

Disrupting Harm

Evidence from 14 countries on the context, threats, and children's perspectives of online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Detailed Analysis of the Frontline Service Providers Survey
Cambodia

Last updated 27/4/21

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This report is a summary of preliminary data collected for this research project. The perspectives contained herein represent the individuals interviewed and surveyed. Support from the Fund to End Violence Against Children does not constitute endorsement.

Introduction

The Disrupting Harm frontline workers survey aimed to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) that are presenting to those directly working to prevent and respond on the frontline social support frontline. Insights from frontline workers via this survey allowed us to more deeply explore findings from other research activities such as the national literature reviews and government interviews from the perspective of staff directly engaged in the response to this growing problem.

A convenience sample of 50 interviews were conducted with client-facing frontline child protection workers who were surveyed in each participating country. In order to participate in the survey respondents had to meet the following qualifying requirements:

- 1) Be an adult over 18 years of age;
- 2) Work the last 12 months (at least) in the field of social work, psychology or frontline social support;
- 3) Manage their own caseload directly in the last 12 months;
- 4) Have caseloads that included children over the last 12 months.

The survey itself included a combination of 68 closed and open-ended questions. The data was collected via SurveyGizmo and administered by Disrupting Harm staff (either in person, or remotely via phone/Skype – due to COVID-19). Whilst the data collected is not statistically representative, it is still a vital snapshot in indicating scope, and broadening our perspectives on knowledge, attitudes and practices related to OCSEA.

NOTE:

In Cambodia, the data collection for the survey was conducted during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 13th 2020 to July 1st 2020 where movement restrictions were in place.

Basic Description of Survey Sample

The sample in Cambodia consisted of 50 frontline service providers. Of those, 30 respondents (60%) identified as females and 20 (40%) as males.

Participants were asked to select a single category that best describes their organisation. All participants (100%) identified their organisation as non-governmental (100%) – Figure 1.

Attempts were made to include government workers in the sample without success. However, in reality, direct social support services are largely provided by NGOs in Cambodia - in some cases alongside government employees, so this anomaly in the sample still provides an accurate indication of the opinions of frontline workers, who are most likely to have direct contact with children affected by OCSEA.

