

Regional Network Forum for Southeast Asia and Pacific

Learning, Networking and Problem-Solving



Thursday 7th March, 2024
Bangkok, Thailand

 Safe
Online

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Note: Direct quotes from the day's discussions are provided sparingly throughout the summaries of sessions, however these have not been individually attributed.

Report by Dr Mark Kavenagh from Evident Consulting



Executive Summary

Representatives of 21 Safe Online grantees and implementing partners working across Southeast Asia and the Pacific had the opportunity to meet face-to-face in Bangkok, Thailand on the 7th of March 2024 in an important moment of reflection and learning. Participants represented ongoing projects in eight countries (Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam) and organizations including nine non-government organizations, four UNICEF Country Offices, two academic institutions and three private companies, as well as three global and regional organizations (INTERPOL, UNICEF Global Office of Research and Foresight – Innocenti, and UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia & Pacific).

The forum was an open space for Safe Online grantees to cross-pollinate knowledge, solutions and ideas between their projects and their efforts to make digital spaces safe for children and young people. Key objectives were to:

- **Share knowledge**, new trends, best practices and approaches to end online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA).
- **Identify** pressing and challenging issues along with strategic needs and opportunities.
- **Network** to build working relationships between grantees and foster future collaboration.

Four over-arching themes can be read across the day's discussions:

Constant Movement and Rapid Spread

Online CSEA evolves quickly, is spreading across the globe rapidly, and flexibility in responses is critical.

The nature of a problem that grantees might have defined for their grant proposals had sometimes already shifted. COVID changed the nature of online CSEA, but also raised public awareness of threats. More recently, the widespread public access to artificial intelligence (AI) tools has brought a raft of fast-adapting threats – but also potential for AI-enabled tools to counter threats. We are already and must continue to capitalize on these opportunities.

Critical points, reflections and actions:

- Online CSEA moves fast. Programming needs to look forward, but also be ready to adjust and update. Nimbleness from grantees and donors is critical.
- Public attention of online CSEA has grown, but it can lack nuance or oversimplify. For example, a focus on unknown offenders can distract attention from risks posed by trusted adults in children's lives.
- Age-old problems play out in digital environments. How do young people negotiate relationships and know when to trust new friends?

Data-Driven Practice

It is critical to utilize the data ecosystem to inform actions.

Quality data is essential to inform and ensure quality and impact of activities. We need better and reliable data, and collection methods, to build a more comprehensive understanding of the threats. We also need collaboration, capacity and sustained political support to ensure data is used most effectively.

Critical points, reflections and actions:

- AI offers remarkable opportunities for safeguarding digital spaces, but also obvious risks. Both sides are important to explore in programming.
- Effective data-sharing to build tools and support law enforcement responses requires balancing benefits to both tech developers and law enforcement actors.
- Financial monitoring of online CSEA elements deserves greater attention from programming.

Story Time

Narratives about online CSEA can be purposively examined and used.

Rarely do we have the time or space to really and explicitly think through the stories that are used to consciously, and unconsciously, conceptualize, prevent and respond to online CSEA. A close and explicit examination of the common narratives about online CSEA can be beneficial to understanding, tweaking, and pursuing innovative programming and advocacy. Critical actions can also help us correct with key populations and other actors.

Critical points, reflections and actions:

- It is worth taking time to explicitly consider the narratives that the public, and programming staff hold to ensure they are helping, not hindering, responses.
- Common narratives can be worked with the add nuance and depth, and educate key target populations.

Seven narratives to reflect upon

Protectionist approaches mean that young people who may engage in concerning behaviors are seen in the same light as adults – described as ‘peer offenders.’ Framing of young people exhibiting ‘problematic sexual behaviors’ may be more appropriate than the labelling that comes with such justice-based terms.	There should be honest recognition that reporting for online CSEA and some rehabilitation programs can be harmful. Frank discussions within our sector that recognize this reality and incorporate it into the narratives for a positive outcomes are needed.
Narratives such as ‘children don’t report to helplines’ can be turned around by specifying that helplines are not meant only for receiving disclosures, but can represent important resources for finding information and guidance - for children and the people surrounding them.	The preference to use data, including statistics to illustrate the scale of online CSEA may be too abstract and overwhelming to the public. The numbers may scare, but then don’t help audiences to know what to do or seem to relate to the children they know.
Unintended consequences can result from activities that focus attention on teaching ‘children to protect themselves.’ This can place a burden of responsibility on children (and families) - and take attention off offenders.	Promoting the home as a safe environment needs nuance. Home can be where harm occurs – with an estimated 80% of abusers coming from the child’s ‘circle of trust.’
The reluctance to talk about sex, particularly with young people, is very common across Southeast Asian countries. This silence is enabling.	

Count What We Do

Data and evidence are enablers, not barriers critical for directing priorities and measuring impact.

Measurement and attribution can be tough, particularly with complex, system-aware approaches that acknowledge many influences and confounding factors. But data and evidence doesn't have to be onerous and complicated. Methodologies should come from the context and fit what is right for the project. Don't underestimate the power of stories to convey impact.

Critical points, reflections and actions:

- Evidence gathering is not only about using the latest measurement trend. Selecting methods that suit the context they are measuring is preferred. Simple is fine – don't underestimate the power of stories.
- Data about online CSEA is deeply sensitive. Rules for how it's collected, sorted and used, particularly data about children, are critical.
- Attribution can be complex, but should not be onerous. Complex systems are at play and it is acceptable to acknowledge this – causal relationships might not always be possible.



Overview

About Safe Online

Safe Online is the **only global investment vehicle dedicated to keeping children and young people safe in the digital world**. It strengthens systems and catalyzes innovative solutions to make the internet a safe place for children to explore, learn and develop.

As an investment platform, Safe Online's mission is to **foster a digital environment where every child feels safe and empowered**. Safe Online achieves this by investing in evidence, solutions, cutting-edge technologies and cross-sectoral programs and capacities, each aimed at addressing online child sexual exploitation, abuse and other digital harms in the context of other forms of violence.

Through the investments, Safe Online builds a global evidence base, seed and grow partnerships and facilitate **advocacy** and **collective action** for the rights and safety of children and young people in the digital world.

The digital world is still a new technology where coordinated effort to improve safety and enhance human rights is more vital than ever. **Safe Online is a natural cornerstone for growing and expanding these efforts**, ensuring continuity of service as well as new and critical opportunities for growth and cooperation.

Safe Online's Investments in Southeast Asia and the Pacific

Safe Online has invested 90 million since 2017 with grants in more than 100 countries. Most funds, \$45 million, are allocated to support systems strengthening. In addition to this, nearly \$22 million goes into evidence generation, with another roughly \$21 million into tech solutions.

There has already been more than \$20 million in grants made to projects in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region across the three pillars.



Safe Online

Portfolio Map



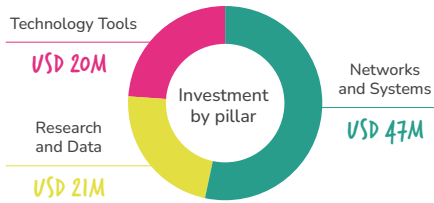
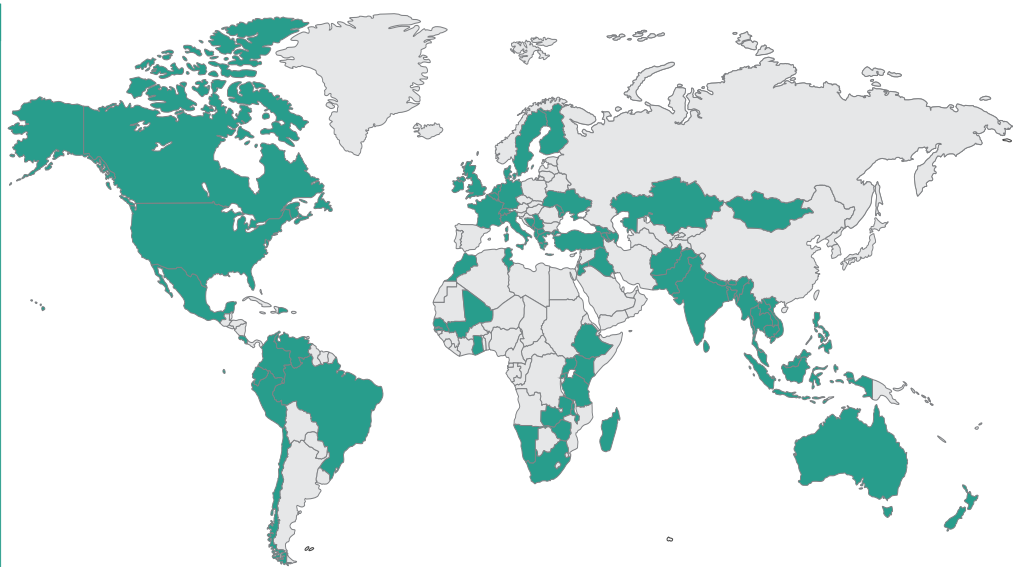
Countries

