



# External Evaluation of IJM's Program to Combat Child Sex Trafficking in Philippines, 2003-2016

IJM PHILIPPINES | 2017

Summary prepared by International Justice Mission.  
[Full evaluation report](#) available: [IJM.org/studies](http://IJM.org/studies)

## IJM'S MODEL

IJM protects the poor from violence by working alongside criminal justice systems in nearly 20 communities throughout Africa, Latin America, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Our theory of change is simple: When laws are enforced, violence can stop.

Through a unique model called *Justice System Transformation*, IJM collaborates with local authorities to rescue victims and restrain criminals, seeking justice for individuals while identifying gaps in the criminal justice system. IJM partners with authorities to close these gaps by improving laws, forming specialized units or courts, building cross-agency collaboration, and providing resources and training, so that criminals can no longer exploit with impunity. Globally, IJM is helping to protect 21 million people from violence.

## IJM PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, IJM has partnered with authorities to protect children from commercial sex trafficking and strengthen the justice system response in Metro Cebu, Metro Manila and Pampanga. Over the past decade, the number of children being trafficked in these hotspots has plummeted.

## EVALUATION OVERVIEW

In 2016, IJM hired external evaluators to conduct a summative [evaluation of IJM's program](#) to determine its relevance, effectiveness and impact during the implementation period from 2003 to June 2016 and to assess the potential sustainability of IJM's work and results in the Philippines. Dr. Robin Haar led the evaluation, employing multiple data collection methods and tools, including: a desk review of research on commercial sex trafficking of children in the Philippines, and IJM program documents and reports; consultations with IJM staff in Washington, DC, and the Philippines; on-the-ground interviews and focus group discussions with a sample of 93 respondents (including Philippine government officials, NGO representatives and IJM staff); analysis of IJM's casework data; and consultation on preliminary findings and conclusions with IJM staff.

**"This evaluation found that IJM's Program was effective on multiple levels, including improving the abilities of law enforcement to combat child sex trafficking, improving prosecution of child sex trafficking cases, improving courts' handling of child sex trafficking cases, and improving aftercare for child sex trafficking victims."**



The Philippines was a hotspot for child sex trafficking when IJM started operations in the early 2000s. There was no specialized anti-trafficking law, no unified plan, and police, courts and social services lacked resources to catch traffickers.



As IJM partnered with local authorities to rescue over 1,450 victims and convict over 175 traffickers, we identified gaps in the justice system and built training modules to equip officials—from police to prosecutors to social service providers.



In 2010, IJM was invited to serve on the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, which developed a national plan of action. Soon after, the Philippines passed a stronger law, and today there is a national dedicated anti-trafficking police force.



Now, the Philippines justice system effectively deters traffickers from exploiting children; IJM studies have shown over 75% fewer minors being sold for commercial sex in the cities where we have worked.

## KEY FINDINGS

"In terms of impact, this evaluation found support for IJM's [theory of change] that improving enforcement of anti-sex trafficking laws would increase the prosecution and conviction of traffickers, leading to an increased deterrence towards child sex trafficking and resulting in reduced prevalence of child sex trafficking. Furthermore, reducing the prevalence of child sex trafficking and closing entertainment establishments involved in commercial sexual exploitation of children would lead to an increase in confidence in the public justice system to combat child sex trafficking."

### Highlights from the external program evaluation show that IJM's program in the Philippines:

- **Equipped police, resulting in victims rescued and traffickers arrested:** IJM advocated for the Philippine National Police to establish dedicated anti-trafficking units in the three project areas, and then trained and provided these units with intelligence, logistical support, and technical assistance needed to arrest traffickers and rescue sex trafficking victims (100% of respondents recognized IJM's contribution to helping police arrest sex traffickers);
  - **Improved prosecutions and child-friendly court practices resulting in convictions:** The majority of respondents recognized improvement in the abilities of prosecutors handling child sex trafficking cases, including child-friendly interview skills and evidence presentation, as well as IJM's contribution to more child-friendly family courts. All of this led to an increased number of convictions of sex traffickers;
  - **Strengthened the aftercare response from government and private aftercare providers,** resulting in survivors who were better prepared to live in freedom and less vulnerable to being re-trafficked. The majority of respondents affirmed IJM's contribution to improved crisis care, aftercare shelter referrals, the quality and range of services provided to survivors, and 100% thought IJM helped to improve victims outcomes;
  - **Demonstrated a reduced prevalence of children being trafficked for sex in the three project areas:** 91.9% of respondents reported IJM contributed to the reduction of child sex trafficking in Manila, Cebu and Pampanga, and the evaluators noted IJM's prevalence studies were a "wise investment of resources" that help assess the impact of the program;
- **Increased stakeholders' confidence in the public justice system** to properly investigate and prosecute child sex trafficking cases, and increased stakeholder confidence in the government social services agency's ability to provide crisis care and refer survivors to quality aftercare services;
  - **Championed policy changes,** including amendments to strengthen the anti-trafficking law, and **became a trusted partner,** as evidenced by IJM's appointment to the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking.

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"In all instances, we see a reduction in the prevalence of child trafficking compared to five to six years ago; the reduction is very steep, the prevalence in commercial sex establishment was reduced so big that we could barely see children in trafficking."

—MANILA GOVERNMENT RESPONDENT

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"The conviction rate has improved immensely because of the logistical support from IJM."

—PAMPANGA GOVERNMENT RESPONDENT

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"I believe there is a reduction because people are more aware and afraid to commit the offense."

—CEBU GOVERNMENT RESPONDENT

### IJM is a data-driven organization. Future IJM projects will incorporate key findings and consider additional lessons and recommendations, including:

- Casework is a driver of system reform. The evaluation noted that working alongside officials on individual cases serves as a diagnostic tool to assess what areas need long-term reform, and it transforms the system along the way. IJM will continue to drive system reform through casework in combatting violence globally.
- There are new and significant aftercare needs for victims of online sexual exploitation. The evaluation noted that there are gaps for providing critical care to this new population of victims that IJM will need to address in its continued program against online sexual exploitation of children.