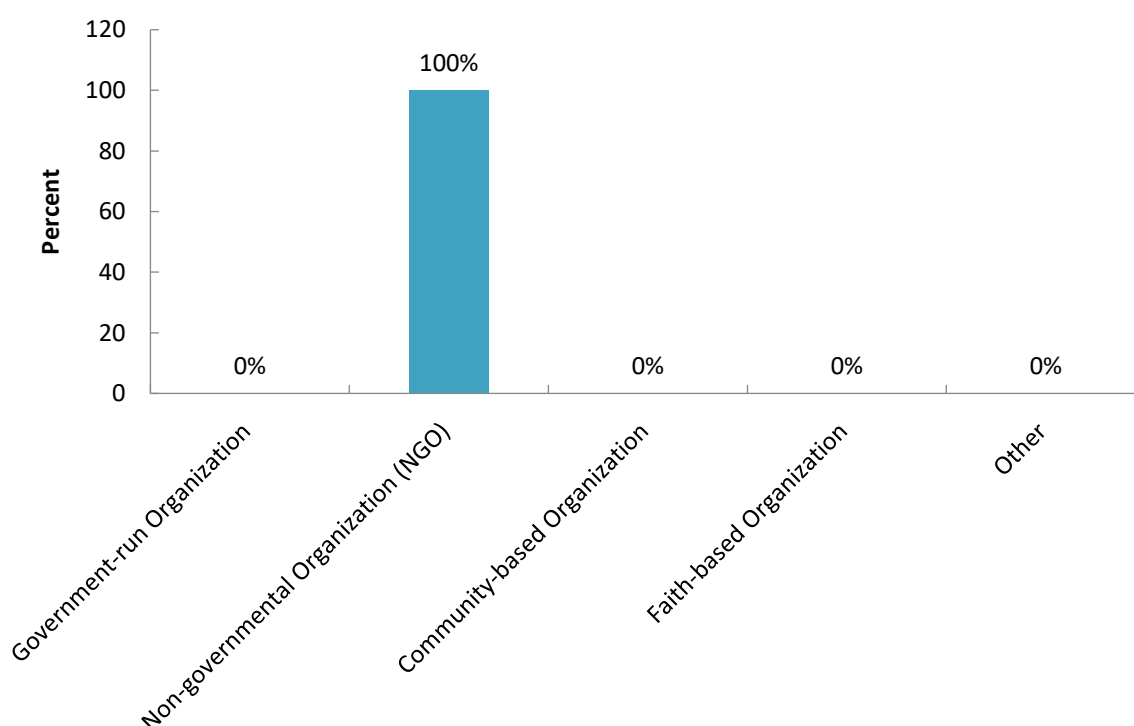


Figure 1. Types of participants' organisations. N=50

The frontline workers were asked to detail what type of services they provided related to children. The results are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