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Armenia
- Australia
- Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh
- Belgium
- Bhutan
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Brunei Darussalam
- Cambodia
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Denmark
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Ethiopia
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- Hong Kong
- India
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Italy
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia

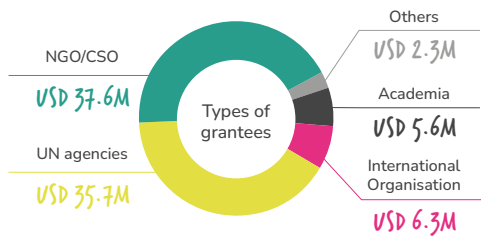
Networks and Systems

Research and Data

Technology Tools



Disrupting Harm countries
Disrupting Harm is a project funded by Safe Online and implemented by ECPAT International, INTERPOL and UNICEF Innocenti.



The presentation of the material on this map does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Safe Online concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Countries

- Maldives
- Mali
- Mexico
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- North Macedonia
- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Peru
- Philippines
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United States of America
- Venezuela
- Viet Nam
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Networks and Systems

Research and Data

Technology Tools

About the Regional Network Forum

The Safe Online Regional Network Forum was designed as a space in which Safe Online grantees working in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region could connect and learn from each other and co-create a body of collaborative knowledge and solutions as they tackle online CSEA in the context of other forms of violence against children.

The forum brought together **21** grantees and implementing partners directly working in the region with a particular focus in **eight** countries (Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Thailand, The Philippines and Viet Nam) representing **nine** non-government organizations, **four** UNICEF Country Offices, **two** academic institutions, **three** private company as well as **three** global and regional organizations (INTERPOL, UNICEF Global Office of Research and Foresight – Innocenti, and UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia & Pacific).

Safe Online aims to be more than a funding mechanism and convened this forum playing the role of a ‘technical friend’ to encourage and enable collaborations and identify connections between the suite of Safe Online funded projects in the region and beyond.

Forum Objectives

1. **Share knowledge, new trends, best practices and approaches to end online CSEA.**
Participants undertook rapid mapping of trends, threats and opportunities in addressing CSEA.
2. **Identify pressing and challenging issues along with strategic needs and opportunities.**
Participants openly shared insights – both successes and challenges – from their own projects and the approaches and data observed working on CSEA in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region.
3. **Network to build working relationships between grantees and foster future collaboration.**
Engagements throughout the forum allowed for alignments in work to be identified and for opportunities to share resources and collaborations to be capitalized on.

Forum Outline

The day was packed with a range of presentations and panel discussions involving grantees as well as enthusiastic group discussion sessions that covered a range of critical issues that occur in the complex work of addressing online CSEA across the region.

The first session invited those present to undertake a rapid mapping of **trends, threats and solutions** across their work and contexts. Groups explored online CSEA in relation to offenders, deterrents, and help-seeking. As one participant observed, *“The offenders are way faster than us.”* Taking the time to pause, convene, and reflect is therefore crucial for advocates and programmers addressing the challenges faced in this work.

The second session was an opportunity for grantees to showcase the **current data ecosystem**, and how data intersects with other components including technology tools to tackle online CSEA at all stages of project lifecycles. Highlighted examples demonstrated the importance of data security and protection – especially given the highly vulnerable nature of the data gathered from survivors of online CSEA.

After lunch attention turned to the **narratives** that grantees encounter, and use, in the work regarding online CSEA. Sometimes it's easy to fall into these narratives without explicit consideration, yet carefully constructed narratives can be harnessed for powerful advocacy. Examples of taking existing narratives and challenging, adapting and using them to progress important conversations were shared. As one participant said in summary of this session: *"It was a humbling experience to realize that we have lots of narratives about victims but struggled to find common narratives to describe offenders. Maybe it's time to shift the public focus on CSEA towards the offenders?"*

In the final session of the day, a panel of grantees shared some innovative strategies and approaches - as well as some concrete examples - of **unlocking evidence generation** about online CSEA. Unsurprisingly, methodologies that are created in the context from the context and fit what is right for the project have the greatest impact. One panel member shared a guiding principle for data they sought: *"If the piece of data hits you it should be memorable. It should stick with you. It should drive you towards some change or action."*

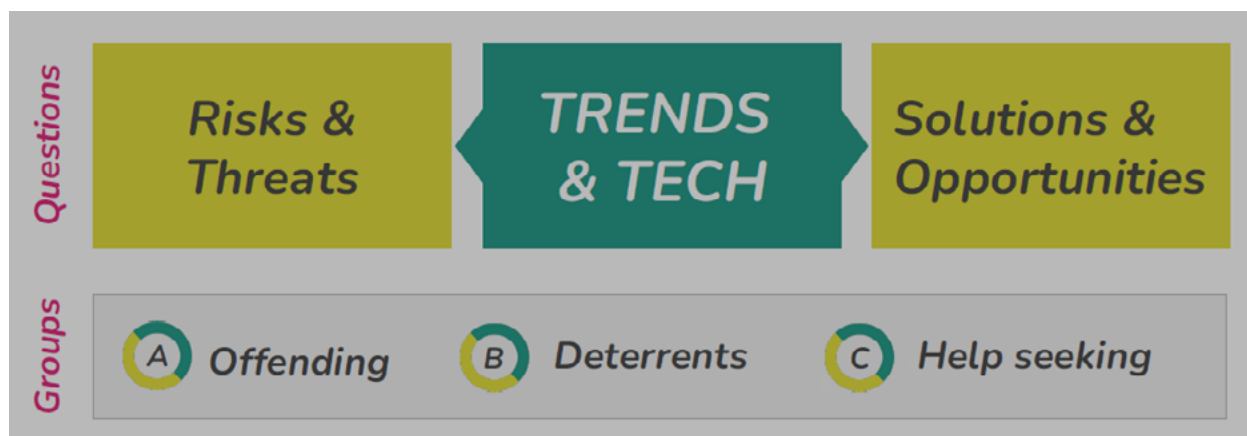
Participants and Funded Projects

Now completed project that improved capacity, knowledge and how to mitigate risks and harms of online CSEA in Vietnam. Dan, World Vision	An open-source platform for helpline counsellors to use text/chat tools. Already active in Thailand, launching shortly in New Zealand and Singapore. Jim, Tech Matters	Global online resource including helpdesk for online CSEA used in 30+ countries. Victoria, Marie Collins Foundation
Research on financial threats and measurement of awareness raising work. Elaine, Dublin City University	Implementing partner operating a helpline 24/7, 365 days as well as a walk-in center addressing online CSEA. Ilya, Childline Thailand Foundation	Project is focused on system strengthening and children as agents of change, strengthening response frameworks and building evidence. Astrid, UNICEF Indonesia
Work over a number of years has led to systemic national changes including new laws in the Philippines. Pat, UNICEF Philippines	Key partner in the Disrupting Harm large-scale evidence generation project in six countries in Southeast Asia and 19 countries in other regions. Smita, INTERPOL	Implementing partner in Cambodia and Thailand with the grantee University of Kent to develop a video game to help young people understand about online safety available in English, Thai and Khmer. Kristen, A2I Cambodia

