75001 Paris - France



www.fondationscelles.org
 Tw: @Fond_Scelles
 Fb: @FondationScelles