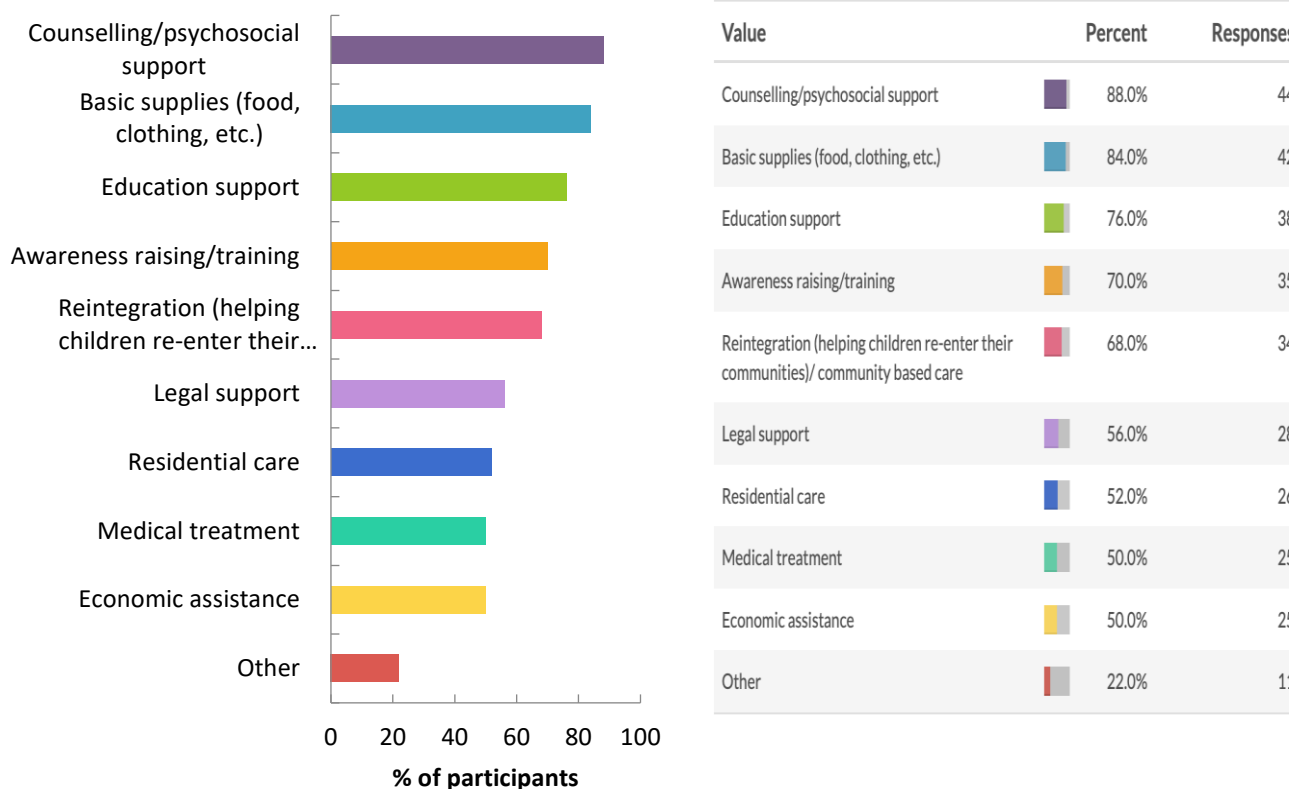


Figure 2. Types of services provided by participants' organisations. N=50

Nearly all respondents (92%) worked in organisations providing more than one service to children (n=46). As Figure 2 indicates, the most frequently reported services were counselling/psychosocial support (n=44 - 88%) and providing basic supplies n=42 - 84%). That was closely followed by education support (n=38 - 76%), awareness raising activities (n=35 – 70%) and reintegration services (n=34 – 68%). About a half of the respondents reported providing legal support (n=28 – 56%), residential care (n=26 – 52%), medical treatment (n=25 – 50%) and economic assistance services (n=25 – 50%).

Other services mentioned by the frontline workers included:

- Referral to NGO partners
- Emergency assistance (flood, fire, house repair, providing shelter etc.)
- Assistance in seeking foster care
- Music and sport classes
- Job seeking assistance/vocational trainings
- Drug use prevention

Perpetrator Demographics

To expand on the current understanding of the context in which OCSEA happens in Cambodia, the survey sought to explore the typical relationships that were observed by frontline social support workers between offenders and child survivors when they reported having worked with OCSEA cases.

From the 26 respondents who had worked with OCSEA cases, they reported that men were more commonly identified as perpetrators and women as facilitators of OCSEA. Out of those who have managed OCSEA cases in the past 12 months, the most commonly referenced relationship between the victim and the perpetrator was said to be that the perpetrator was a ‘foreigner’, followed closely by ‘community member over 18’. One frontline worker commented: *“For online cases, suspects are from all kinds but mostly suspects are unknown and foreigners”* (RA3-CA-03-A). It should be noted, that while often applicable, an assumption that abuse is ‘foreigner related’ is widely made in Cambodia.

Similarly, participants were asked about the most common relationships between facilitators and victims in the OCSEA cases they have managed. Of those who managed cases in the past 12 months, almost a third responded that the cases did not involve a facilitator, while the most common relationship reported was that the facilitator was a ‘parent/step parent’ of the victim. Very few respondents provided an answer to this question, so the results should be interpreted with caution.

When given the opportunity to provide additional comments, participants mentioned additional victim-perpetrator relationships they came across in their work, with one NGO worker witnessing child abuse by humanitarian workers: *“The boy was abused by the missionary who worked as a humanitarian”* (RA3-CA-19-A) and another describing abuse with online elements that had occurred between peers: *“Had only cases that children masturbated each other and shared [online]”* (RA3-CA-07-A).

Scenarios

Participants were presented with four scenarios depicting situations in which at least one offender victimised a child through different modes of online sexual abuse and exploitation. After being provided with definitions of 'OCSEA', a 'perpetrator' and a 'facilitator' earlier in the survey, the participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the child was a victim and that the offender had committed an OCSEA-related offence.¹ These questions were designed to elicit insights about how participants assessed different forms and situations of OCSEA. It should be noted that responses are likely based on a combination of the participant's knowledge on the issue, including how these issues may (or may not) be defined in law in a country, as well as influenced by social norms and beliefs. Irrespective of the basis for responses, the results indicate areas that are well understood (sometimes almost unanimously) and others where training and consistent messaging is needed to ensure consistent responses.

A four-point Likert scale was used to assess agreement related to statements for each of the scenario questions. Where interesting indications in differences occurred, we note them, but otherwise combined 'slightly agree' and 'strongly agree' together and 'slightly disagree and strongly disagree' also together, resulting in binary agree/disagree categories for the analysis presented here.

¹ Names for the scenarios were changed to common names in each country for the translations but have been edited in the analysis to be consistent across all the DH reports

Scenario 1

Palila pays a 16-year-old younger relative, Tamah, to undress while filming and later posts it online. Mamo, who does not know Palila, watches this interaction online from home 30 miles away.