<p>Key partner Disrupting Harm large-scale evidence generation project including six countries in Southeast Asia and 19 countries in other regions.</p> <p>Marium, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office for Research and Foresight</p>	<p>Designing tools to capture volatile streaming data and identify CSEA for removal, and tools to reduce trauma of investigators.</p> <p>Bree & Sam, Kindred Tech</p>	<p>Working with the Philippines government on a project to strengthen systems to address online CSEA.</p> <p>Pia & Ralph, International Justice Mission (IJM)</p>
<p>Programming to reduce online CSEA using community-based models of system strengthening in Vietnam.</p> <p>Migena, Plan International Vietnam</p>	<p>Supporting the Ministry of Education & Training to develop guidelines for teachers and school staff about child online safety.</p> <p>Le Loan, UNICEF Vietnam</p>	<p>Developed the ICOP tool which uses algorithm to detect CSAM online and supporting law enforcement to use it.</p> <p>Corinne, University of Lancaster</p>
<p>Programming that includes support to APLE's child helpline as well as police training - an holistic approach including different sectors consecutively.</p> <p>Giorgio, UNICEF Cambodia</p>	<p>Key partner in Disrupting Harm large-scale evidence generation project including in six countries in Southeast Asia and another 19 countries globally.</p> <p>Andrea, ECPAT International</p>	<p>Currently undertaking a study exploring live-streaming of CSEA to inform response programming.</p> <p>Selena, Plan International Philippines</p>
<p>Undertaking a multi-country research with children aged 9-16 about recognizing and responding to grooming and solicitation.</p> <p>Yuko, Save the Children Asia Regional office</p>	<p>Project supports connections across the region and specific activities to explore measuring impact of online CSEA activities like awareness raising campaigns.</p> <p>Christina, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office</p>	

Rapid Mapping of Current Trends and Threats in the Region

This interactive session allowed for the exchange of knowledge on the latest trends and threats regarding online CSEA specific to the Southeast Asia and Pacific region, including those linked to new technology developments that may increase risks for children or provide avenues to strengthen prevention and responses.



In three smaller groups, participants discussed the current climate of work that addresses online CSEA in the region. Group A focused specifically on offending, group B on deterrents and group C on help seeking. New and emerging trends, risks and threats, solutions and opportunities were discussed with group members given the chance to 'cross-pollinate' information between their projects, operating environments and expertise. Priority was given to developments relating to technology that affect online CSEA and efforts to tackle it.



Group A. Offending

Risks & Threats	Trends & Technology	Solutions & Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interventions on the demand side • Low attention on gaming and new tech (like VR) • Stretched law enforcement capacity to keep up with new threats • Offenders are early adopters of new tech and use to their advantage • Low attention on peer-to-peer offending and struggles to define and prevent it • Generally greater amounts of our personal information available now online • Children know that authorities don't respond • Boys are vulnerable to grooming – how can we teach them to identify when a relationship is not genuine? (digital and emotional literacy) • Lack of evaluation mechanisms for online CSEA prevention initiatives • Children are knowledgeable, but that doesn't translate to changed behaviors or less risk taking (to note that taking risks is part of adolescent development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation tools making cross-cultural trafficking easier • Tech advances making it easier for anyone to scam from anywhere (VPNs, crypto) • Surge of online CSEA during COVID, which also raised public attention • CSEA happens on the shallow end, not all in the dark web • Offenders adapt to new technology faster than law enforcement • Fake/AI generated images are a rapidly growing threat • Explosion in sexual extortion including boys' related suicides • Culture of public (particularly young people) resharing CSAM intending to 'raise awareness' • Ease of creating multiple and fake accounts • Scam centers and lover and/or modeling schemes • Local-level CSEA (not organized crime) such as peer-to-peer, or exchange groups on E2EE platforms like Telegram, Discord for profit or trade • Children following pop-culture icons who display (or are famous for) sexualized content • Market is not only Western-driven. Growing awareness of local demand for CSAM from within the Southeast Asia region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent Taylor Swift AI generated nudes – the internet collectively refused to share them. Why? • The potentials of tech are not always visible to civil society • Tools and approaches for children to recognize a genuine relationship • Ways to inspire reflection for youth and help them consider their risk taking • Address via role models, socialization processes and influences from pop culture

Shifts in perception: This group touched on a range of emerging trends that highlighted how fast online CSEA can change. In many cases, the nature of a problem they might have defined for their grant proposals had already shifted – COVID changed the nature of online CSEA in some ways, but also raised public awareness of threats. More recently, the widespread public access to artificial intelligence (AI) tools has brought a raft of fast-adapting threats – but also

potential for AI-enabled tools to counter threats and some grantees are already working with these opportunities directly.

Participants noted that public awareness of online CSEA has evolved, with generally greater public knowledge of threats, but sometimes these understandings are also off-base. For example, in Asia there is still a strong sense that online CSEA is being committed by a small number of foreign preferential offenders, making use of complex technology and the 'dark web' and who seek to carefully cover their tracks. An understanding that many offenders of online CSEA are known to the victimized children, and from their communities, is missing. *"This isn't [only] happening on the dark web. It is occurring at the shallow end of the internet. You don't have to dig deep to find it, so why aren't we?"* The scope of the issue is also not well grasped by the public. While advocacy has used big, dramatic numbers – for instance the millions of annual NCMEC reports – this feels abstract and the public aren't connecting this to the end-point of understanding the scale of children in their direct communities who are having experiences of harm.

Shifts in the how: The group discussed how more offenders are involved in setting up networks, groups and offending 'systems'. They are targeting big numbers of children rather than 1-1 grooming. *"It is a numbers game."* In other instances, small de-centralized groups pop-up and disappear rapidly where you must share content to access other content or pay a small fee. These are very hard for law enforcement to track.

Advances in technology, like AI, are very useful in enabling offenders' approaches and allowing them to reach more children. Inexpensive and rapidly improving internet speeds make more children widely accessible with minimal outlays. Offenders are fast adopters of new technologies. Now offenders can use freely available AI tools to filter the kids that are more vulnerable. For example, they can use ChatGPT to review massive amounts of data and identify children who use words like 'I am sad, I am lonely.'

There was no doubt amongst participants that the new availability of AI had markedly shifted the issue. Problems like the creation of fake images and videos, and AI porn are still being grappled with ethically and legally. While public attention has grown, the perceptions of the threats are still highly concentrated on social media. Gaming, chat, live-streaming and other platforms are not yet part of the main conversation. *"Every kid and every offender has a Discord account, but not us, and not law enforcement. Why?"*

In only one year, the risk scenarios can be totally different. What is the current popular app amongst children (and adults) can change fast. Programming has to be adaptable and nimble to keep up. The way offenders are grooming is also shifting and makes use of pop culture and trends. For example, offenders coax children to do sexual things by framing them as 'challenges'.

Scam centers operating in Southeast Asia are exploding. These are focused on financial gain, are truly a borderless issue. From what is known, most of the scam centers don't currently target children. But this could quickly change. *"Before you had to meet the victim to get the money, now so much easier."*

Peer involvement: We are increasingly seeing children involved in offending. Selling content, being tricked into sharing content and then on-sharing/blackmailing. A participant noted that in one country, there is a culture amongst young people of sharing CSAM images with the intention of educating – a misguided desire to do something about an issue they see no action from authorities about: 'don't share your image online or this could happen to you'.

It is also important to acknowledge that a lot of kids are engaging in these behaviors and content is not leaked and nothing ever happens. Much of the content being shared online never

even makes it to other people. How do we then characterize the difference? Why do some instances end in harm but not others? Given this situation, young people rightly question online safety educational messaging along the lines of ‘everything is harmful’ as irrelevant to their lived experiences.

Innovative responses: There is an age-old problem that young people are grappling with - how do you recognize a genuine relationship? All the offender has to do is say they are interested. Boys are much more susceptible. Many say they really believe they are having a relationship with the person. How do we teach them to recognize what is a genuine relationship? A21’s game takes young people through learning about tricky and safe/unsafe people and helping young people to see consequences. Digital literacy was discussed and while it can possibly be a useful entry point especially in contexts where it receives higher resources and is already part of the school’s curriculum, **what is needed is coupling of digital literacy with relationships and sexuality education** with the latter remaining a critical barrier in contexts with taboos around sex.

