

Editorial

Here is the second issue of our journal for the year 2021. We are very pleased to publish these contributions from a variety of authors and backgrounds.

The first contribution – ‘“On My Own”: The Exploitation of Street-involved Children on the Rapidly Changing Thai-Cambodian Border’ – is written by Jarrett Davis and Glenn Miles. They argue that the effects of regional and national conflicts often have pronounced impacts on the psychosocial and socioeconomic development of children, not only for those who directly experience conflict, but also for subsequent generations. The Cambodian city of Poipet, which runs along the Thai-Cambodian border, has been in a unique position to observe these effects. From the refugee camps on the Thai side of the border in the 1980s, through the writing of Cambodia’s constitution in the 1990s, to the long period of recovery in which the areas have become synonymous with unsafe migration, trafficking, and various forms of exploitation. The research of Davis and Miles draws on primary data collected from 80 street-involved Cambodian children living and/or working along the Thai-Cambodian border area of Poipet and Aranyaprathet and offers an initial analysis of their key experiences, perspectives, and vulnerabilities. The data of Davis and Miles’ article shows that children who crossed the border for work were exposed to a heightened risk of physical and sexual violence. Gender was also found to be a considerable risk factor for street-involved children, with boys twice as likely to disclose experiences of physical violence, and four-times as likely to disclose experiences of sexual violence. Despite this, neither males nor females perceived sexual violence as a danger for males. This article provides a resource for all involved in supporting these children throughout the region and calls for a more nuanced and informed discussion on the vulnerabilities of street-involved young people in attempting to prevent and address their exposure to and experience of physical and sexual violence.

Our second contribution is written by Suzanne Hoff, who gives us a practitioner’s insight in her article ‘The Importance of Strategic Litigation to Fight Human Trafficking and (Labour) Exploitation’. Hoff calls for an increased use of strategic litigation by NGOs in the anti-trafficking field to ensure long-lasting systemic reforms. While the prosecution of human trafficking or related severe forms of labour exploitation, like forced labour, tends to be quite challenging and prosecutions and convictions are seriously lagging behind, it is argued that strategic litigation, meaning continuing legal action, aimed at achieving rights-related changes in law, policy, practice, and/or public awareness, can help to ensure that justice is delivered to victims, as several landmark cases also show. Efforts to counter human trafficking through strategic litigation by NGOs remain in their infancy as they are resource-intensive and require access to experienced lawyers in high-level courts. Hoff discusses some examples and dilemmas, and identifies the needs for NGOs to be able to use strategic litigation more often as an effective tool to effectuate systemic change.

Our final submission is from Eva Luna Nijenhuis. With her article 'On a Continuum of Roles: Women as Key Socialization Actors of Other Women in Al-Shabaab' Nijenhuis responds to the lack of research on the active role of women in terrorist organisations by uncovering how women in terrorist organizations, specifically Al-Shabaab, socialize with other women who enter or change roles within the organization through a carefully conducted literature review. Her innovative approach gives us insights from the existing literature on the role of women in terrorist organizations and the current knowledge on organizational socialization (part of organizational studies). Nijenhuis's research shows that women are active in a wide array of roles and that they should not only be viewed as passive victims. Furthermore, women who are already familiar with the terrorist organization are especially important for the socialization of female newcomers and their role in maintaining the terrorist organization should not be ignored. The article also sheds light on how the theory of organizational socialization could be improved as the results provide a better understanding on how socialization might differ depending on the degree of autonomy of newcomers and what insights it might provide for other criminal organizations.

We hope you all enjoy reading these articles.