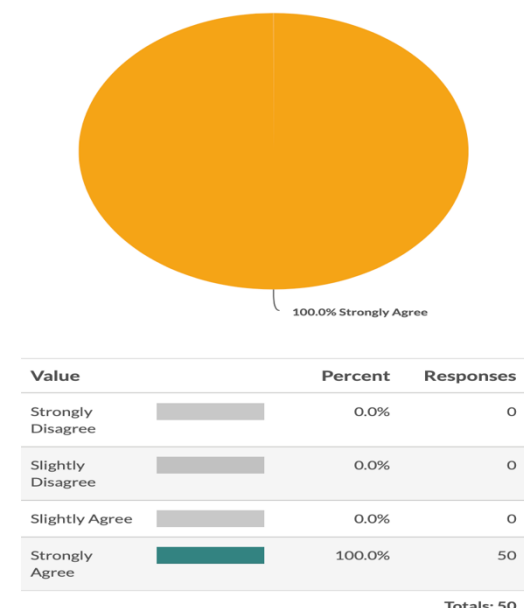


Figure 3. Do you think Tamah is a victim of OCSEA? N=50

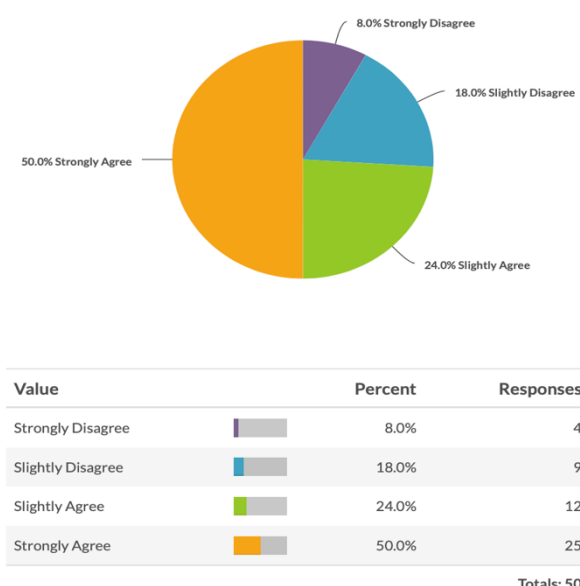


Figure 4. Do you think Mamo has committed an OCSEA-related crime? N=50

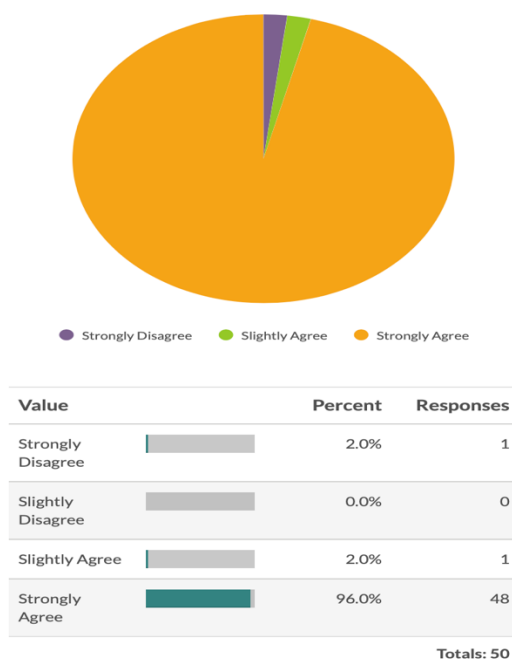


Figure 5. Do you think Palila has committed an OCSEA-related crime? N=50

All 50 participants (100%) agreed that Tamah was a victim of an OCSEA-related crime (Figure 3). Nearly all participants – 98% - also agreed that Palila - the adult who paid and filmed Tamah, had committed an OCSEA-related offence (Figure 5).