Yet the group discussed that **teaching young people about risks isn’t the end of the story.** *“Children have the knowledge and the instincts, and they know how to do background checks. But somehow they don’t do that, and we don’t know why.”* An enduring challenge is measuring the impact of prevention activities. We know they are more knowledgeable, but is it changing their behavior? We need also to consider that young people are choosing to take risks. *“When I was a young person I took risks. I only imagine if there was recording back then – the trouble I would be in!”*

Group B. Deterrents

Risks & Threats	Trends & Technology	Solutions & Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet access for children with disabilities has positives, but vulnerabilities too Children in the region are not aware of risks Some dominant social norms enable CSEA (e.g. no touch, no harm) Prevailing taboos about discussing sex, even for harm prevention Divide between digital infrastructure and readiness of community Unmonitored online gaming shops as risky locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happens on the surface web, preventative tools can work well there Parents in the region are not aware of the risks Biases in algorithms emphasizing harmful content Workload challenges for support services and law enforcement Perpetration from within families, communities (most attention on ‘strangers’) Children using VPNs to get around protective mechanisms like age verification or blocked content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation/policy related to emerging tech: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges with implementation Leadership of industry is vital Accountability/standards for private platforms Financial institutions Online safety legislation in demand-side countries Mobilize survivors, leaders to speak with tech companies Taking-down CSAM, INTERPOL worst list Filtering of suspicious transactions Chatbots – screening and diverting offenders to supports and resources

Biases in the technology: There is a dominant perception that offenders are white and this narrative is being directed into tech tools. These tools are also predominantly English and so confirmation bias is reinforcing the main narrative and nuance is lost.

Do we have technology meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities and children who are more vulnerable?

There are legal frameworks in the Philippines with roles and responsibilities outlined for tech and financial sector regarding the detection and reporting of activities related to online CSEA, but the implementation is poor.

Law enforcement workload: While understanding and engagement with systems like NCMEC reports grows, there is still limited time and resources to look into reports: *"It does not matter how well technology works but if it increases the workload of the law enforcement, it is not effective."* More needs to work out re how to get police on board across the Southeast Asia and Pacific region, including in countries that are hard to reach.

Low caregiver awareness of risks: Accessibility of social media platforms is increasing and can be uncontrolled because of the lack of digital literacy of parents and caregivers. In a consultation with children from 14-19 years old conducted by UNICEF Indonesia, it was mentioned that children can buy data package with ease, access VPNs and see pornography as an entertainment.

Only 0.9% of the 550 parents interviewed as part of the baseline study conducted by World Vision Vietnam in Danang were aware of the risks children face online and none of the 114 teachers interviewed were aware of the 111-hotline number.

Who is responsible: Trusted members of the community can victimize young people and when we talk about who children reach out to when abused, they frequently describe someone in their circle of trust – making disclosure harder for them. We are also seeing children engaging in problematic behaviors – such as a 16-year-old girl grooming a male adult. There is a blurring between offenders and victims.

Attitudes: In the Philippines, there is a trend of live streaming – self-facilitated and self-generated among the youths and adolescents which needs to be studied further in terms of the magnitude, drivers, motivations, triggers and what support needs to be provided to work as deterrents. There is still a big taboo in the region on the topic of sex and sexuality. Children are embarrassed to discuss with parents and caregivers around these issues and seek information from other sources which may not be reliable.

Leadership and private sector: The [ASEAN Regional ICT Forum](#) provides support for service provision but also makes recommendations on legislative reforms. There is high level political commitment at regional level but implementation at country level is challenging. Leadership of industry is so vital in this regard, and champions are needed in the private sector. Accountability standards are needed for private platforms. Children have significant power to hold tech platforms accountable and children's voices should be used to call out the tech platforms.

Gaming is a bigger area in which CSAM is now emerging and detection of CSAM in animation videos is harder. Monitoring of financial institutions is also important.

Indonesia very recently amended the law on information and electronics and added a specific stipulation for the tech sector in terms of safeguarding the rights of children and defining the minimum age for accessing the platforms.

Group C. Help-Seeking

Risks & Threats	Trends & Technology	Solutions & Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for ethnic/minority groups • Lack of democratic balances and surveillance may discourage help-seeking • Lack of sustained funding for help-seeking services • Bad actors attacking help-seeking tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spike in reporting in Cambodia after Disrupting Harm project • Text-based reporting available via Helplines/hotlines • Overall help-seeking and reporting is quite low • Capacity to test and adopt new resources and tools is limited • Risk-averse help-seeking sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-based services can feel easier to report to for young people • Focus on resilience rather than trauma and rescue • Outreach to under-served communities • Risk management, not avoidance

Offender-focused help is rare: The group delved into the fact that approaches necessary to really tackle offending behavior and the demand-side of this problem should likely come from a social & behavior change perspective. However, these approaches are considered very complex, oftentimes expensive, and the impact takes time to be demonstrated. This doesn't fit with pressure on/from donors, or the fast shifts that can occur in the way this problem presents.

Reports: Generally, it is difficult to tackle offending with currently low levels of disclosure and reporting across the board. Lack of trust in the reporting mechanisms and actors has been portrayed often as one of the causes for low levels of reporting, which can also be specifically hindered in the context of low trust in democratic institutions and increased government surveillance known to be present in some parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Help-seeking phenomena can be mostly divided in two different groups, which should be tackled differently if there is an attempt to boost reporting:

- Reporting to parents/caregivers: Reporting in this area is affected by factors such as cultural bias, risk-averse societies, economic pressure or that the person responsible for the crime is within the family environment;
- Reporting to platforms and support services: Reporting in this area is affected by factors such as low levels of trust and capacity to deal with the situation.

Gender analysis and data is needed to understand how to encourage help-seeking and support for children of all genders. Despite the difficulties and trends showing low levels of reporting and disclosure, there are some interesting examples in the opposite direction, such as the spike of reporting in Cambodia in recent years. Furthermore, new technological developments and how these are affecting the ways young people are communicating should be further explored when it comes to reporting, such as:

- Text-based reporting is easier to use on sensitive topics than traditional call-based services; and,
- AI chatbots can be used as an enhancement (not as a substitute) to promptly answer, filter and assist with connecting children to support.

Across Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, there is rich cultural and ethnic diversity. Minorities, migrants and stateless people are identified as highly vulnerable populations and need tailored and accessible mechanisms for help-seeking.

All in all, there should be a focus on more pragmatic responses to offending deterrence and reporting, versus more idealistic responses. Also, it was suggested that a **mixed offer in terms of help to report and deter offenders usually increases efficacy and numbers.**

Finally, it must always be remembered that if the support services for rehabilitation of offenders and treatment of survivors are inadequate, there is no point trying to increase their demand or awareness.

The Taylor Swift Deep Fakes

In early 2024, a set of deep fake images/videos emerged but there was a fascinating response. Unlike the response to past releases of private images, there was an almost unanimous refusal to view or circulate the images online. Once it became known that the images were fake, people simply stopped sharing the content. Platforms such as X also moved swiftly to take them down.

- Young people's ethical reasoning may be shifting to accommodate the changing ways that we interact via technology.
- How can we tap into what the social and other factors which led to this response?
- What other impacts of pop culture, influencer culture, online contexts can be harnessed as part of the solution to tackle digital harms to children?

Rather than look to the online world only via a risk framework, co-opting positive internet culture, norms and behaviours could help address barriers we find in the real world. For example, while taboos about discussing sex have led to ongoing inertia in improving sex education, this could not be the case online. **Could we better focus our attention on making good information available online rather than trying to convince reluctant governments to alter curricula?**

Critical Points, Commitments and Potential Follow-ups:

- Discussion highlighted how fast online CSEA and other tech facilitated risks and harms move. In many cases, the nature of a problem that grantees might have defined for their grant proposals has already shifted and needs nimbleness from grantees and donors.
- While public attention has grown, there is still a strong public sense that online CSEA is being committed by a small number of foreign preferential offenders, making use of complex technology and the 'dark web'. Gaming, chat, live-streaming and other platforms are not yet part of the main conversation which focuses on social media platforms.
- Scam centers operating in Southeast Asia are exploding. These are focused on financial gain, are truly a borderless issue and while children are not yet the core focus, this could change.
- Within the problem of online CSEA, there is an age-old problem that young people are grappling with - how do you recognize a genuine relationship? This could be an easier entry-point for solutions.
- Offers from grantees were made during discussions to share resources that have been developed specific to projects (and target audiences) but could be adapted.

Data & Technology to Inform Systemic Approaches

This session focused attention on the current data ecosystem regarding online CSEA, and how data intersects with other components - including technology tools - to tackle online CSEA across the data lifecycle. Data and technology considerations for the Southeast Asia and Pacific grant portfolio were highlighted.

