

Child Prostitution in Cebu Alarming - ILO [International Labor Organization]

Publisher: (c) 2005 The Philippine Star
Publish Date: 2005-06-13

CEBU There are more child prostitutes in Cebu City than in the cities of Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu, last year's study of the International Labor Organization-International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPECL) revealed.

The ILO-IPECL, with the help of the University of San Carlos, conducted the study from December 2003 to January 2004 and came up with the numbers which it said were alarming.

Cebu City had 149 child prostitutes, while Mandaue City had 22 and Lapu-Lapu City, 10. The ILO, however, admitted that this count was only a small portion of the actual number that remains unreported.

Jesus Macasil, ILO-IPEC representative, said, "This is very alarming because this only involves a portion of the real number. This does not include yet prostitution in schools or the 'prosti-tuition,' the akyat-barko, and those who work in spas and bars."

In Cebu City, Macasil said the study covered only 20 barangays, and topping the list was Kamagayan with 30 child prostitutes, followed by Lorega-San Miguel with 26, Suba with 16, and Ermita with 14.

Most of these children aged 11 to 17 are classified as "freelancers," or doing their trade while they roam the city streets.

The study may not be extensive as it should have been, but the ILO-IPECL said this should be enough to be alarmed and to do something about child prostitution.

The agency timed its announcement with yesterday's observance of World Day Against Child Labor as a way to gain support for the campaign against child labor, which apparently includes prostitution.

Ligaya Abadesco, of the Visayan Forum Foundation Inc., said everybody should be alarmed because more and more children are being prostituted or forced to work in hazardous environments.

Abadesco said children should have education, but poverty, lack of value formation and peer pressure, among other factors, have led them astray.

In another ILO survey last year, Southern Luzon was found to have the most number of child laborers in the country with 416,000, but this did not include child prostitutes.

Central Visayas ranked second with 388,000, followed by Eastern Visayas with 349,000. Western Visayas was fifth with 328,000.

Of the total number of child laborers in Central Visayas, 217,000 or 55.8 percent were exposed to hazardous working conditions, with the males outnumbering the females.

Of these child laborers, 63.3 percent were in the agriculture sector, 21.3 percent in services, and 8.8 percent in the industrial sector.

Ref.: http://www.libertadlatina.org/Asia_Philippines_Cebu_Child_Prostitution_Rates_Alarming_06-13-2005.htm