Of the three circumstances in this scenario, participants seemed to struggle the most to identify if the remote third-party (Mamo) viewing the material had committed an OCSEA related crime – though this

was still skewed towards agreement. Out of 50 participants, 37 agreed (74%)- 25 strongly and 12 slightly - that Mamo had committed a crime, while 13 disagreed (26%) – 4 strongly and 9 slightly– see Figure 4.

Some of the participants perceived Mamo as a victim, with one respondent mentioning: *“Mamo is also a victim because other person posted porn video or photo to make Mamo interested”* (RA3-CA-13-A) and another NGO-worker claimed: *“Three of them are victims of OCSE because they watched the video. Tamah is a victim that is more affected because Tamah had the porn photo taken directly”* (RA3-CA-31-A).

One respondent focused on the importance of establishing Mamo’s intent with which he was watching the video: *“I am not sure because I do not know the reason why Mamo watched a porn movie. He scrolled up and down and saw this video or had a person send it to him. So, the information is not clear in scenario”* (RA3-CA-39-A).

These comments suggest that not only the definitions of ‘OCSEA,’ ‘perpetrators’ and ‘facilitator’ were not well understood by a number of Cambodian frontline workers, but also that a victim-centred approach is lacking in case assessment.

Scenario 2

Kaimi is a 17-year-old student. Kaimi has struggled to make good grades this year and is worried that Uli, a teacher who is a close family friend, will tell Kaimi's dad. Kaimi offers to send Uli naked pictures if he promises not to talk to the family. Uli accepts.