The Data for Change Initiative and the \$15 million investment in Disrupting Harm, both supported by Safe Online, are critical contextual large-scale contributions to the data global landscape of online CSEA.

Disrupting Harm

Large-scale data about online CSEA at national levels is sorely limited. In 2019, Safe Online invested \$7.5 million in the first round of Disrupting Harm. Comprehensive surveys of children and caregivers, law enforcement data and qualitative data was collected and presented in 2022 in 6 national reports for countries in Southeast Asia and 7 national reports for countries in Southern and East Africa. Research in a second round of 12 Disrupting Harm countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and South Asia is due for release in 2025, for an additional \$7.5 million. This comprehensive data in predominantly Global South countries is arguably more comprehensive than many efforts to measure the issue in Global North countries to date. The data provides a critical picture of the scale and scope of online CSEA and has also been positively received and utilized by National governments in target countries, who are now collaborating with actors working in the space of addressing online CSEA to respond.



The Data for Change Initiative

Quality data is essential to inform and ensure quality and impact of activities. We need better and reliable data, and collection methods, to build a more comprehensive understanding of the threats. We also need collaboration, capacity and sustained political support to ensure data is used most effectively. There is an immediate need to improve capacity, transparency, responsible data use and investments in data efforts. The Data for Change Initiative seeks to explore and support these aims.



Data & technology intersections



LEARN MORE ABOUT

- **Approaches** to intersection of data & tech
- **Guiding principles** -oversight, ethics, responsible data use
- **Inclusion** of diverse perspectives – vulnerability, gender, survivors, children, global



ACROSS DATA LIFECYCLE

- Generation & collection
- Storage & processing
- Applications & use



REFLECT ON

- How can tech better support data efforts?
- How can data be better used to inform tech development?
- Collaborations across data lifecycle?



EXAMPLES

- Dublin City Univ.
- Kindred Tech
- INTERPOL
- UNICEF EAPRO

Following a brief presentation by Safe Online about the two data initiatives, four grantees provided insights gleaned from the ways in which data is used in their projects in the region:

- Law enforcement data for research - **INTERPOL**
- The 'Auditor' tool for managing CSEA data - **Kindred Tech**
- 'Primero' data systems - **UNICEF EAPRO**
- Collecting data about online CSEA offenders - **Dublin City University**

Law enforcement data for research

The key tool developed and managed by INTERPOL to address CSEA is the International Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSE Database). To be connected to the database requires a State member to meet pre-requisites such as having a dedicated specialized police unit for CSEA in the country, and for staff who are trained to use the tool to be committed to working in the unit for a minimum of 3-5 years - so that capacity isn't lost through internal police rotations. However, content in the ICSE database can be contributed by countries not formally connected to the ICSE Database as well as those actively connected and using it in their investigations.

Elements within the ICSE database tools allow for a suite of enablers in identifying victims and supporting investigations. For example, images could be uploaded with GPS tags outside a connected country and law enforcement locally can be coordinated with to investigate. Parallel INTERPOL tools that enable collaboration – such as the secure INTERPOL police network (available for all 196 member countries of INTERPOL) enable efficiencies in investigations for online CSEA.

The 'Auditor' tool for managing online CSEA data

The 'Auditor' tool was born out of a problem of handling data. Forensic tech investigations usually include a complainant officer, an analyst who takes the complaint, and other involved investigators. The task facing the development team was to find the best ways to safeguard the mental health of these officers in managing the sensitive content they are working with using automated processes as much as possible.

The tool automates what can be automated and removes officer exposure to potentially traumatic experiences along the way. It also speeds up the processes and allows for check-ins without being re-exposed to the material.

Audit logs of who accessed evidence and for what purposes are also stored and analyzed to improve effectiveness. For example, is there someone accessing evidence at particular rates that are more successful with investigative outcomes? Is someone accessing content a lot but having poor outcomes – maybe they are burning out? Are there best-case scenarios in the way data is being managed that can be used to nudge particular approaches to various types of cases?

The tool is showing that 96% of submissions are judged not to justify investigation (for reasons like the timescale for data retention already expired meaning the investigation would stall). That is keeping a lot of traumatic content from unnecessarily going before human investigators' eyes. It is also saving lots of time. It is obviously critical to consider how AI tools are seeded/trained. Language content or even series of emojis can be used. Focus on ensuring that the investigating pathways are relevant to the cultural context within which they are taking place is also critical.

The intention is not to promote AI replacement of human skills. When something is automated, a human can still always take over within the tool. Pop-ups inform users that 'the robot has made this decision' which they can always contest and override.

Primero data systems

Supporting countries to strengthening their child protection systems is a core task of UNICEF. One of the key reasons that social workers quit is the burden of administrative work placed on them. Primero is a case management tool for social service workers to manage and track their cases. While not exclusively, it certainly includes cases of children affected by online CSEA.

For true sustainability, the goal is always to institutionalize the use of the system at a national level by tying it into national child protection plans and systems.

“The more users at a national level, the stronger the data it generates for monitoring and informing policy and practice.”

The promotion of using the Primero tool by UNICEF frequently goes hand-in-hand with capacity development of case workers. Soft skills can be the focus of partnering non-government organizations as the tool is rolled out.

Country examples			
Cambodia	Philippines	Thailand	Indonesia
“We needed to ensure different levels of the child protection system had the knowledge and skills to engage with the Primero tool. At district level most staff are using paper-based systems.”	“For us the co-creation of the platform with government has been really important to its success. But this means it takes a long time. Ultimately we are hoping the government takes the model and rolls it out at scale.”	“The Thailand team is now trying to identify a machine learning model that could screen child health records to identify and flag particular cases for early intervention.”	“The Indonesia team is looking at ways to integrate the Primero child protection tools with existing gender-based violence monitoring systems”

Collecting data about online CSEA offenders

Preliminary highlights were shared from the research collaboration between Dublin City University and Stella Maris University in the Philippines that included key informant interviews and analysis of chat logs between the demand-side and supply-side offenders of online CSEA.

The project team identified evidence of children actively engaged in their own exploitation (presenting themselves to offenders as available). They also identified forms of ‘mentoring victims’ by adult and children in surrounding communities. This was described as people teaching them what to do to facilitate their own abuse.

The analysis also illustrated clear evidence that greater focus is needed on the financial data. There is a certain reluctance from some financial institutions to acknowledge the scale of the problem and from governments to delve into this from a regulatory perspective and this should change.

Interviews with Offenders in the Philippines:

The Dublin City University research project shared critical insights from interviews with offenders (people deprived of liberty) involved in organized trading of online CSEA in the Philippines:

- Indications of a contagion effect in communities where trade in online CSEA was being enabled.
- Evidence of indoctrination by trusted family and community members.
- Community level ‘normalization’ of the practices.
- Cultural stigma attached to loss of virginity a push factor. Even if girls had lost their virginity through rape, they are perceived as sullied and trading sex the main survival mechanism.

Critical Points, Commitments and Potential Follow-ups:

- AI provides opportunities to automate things that can be automated to safeguard the mental health of professionals working in this space. The intention is not to promote AI replacement of human skills. When something is automated, a human should also be able

to take over. But removing exposure to sensitive content where it is possible has great potential for efficiency in our field.

- INTERPOL invited Safe Online grantees to ensure that their advocacy with law enforcement pushes for dedicated units on crimes against children and connection to the ICSE Database as a core systemic change on a global scale.
- A struggle in the sector is access to data and the examples indicated the need for systematic approaches, and long-term collaborations rather than quick harvesting of datasets. There should be a two-way value in the data-sharing agreement – critical for law enforcement requests.
- There is a certain reluctance from some financial institutions to acknowledge the scale of online CSEA and from governments to delve into this from a regulatory perspective and this should change.
- A potential advocacy direction emerged in discussions regarding financial monitoring. Austrac and Fintrac share suspicious transaction reports (STR) about microtransactions with INTERPOL so it can be accessed by law enforcement, but the criticism is that these go nowhere. It is noted that STRs are under the lens of anti-money laundering, but if a fraud lens were applied, financial institutions would be quicker to act.



