

**CHILD TRAFFICKING AND THE
WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR
IN KAMBIA, SIERRA LEONE:
A MIXED METHODS STUDY**

In 2021, the African Programming & Research Initiative to End Slavery (APRIES) at the University of Georgia's Center on Human Trafficking Research & Outreach (CenHTRO) used mixed methods to conduct baseline community-based research in **Kambia, Sierra Leone** on child trafficking and child labor in collaboration with Sierra Leone-based research partner Conflict Management & Development Associates.

The research estimates the baseline prevalence of child trafficking in Kambia, using both traditional survey methods and the Network Scale-up Method. It also describes the nature of the problem and identifies service and policy gaps regarding child trafficking.

This document briefly reviews the study's key findings, implications, and recommendations for policy and practice. Please see the full report for more detailed information and an extended discussion of each of these topics at cenhtro.uga.edu.

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PREVALENCE ESTIMATES

34%

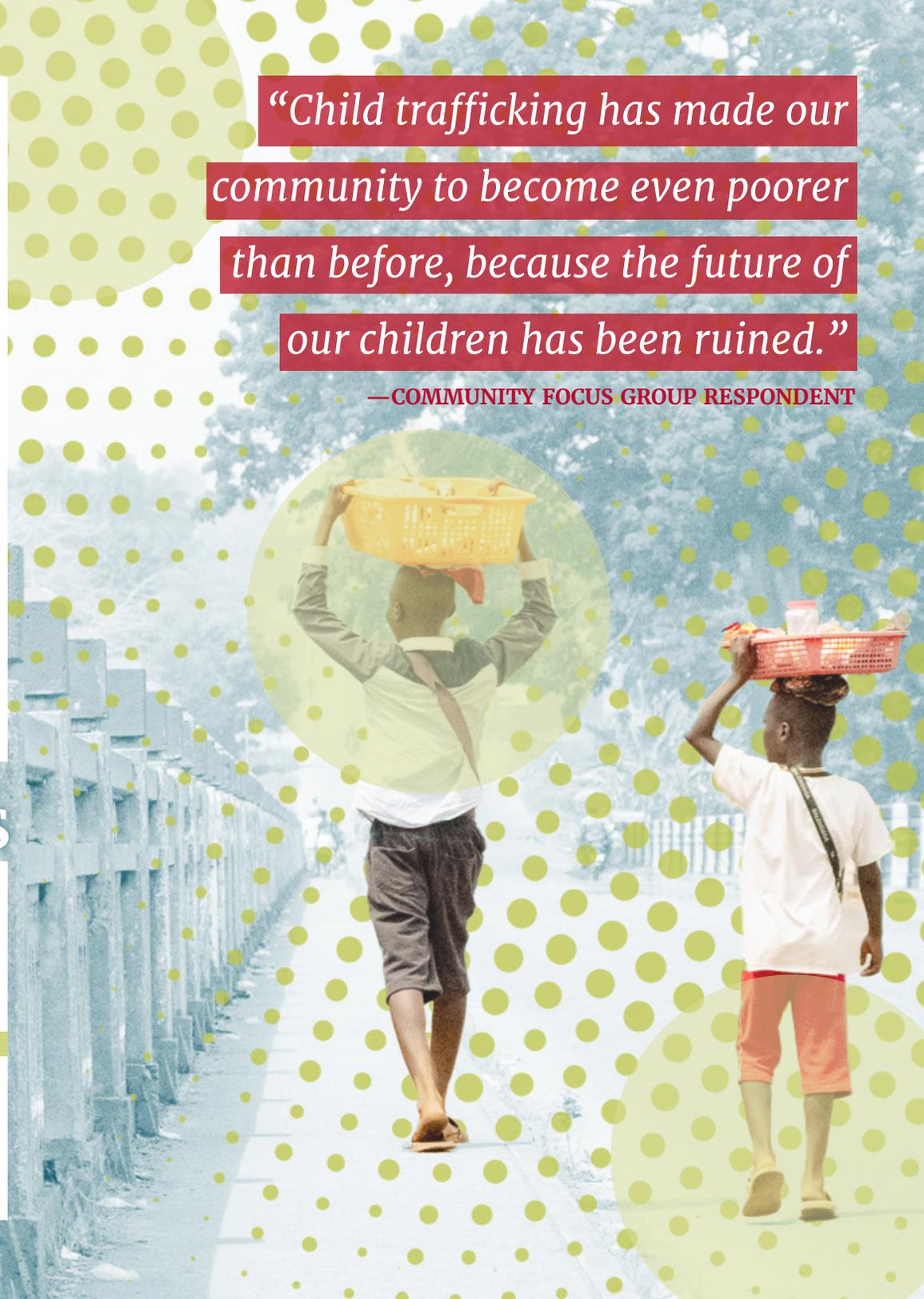
of children aged 5-17 in Kambia experienced **child trafficking**, according to one-year prevalence estimates.

40%

of children aged 5-17 in Kambia experienced **child labor**, according to one-year prevalence estimates.

“Child trafficking has made our community to become even poorer than before, because the future of our children has been ruined.”

—COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP RESPONDENT



Portering and fishing were found to be the most prevalent hazardous labor sectors for child trafficking.

Domestic work, agriculture, and trading or vending were the other most prevalent other labor sectors in which children experienced trafficking.

Exposure to extreme cold/heat/humidity, carrying heavy loads, operating heavy machinery/working with dangerous tools, and exposure to dust, fumes or gases are the four most reported hazardous working conditions.

“I was always the first to be woken up by 6 a.m. I was the one doing all the household chores while her children were still in bed. We started fish balls for sale, which was all for her benefit.”

—FEMALE SURVIVOR

61% of trafficked children experienced force, fraud, or coercion.

Three most common types of force, fraud, or coercion used by traffickers to keep children in trafficking situations:

FORCED TO WORK FOR LITTLE OR NO WAGES
FORCED TO WORK FOR A NON-HOUSEHOLD MEMBER
FORCED TO WORK TO PAY FOR SCHOOL



VULNERABILITIES

Children aged 12-17, those who contributed to the expenses of the household, those who are not enrolled in a formal school, those who are enrolled in a Koranic school, and those who are orphans have higher odds of being trafficked.

Structural factors, such as a lack of secondary schools, lead to a family decision to send their child to a bigger town with a family friend or relative in order to attend school. However, when the child arrived, they were trafficked, rather than allowed to attend school as promised.

Male children had 34% higher odds of being trafficked than female children.

“I think the best thing is papa government should build more schools and bring a lot of social activities in the villages. We have laws against child trafficking but not working because of poverty. Let there be more developmental programs in the villages.”

—MOTHER OF SURVIVOR, FARMER

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen and expand developmental programs, especially in rural towns, through building more and improving access to secondary and primary schools, investing in qualified teachers, and expanding social and community centers for youth.

Safeguard children through awareness raising and monitoring informal foster care placements.

Increase effort into implementing laws that fight against trafficking, such as through supporting the enforcement of bylaws in local communities.

Encourage community members to speak up about child trafficking and child abuse by further expansion of the freedom hotline 134 and education of national and local anti-trafficking laws.

Increase financial and resource support for families, including cash support for struggling families through microcredit and providing seeds to farmers.



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