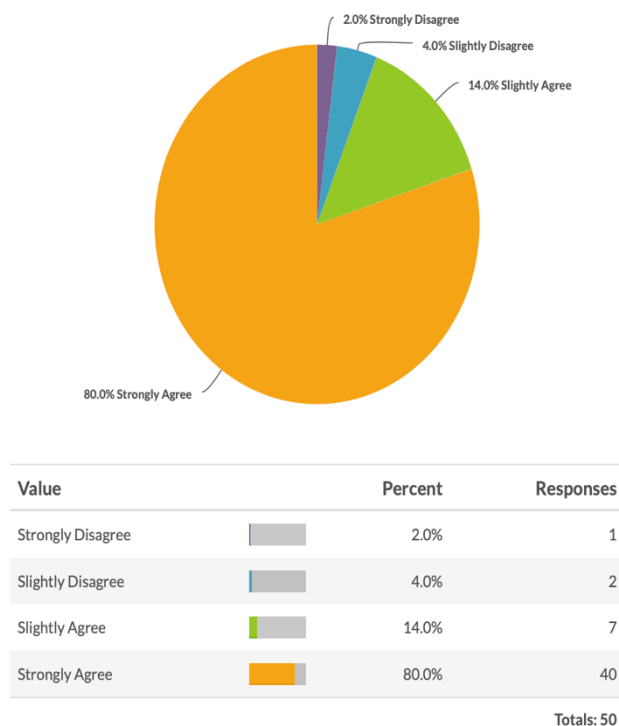


Figure 6. Do you think Kaimi is a victim of OCSEA? N=50

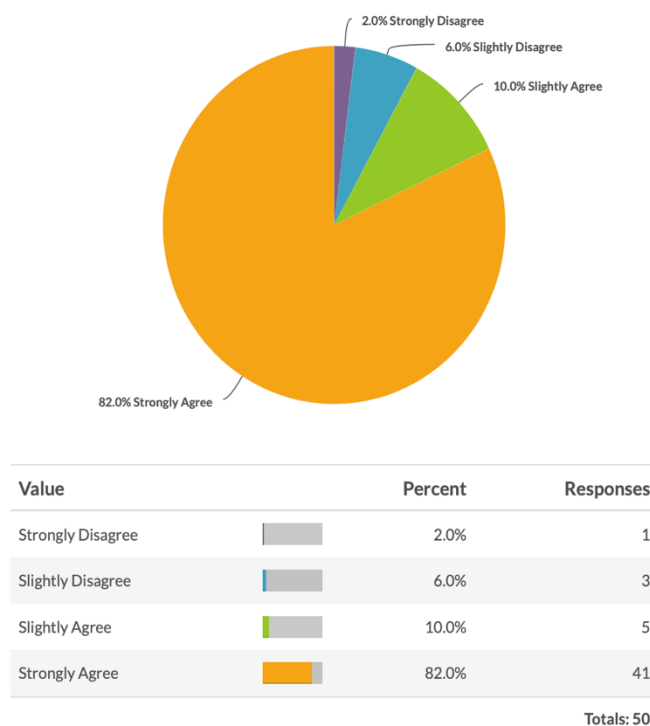


Figure 7. Do you think Uli has committed an OCSEA-related crime? N=50

Nearly all participants (n=47 - 94%) agreed that the student (Kaimi) is a victim of OCSEA (40 strongly and 7 slightly) and 3 disagreed (6%) – see Figure 6. Similarly, 46 participants agreed and 4 disagreed that the teacher (Uli) in the position of power has committed an OCSEA-related crime (Figure 7).

One participant mentioned that a crime would occur: *“If Uli shared Kaimi's picture with others by social media”* (RA3-CA-16-A). Others expressed why they think Uli has committed an OCSEA-related crime, focusing on her/his role as a teacher:

“Due to Kaimi's thinking, he made the wrong decision and did not think properly. Teacher Uli knows that this is not right, but he still let the children do it without telling the children any other way. He is completely wrong” (RA3-CA-31-A);

“In this case, it is already wrong that Uli agreed to do this and he is also a teacher and he doesn't follow the code of conduct of teachers” (RA3-CA-14-A);

“Uli committed OCSEA because Kaimi is under 18 years old. Uli is a teacher, should not respond with agreement with this. Uli should first ask - Why is Kaimi sending his/her naked photo to Uli?” (RA3-CA-39-A).

Scenario 3

Sam is a 10-year-old whose family struggles to make ends meet in their rural village. Sam's uncle, Alex, has a good government job and has always given money to help the family out. Recently, Uncle Alex wrote a message to Sam on Facebook asking to have a secret meeting at his house. When Sam arrives, Uncle Alex asked Sam to sit on his lap and began touching his private parts.