Scrutinizing Common Narratives about online CSEA

Building on the mapping of trends, threats and opportunities from earlier in the day, during this session, participants took time to reflect on the common narratives that are used to describe, understand and address online CSEA. The time to consider and discuss how such narratives may influence what topics get discussed or prioritized, and even how advocacy and programming are approached.

Definition of 'Narrative'

A way of presenting or understanding a situation or series of events that reflects and promotes a particular point of view or set of values.

Rarely do we have the time or space to really and explicitly think through the stories that are used to consciously, and even unconsciously, conceptualize, prevent and respond to online CSEA. A close and explicit examination of the common narratives about online CSEA can be beneficial to understanding, tweaking, and pursuing innovative programming and advocacy.

Narrative landscape



Harmful narratives	Helpful narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are obstacles to your goals• Hold back your vision of the future• Often maintain existing power structures• Stand in the way of the future you're building• Often rely on fear mongering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lift the voices of people on the frontlines• Allow you to imagine the future you dream of, and propel you towards that future• Advance your work and make it more durable• Rely on frontline ownership + power• Often provide pathways to building trust among allies

In small groups, the participants were invited to dedicate some time to really exploring the narratives regarding online CSEA that are used commonly to describe **offenders, deterrents, and help-seeking** about online CSEA by:

- The public;
- People affected by online CSEA; and
- Programming and advocacy workers.

Group A. Offending

Helpful Narratives	Harmful Narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are knowledgeable • Children have agency, they are not passive recipients • Children take active part in society • Governments are accountable for all citizens, including children • Even close hands can harm • It is never the victim's fault (Boys, girls, LGBTQ) • There are a million ways to be a boy/girl • Offenders have agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are criminals • Facilitators of CSEA are doing it for the children's benefits/own good • No touch, no harm • The problem does not exist (Government) • Children need to be educated, are solely responsible to protect themselves • Parents/teachers are not knowledgeable about the digital world whereas children are digital natives • Home is always a safe, nurturing environment for children to thrive • Community is an enabling environment "not my home, not my problem" • Rehabilitation of offenders is impossible "one a trafficker, always a trafficker" • The offenders are monsters • Stranger danger (Westerner visitors) • Girls shouldn't have sex / girls asked for it • Victims are responsible for the crime • Boys will be boys

'Offenders': This group explored the ways that a protection or legal framing of this issue tends to push responses towards particular framings that can ultimately be unhelpful. Protectionist approaches mean that young people who may engage in these concerning behaviors are seen in the same light as adults – and thus described as 'offenders.' Framing of young people exhibiting 'problematic sexual behaviors' may be more appropriate than the labelling that comes with such justice-based framing.

Some of the other narratives explored regarding offending result in the minimization of harm (no touch, no harm) or inadvertently shift the focus away from offending behavior entirely (activities that teach children to protect themselves). It was discussed that focus on self-protective behaviors can be particularly difficult because then if something does go wrong this can lead to further self-blame by the child. While these activities are undoubtedly part of the response, they must go together with offender- and offending-focused activities.

Messages about offenders that were deemed unhelpful include that 'these people are monsters' and that 'rehabilitation of offenders is impossible.' While greater media coverage seems to be happening, simplified messages like these can be a hinderance. The group explored that when addressing peer offending – this type of narrative can be especially harmful. Similarly, the common 'stranger danger' narrative can be problematic as it means communities are less vigilant with abuse that may be intra-community or family-based. The group suggested narratives needed to be put forward that emphasized the risk at home: 'Even close hands can harm.'

Taboos discussing sex: The reluctance to talk about sex, particularly with young people, is very common across Southeast Asian countries. This silence on sexual issues also extends beyond parental discomfort discussing the topic with kids. Participants also discussed that in some communities, people are well aware that abuse is going on, but still will not discuss it, feeling that it is not their problem, or that raising the topic could bring repercussions on them. A sense of ‘not my home, not my problem’.

“It is almost similar to the culture of omerta [referring to the Mafia term for code of silence]. There is a pervasive reluctance to discuss, a lie of omission that facilitates the offending.”

The silence is enabling, and can even mean that ‘mentoring’ of abusing can occur and not be questioned by the community. But if it is harnessed, the community can be really supportive and vigilant to what is occurring.

Is home safe?: Another narrative explored by the group was the idea – often a big part of protection activities – of promoting the home as a safe environment. But home can be where harm occurs – with the Council of Europe estimating that up to 80% of abusers known to child victims – coming from their ‘circle of trust.’ The group opted to add the word ‘can’ to this narrative as a way to shift it from harmful to helpful: ‘Home can be safe and protective – when the right supports are in place.’

Statistics: The preference to use data, including statistics to illustrate the scale of online CSEA risks was queried. While we want to show it is a very real problem, the group wondered if these numbers were abstract, and overwhelming to the public. They scare, but then don’t help audiences to truly understand the issue and know what to do.

Reporting: An important discussion was also the risk of messages grounded only in the idea of promoting reporting. Particularly when data like Disrupting Harm has illustrated that even when reports are made, the experiences of the young people involved can be extremely difficult and supports or legal processes are far from optimal.

Overall, advocacy and programming is heavily centered on victims. The group felt that any narratives that reframed the issue to bring more attention onto offenders and the circumstances enabling offending were useful. Similarly, the work done regarding sexual violence a decade ago could be valuable where it was argued: ‘don’t teach women and girls to modify their behaviors, instead focus on teaching men and boys not to rape.’

Kids can do: Helpful narratives included focusing on children and young people as knowledgeable, and evolving with increasing autonomy and maturity as they age. Rather than a focus on adults as protectors and educators of children regarding online safety, what strengths and skills that young people have can be bolstered and enabled and passed on to adults to continue to pass around? While adults may have life experience and knowledge of human behaviors, their technology knowledge can be lower – so rather than try to understand the tech, adult roles can be to collaborate with young people to combine their life experience with their tech knowledge.

Finally, the group discussed that sometimes it is hard to determine exactly if a message is harmful or helpful. For example, does saying that ‘governments are not doing enough’ fail to reward action that is taken and thus discourage? Or does praising small progress reduce the chances of further work?

A participant also noted in the large group discussion that many of the narratives that had been identified were external, community-level narratives: *“But what about the messages that we use in child protection advocacy and programming that we believe strongly ourselves? Could some of these narratives be harmful and justifiable for us to question?”*

Group B. Deterrents

Helpful Narratives	Harmful Narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivor stories (empowering, ethically informed) • Realistic and meaningful survivor journey • Positive depictions of the internet • Parental responsibilities • Balanced narratives that note challenges, wins and diversity rather than stereotypes • Evidence-based messaging • Offenders described not simplistically but acknowledge factors such as mental illness, normalizations, resources and available help to manage problematic sexual behaviors • Encourage more collaboration • Encourage more disclosures and trust in police • Responsible sex education at home and in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep, dark nature of online exploitation • Hollywoodization of the crimes • Policing of children's use of technology • Placing the burden of safety on the individual (child) • Focus on the challenges • Children portrayed as having no agency • Sex education that doesn't talk about sex, reproductive rights and gender equality

Hollywoodization: While public narratives about these risks and harms are useful, they can also simplify and 'Hollywoodize' the issue too – which then takes time and effort for experts and programming staff to reframe. For example, the deep dark nature of online world is promoted through visuals which use certain colors and non-face hooded person sitting against a laptop – these kinds of visuals somehow change the perception to sinister. These narratives can also set up expectations of very swift justice processes. Bringing more depth and nuance to these issues is needed.

Unintended consequences: This group also raised the issue that unintended consequences can result from activities that focus attention on teaching 'children to protect themselves.' This can be seen as placing a burden of responsibility on children (and families) and takes attention off offenders. It was noted that tech companies appreciate the framing of tools to 'help young people protect themselves' with certain tools regularly announce as being made available for users to protect themselves. This framing can help companies deflect away from their responsibilities to deal with bad actors/offenders on their platforms and place the burden on children and families to manage threats.

Survivor stories: Survivor stories can be useful narratives to help with deterrence. Positive stories of how young people managed risks, or sought effective support when things went wrong can encourage others to speak up. These stories can also motivate and educate others within the support ecosystem like police, support workers and parents and trusted adults with practical indications for improvements. The stories illustrate what can go right when support is accessed and helpful to young people. However, survivor stories not used properly can be harmful. A part of the concerns from survivors is if their stories are used but with no follow up actions.

Group C. Help-Seeking

Helpful Narratives	Harmful Narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotes and lived experiences • Helplines can be in a range of different forms and different uses - AI and chatbots • Utilizing the tech that informs a child's life can be useful • Everybody makes mistakes • Help is provided without judgement • Sex education includes health, decision making, consent and empowerment • Recovery is possible • Self-empowerment, self-guarded • Contextualized statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children don't report to helplines • Large number of NCMEC reports highlighted to scare the public about the scale of the problem • Disparate statistics and large abstract figures • You can't solve a tech problem with a tech solution • Rescue • Self-generated CSAM • Removal from harm (trauma follows the victim) • Children shouldn't watch porn (can be stigmatizing) • Visual cues like crying children/ saviors/ soldiers

Audiences: Initially this group spent time discussing the differences in audiences for these narratives. It was noted that some messages suit different contexts and people and they felt it was important that the sector takes the time and effort to really consider the audience when using narratives. We should consider if and how we are targeting children (victims), adults (offenders), funders, government, the public and consequently tailor the narratives that we use.

Helplines: New narratives could be built around helplines. Narratives such as 'children don't report to helplines' can be turned around by specifying that helplines are not meant only for directly receiving disclosures, but can represent important resources for finding information and guidance, for children and the people surrounding them.

There should be honest recognition that reporting online CSEA and some rehabilitation programs can in fact be harmful. Frank discussions within the sector that recognize this reality and incorporate it into the narratives for a positive outcome are needed. Whether one-stop centers or specialist centers are best for such sensitive issues could be investigated too – (noting that evidence for the effectiveness of one-stop centers exists).

With all the buzz around AI currently, it should be clear that this and any other technological developments can have positive and/or negative outcomes.

Risk aversion: The group felt that in general there is a need to shift from risk-averse narratives to ones that deal more with harm minimization and resilience. Narratives around privacy and deterrence are still critical and unresolved for the online CSEA ecosystem. There should also be debate and eventually a transformation of terms like 'rescued', which are very law-enforcement framed and lack the nuance of the realities. Terms such as 'safeguarded' can also encounter problems as they are not easily translatable into other languages outside English.

Many countries, in the Global North or South alike, still have problems with terms and concepts such as 'Sex education.' To overcome this, more technical language regarding 'safety' has been effective.

Consider the format: Finally, the discussion touched briefly upon different formats for helpful narratives, and how more personal formats that connected to the humanity of the issue - such as case studies – are valid for certain purposes, such as raising awareness and resources mobilization.

Seven narratives to reflect upon

Protectionist approaches mean that young people who may engage in concerning behaviors are seen in the same light as adults – described as ‘peer offenders.’ Framing of young people exhibiting ‘problematic sexual behaviors’ may be more appropriate than the labelling that comes with such justice-based terms.	There should be honest recognition that reporting for online CSEA and some rehabilitation programs can be harmful. Frank discussions within our sector that recognize this reality and incorporate it into the narratives for a positive outcomes are needed.
Narratives such as ‘children don’t report to helplines’ can be turned around by specifying that helplines are not meant only for receiving disclosures, but can represent important resources for finding information and guidance - for children and the people surrounding them.	The preference to use data, including statistics to illustrate the scale of online CSEA may be too abstract and overwhelming to the public. The numbers may scare, but then don’t help audiences to know what to do or seem to relate to the children they know.
Unintended consequences can result from activities that focus attention on teaching ‘children to protect themselves.’ This can place a burden of responsibility on children (and families) - and take attention off offenders.	Promoting the home as a safe environment needs nuance. Home can be where harm occurs – with an estimated 80% of abusers coming from the child’s ‘circle of trust.’
The reluctance to talk about sex, particularly with young people, is very common across Southeast Asian countries. This silence is enabling.	



Innovations & Tailoring Evidence Generation for online CSEA

In this final session, participants were invited to consider creative and diverse methodologies and strategies for measuring impact and generating evidence on what works to tackle online CSEA.

Data and evidence doesn't have to be onerous and complicated. Methodologies should come from the context and should fit what is right for the project. There is a wide diversity of methodologies and strategies that can be chosen to measure impact and inform decision-making, influence policy, and that can align with donor or government data requirements.

Four speakers provided insights into strategies, challenges and approaches to using data in practical and useful ways to monitor and evaluate projects:

- Case studies of stories for change - **World Vision Vietnam**
- The Aselo platform - **Tech Matters**
- Systemic approaches are hard to measure - **UNICEF Cambodia**
- Methods to measure change - **Safe Online**

Case studies of stories for change

"If the piece of data hits you it should be memorable. It should stick with you. It should drive you towards some change or action."

The World Vision project in Vietnam focused on building community networks for child online protection with multiple stakeholders. It faced challenges in generating evidence that told people what the project achieved. One method used was simply to share case studies demonstrating how the different factors of the project intersected and complemented each other.

Vietnam Case Study

We worked with an eleventh grade boy who was sexually abused. He learned that his male friend - who was a child club leader - had been speaking to others about safety online. He got the courage to approach his friend and over coffee he opened up about his experiences. The friend said "I know how to help you, don't worry". Together the boys went to a village volunteer who progressed the case through the community system to the police. The adult offender involved was ultimately terminated from their position where they were working in contact with children.

Generating evidence involves situations where the people involved might not be proud of various behaviors – like parents who are not confident of their approaches. So you can encounter some reluctance and you need to scrutinize the validity of any data you gather.

Complementing complex qualitative data with other sources is valuable. For example, analysis of the data from the national hotline in Vietnam was used to inform advocacy and policy decisions. Initially World Vision had a staff member sitting at the hotline to do this analysis but as they went along, the process was demonstrated and the data analysis encouraged to continue to inform government policy and decision making internally.

The 'Aselo' platform

The task that Tech Matters set out to address was to build a platform that can help improve the capabilities of helplines so that counsellors could spend less time and attention on data collection and more focus on the children that they help. Aselo is therefore a customizable, open-source tool that collects and consolidates text data from range of tools and platforms (voice, SMS, webchat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger) and presents it in a simple to use 'contact center platform' for helpline counsellors.

Some helplines that use the Aselo package also pay for further improvements, and because the tool is open-source, when improvements are made, they are deployed to all other users too. It's a constantly evolving tool.

"When you build an online platform it generates data like crazy and you need to control this. What is useful and what data does the counsellor need easy access to?"

The problem here was not one of needing to get data, but to be able to better use it. The data can be refashioned to meet the required templates for governments or other requirements. The tool also creates opportunities to explore aspects to identify what improves efficiency. For example, data analysis could apply temporary blocks to abusive caller IDs or route repeat callers directly to senior counselors.

The sorts of data that are being collected and stored by helplines are very sensitive, and complex tech and data security issues are not generally the expertise of helpline organizations. Tech Matters noticed that because the work is so intervention focused and dollars were being stretching to provide more services, that some data management practices were not as strong as they could be. The organization has been able to bring a high level of tech thinking to the development of the tool to improve these processes.

"It was easier for us to focus one engineer on security issues and for that to roll out to 15 helplines than for each hotline to individually do this through consultants."

Guidelines for collecting, storing and using data better, for social good: www.BD4D.org

Systemic approaches are hard to measure

The principle behind UNICEF Cambodia's Safe Online funded project was to simultaneously work along multiple tracks with different stakeholders. This included multiple ministries, (Women, Social Welfare, Interior and Post & Telecommunications) and service providers, communities, parents/caregivers and young people.

The systemic approach brings challenges when collecting data and monitoring how activities may be impacting - because of interconnections and interactions across the tracks.

One aspect of the project was a public campaign to address online grooming. UNICEF Cambodia partnered with an academic partner and a communications design company. The idea was to use an evaluation framework developed by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office to define and measure some clear indicators for impact. These indicators were established as the campaign was planned and conceptualized rather than as an afterthought. The goal was that if measurement was considered from the start, that it could also be embedded in the campaign to gather data along the way. This is different to how media campaigns are usually fielded and was not well understood by stakeholders – including communications experts who are used to measuring 'reach' and audience, but not really impact.

Learning from that first campaign, a second one this year is using innovative data collection such as monitoring volume of calls to the helpline around key public messaging periods for the campaign.