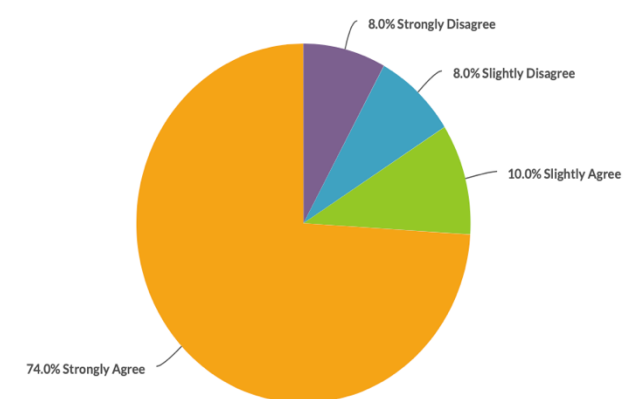


Figure 8. Do you think Sam is a victim of OCSEA? N=50

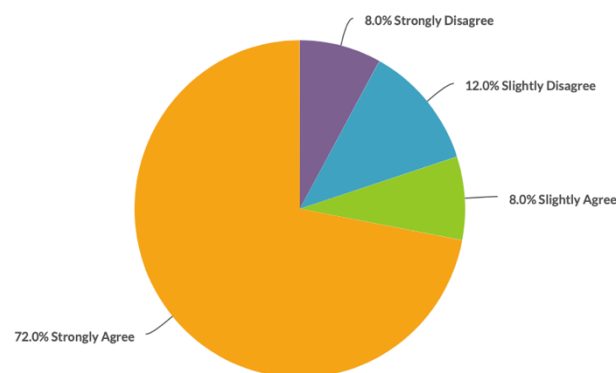


Figure 9. Do you think Alex has committed an OCSEA-related crime? N=50

As Figure 8 shows, 84% of participants (n=42) agreed that 10-year-old Sam is a victim of OCSEA (37 strongly agreed and 5 slightly) and 16% disagreed (4 strongly and 4 slightly). This could be influenced by cultural practices in Cambodia, where adults (particularly within the family) engage in touching, pulling, or playing with young boy's genitals. While this generally happens to boys in infancy through early childhood, it sometimes continues throughout childhood—often blurring the line between the cultural practice and sexual abuse. As a result of these perceived 'grey areas' the sexual exploitation and abuse of boys is, at times, not recognised or ignored and the practice of adults touching boys' genitals is not perceived as harmful. Disagreement could also be related to participants seeing the abuse as offline (not perceiving the Facebook contact as grooming).

Eighty percent of respondents (n=40) agreed that the adult, Alex, has committed an OCSEA-related crime (36 strongly and 4 slightly) and 20% disagreed (6 respondents slightly and 4 strongly) – Figure 9. When given the opportunity provide additional comments, one participant who did not perceive Alex's acts as OCSEA-related crimes explained: *"Because he just messaged via Facebook, but he didn't share something about Sam to others"* (RA3-CA-16-A), which suggests that for some frontline workers

the perception of crime seemed to relate to the offline physical abuse rather than the indication of online grooming (via messaging service).

Others focused on the child's behaviour rather than the behaviour of the adult, with one respondent mentioning: *"Should understand the reason why Sam agreed to send through Facebook with secret from Alex and agreed to sit on Alex and let Alex touch his private place"* (RA3-CA-13-A). This illustrates a victim-blaming approach which is common in Cambodia and other settings, where adults may appear to hold children - and other victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and violence - responsible for what happened to them. This leads to children and other victims not disclosing their abuse due to fears of being held responsible, blamed or punished, increasing their vulnerability to further abuse. This also increases the risk of children being expelled from families, being stigmatised, and experiencing feelings of guilt and shame, instead of receiving the empathy and support that they deserve. This example highlights the significant need for capacity building among frontline workers in Cambodia.

Scenario 4

Joe is 16, and his girlfriend Lucy is 15. They have been dating for a year and regularly have sex. Sometimes, when they can't be together, they send photos to each other of themselves naked. Joe's friend Matt knows about this and breaks into Joe's phone and forwards naked pictures of Lucy to a group of their friends.