Another track from the project has been supporting private sector tech companies to implement better child safety practices. A slow, careful process, endorsed by government meant that when the guidelines began to roll out to industry, the companies turned up to listen. Measurement of impact in unconventional ways was undertaken – for example one telecommunications company with tens of thousands of staff reported to us that their senior management team held a review event of their child protection policy and procedures. While this isn't overly 'countable' it's an extremely strong measure of real-world impact.

The UNICEF Evaluation Framework for Child Online Protection Interventions can be found here: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/evaluating-online-safety-initiatives>

Brief reflections from a donor

Story-telling (and data) is such a helpful part of the ecosystem around grants and programming. It allows donors to promote the value of the funded work, and convince further buy-in from politicians and bureaucrats. Furthermore, we always remember that we are spending the money of our tax-paying citizens so we need particular checks and balances. Disbursing money through a mechanism like Safe Online is therefore attractive for these components.

Case studies and 'most significant change' information is golden for us. We can take that information back to our government stakeholders to demonstrate impact in advocacy conversations.

Methods to measure change

Contribution Analysis: An approach for assessing causal questions and inferring causality in real-life program evaluations. It is a step-by-step approach designed to help arrive at conclusions about project contribution. It is useful where a project is not experimental but based on a theory of change.

Outcome Harvesting: Identifies, formulates, verifies, analysis and interprets 'outcomes' in project contexts where relations of cause and effect are not fully understood. Outcomes are defined as changes in the 'behavior writ large' of one or more social actors influenced by an intervention.

Most Significant Change: Generates and analyses personal accounts of change and decides which of these accounts is the most significant – and why. It is not just about collecting and reporting stories but about having processes to learn from these.

Critical Points, Commitments and Potential Follow-ups:

- It's important that gathering evidence isn't simply about simply adapting the latest data trend. Mixed methods are often promoted, but is there justification to just use quantitative or qualitative approaches at different times?
- The data involved around online CSEA is deeply sensitive. Rules about how the data is stored, accessed, and collected may not be the wheelhouse of the people working on these projects. Benefiting from joining forces or working with guidance developed by tech experts (such as www.bd4d.org) can be helpful shortcuts.
- Measurement and attribution can be complex, particularly with complex, system-aware approaches. But it also doesn't have to be onerous. Approaches to measurement should come from the context and fit the requirements of the project. Don't underestimate the power of stories to convey impact.

Annex 1: List of Participants

Organization	Focus	Region/Country	Title
1. A21 - University of Kent <i>implementing partner</i>	Research/Tech tool	Global, Cambodia, Thailand	Cambodia Country Manager
2. Childline Thailand Foundation – <i>Tech Matters implementing partner</i>	Tech tool	Global, Thailand	Executive Director
3. ECPAT International	Research	Global (DH)	Research & Child Rights Manager
4. Dublin City University	Research	The Philippines	Postdoctoral Researcher
5. INTERPOL	Research/Tech tool	Global (DH)	Criminal Intelligence Specialist
6. International Justice Mission	Systems	The Philippines	Lead, Project Integration
7. International Justice Mission	Systems	The Philippines	Senior Specialist for Prosecution Assessment and Consulting
8. Kindred Tech	Tech tool	Regional (Oceania)	Chief Operating Officer
9. Marie Collins Foundation	Systems	Global, Vietnam	CEO
10. Pathfinder Labs	Tech tool	Global	CEO
11. Plan International Philippines – <i>Plan Int. Australia implementing partner</i>	Systems/Tech tool	The Philippines	Portfolio Manager, Protection from Violence
12. Plan International Vietnam	Systems	Vietnam	Country Director
13. Save the Children Hong Kong	Research	Global, Cambodia, The Philippines	Asia Child Protection Advisor
14. Tech Matters	Tech tool	Global, Thailand	Founder & CEO
15. UNICEF Cambodia	Systems	Cambodia	Child Protection Specialist
16. UNICEF EAPRO	Systems	Regional	Child Protection Regional Advisor
17. UNICEF EAPRO	Systems	Regional	Program Manager
18. UNICEF Indonesia	Systems	Indonesia	Senior Child Protection Specialist
19. UNICEF Innocenti	Research	Global (DH)	Researcher, Children & Digital Technology
20. UNICEF Philippines	Systems	The Philippines	Child Protection Chief
21. UNICEF Vietnam	Systems	Vietnam	Child Protection Chief
22. University of Bristol & Lancaster University	Tech tool	Regional	Professor of Applied Social Science
23. World Vision Vietnam	Systems	Vietnam	Regional Director, Program Quality & Impact

Annex 2: Program

Time	Session
08:30-09:00	Registration and tea/coffee
09:00-09:15	Welcome, introductions and plan for the day
09:15-10:00	<p>Networks and collaborations - get to know each other!</p> <p>Objective: Create a sense of community to connect the dots, facilitate networking and possible collaborations.</p> <p>Methodology: A facilitated game to learn more about the work of the grantees and start scoping out possible collaborations, including opportunities to create communities of practice for the region or selected priorities or areas of interest.</p> <p>Intended output: Participants have increased understanding of Safe Online investments in the region and an idea of opportunities for cross-country learning and potential future collaborations.</p>
10:00-11:15	<p>Trends and threats including latest technology developments affecting online CSEA and efforts to tackle it</p> <p>Objective: Facilitate exchange of knowledge on the latest trends and threats specific to the region, including those linked to new technology developments that may increase risks for children or provide avenues to strengthen prevention.</p> <p>Methodology: Deep dives on specific manifestations of online CSEA in the region, to share and collect experiences and lessons learned. Participants will share insights on key areas: supply side/financial incentives, offenders' profiles, peer to peer abuse, deterrents and help seeking.</p> <p>Intended output: Unpack intersections between key vulnerabilities, drivers and root causes, new technologies, manifestations of abuse and behavioural changes of offenders, survivors, and caregivers. Participants share an understanding of how the phenomenon is evolving in the region, and what are the latest tech applications to tackle specific manifestations and vulnerabilities.</p>
11:15-11:45	Tea/coffee break
11:45-13:00	<p>Data & technology cycles: amplifying impact through a whole system approach</p> <p>Objective: Jointly discuss the current data ecosystem, and how data intersects with other components including technology tools to tackle online CSEA across the data lifecycle. Highlight data governance considerations across components.</p> <p>Methodology: Selected grantees will share information about existing technology tools and data sources to highlight interlinkages and infrastructure needs, followed by open discussion to enable participants to learn more and explore possible collaborations.</p> <p>Intended output: Participants have greater clarity of how data, technologies and innovations can be leveraged to enhance interventions and scale up solutions, including the key actors and potential complementarities and collaborators to consider.</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch

14:00-15:15	<p>Narratives about online CSEA, and what they mean for programs and advocacy</p> <p>Objective: Building on the previous conversations on trends, threats and data cycles, participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the current narratives used for online CSEA and how such narratives are influencing what is discussed or prioritised for advocacy and programming to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Methodology: Preselected breakout groups will focus on three clusters of issues around offending, deterrents and help seeking for both children and offenders to reflect on the current challenges and areas for improvement in crafting narratives that can be used to communicate effectively on the issue and leveraged for advocacy wins or programmatic goals.</p> <p>Intended output: Participants have a greater understanding of the limits and potentials of current narratives around offending, deterrents and help seeking for different groups, as well as possible approaches to develop coherent narratives that are child centred.</p>
15:15-15:45	Tea/coffee break
15:45-17:15	<p>Unlocking evidence generation on online CSEA: strategies and approaches</p> <p>Objective: Create an understanding of diverse methodologies and strategies for measuring impact and generating evidence on what works to tackle online CSEA.</p> <p>Methodology: A panel of grantees will share insights and reflections on evidence on what works to tackle online CSEA from their projects, including the challenges they have encountered and what strategies they used to measure success and use evidence-based learning for programme improvement. This will be followed by a brief discussion on how different methodologies can support grantees in measuring and communicating results and influencing decision making processes.</p> <p>Intended output: Enhanced knowledge and capacity in understanding and applying specific methodologies for impact measurement and learning, leading to knowledge generation and strengthened evidence-based practices to prevent and tackle online CSEA.</p>
17:15-17:30	Summary and wrap-up



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