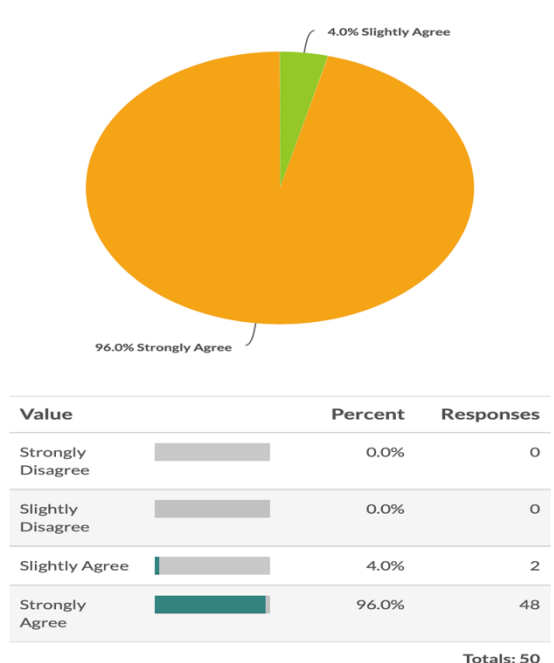


Figure 10. Do you think Lucy is a victim of an OCSEA related crime? N=50

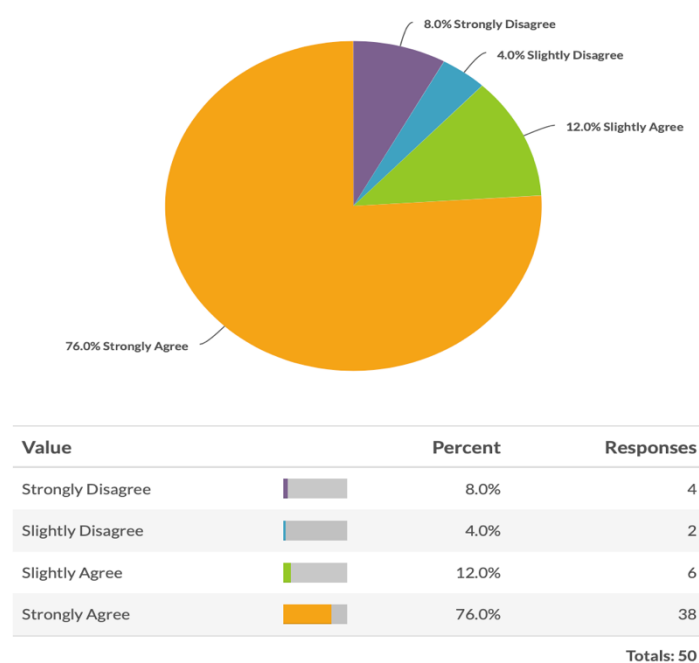


Figure 11. Do you think Joe is a victim of an OCSEA related crime? N=50

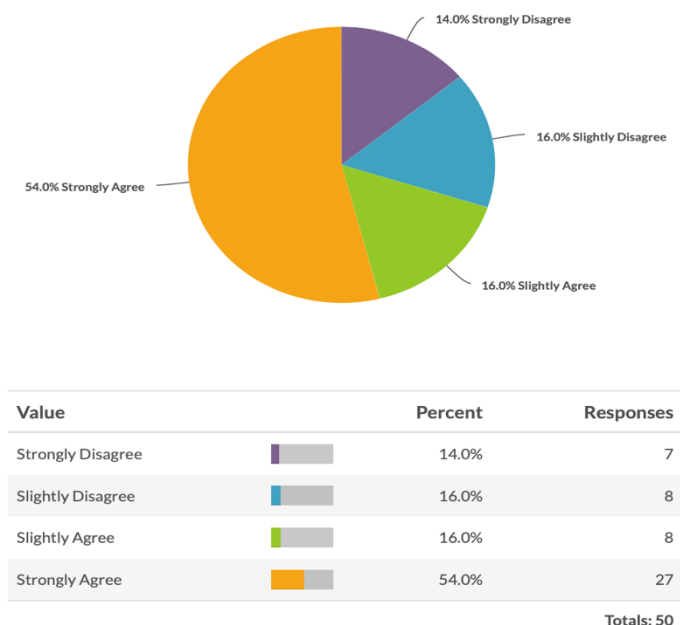


Figure 12. Do you think that Joe has committed an OCSEA related crime? N=50

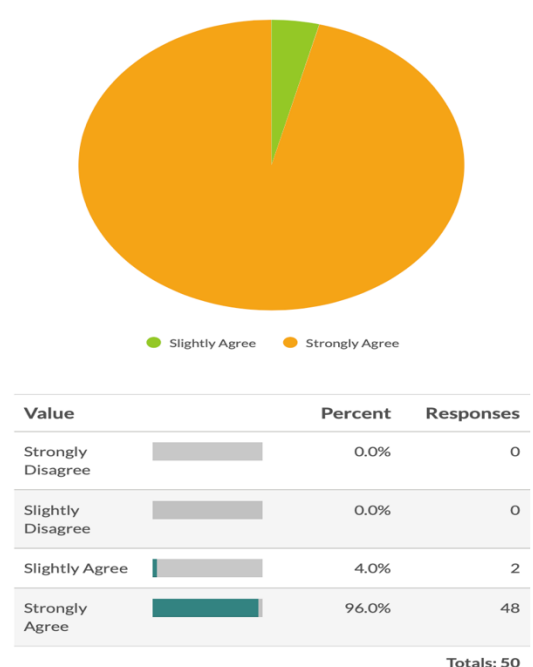


Figure 13. Do you think that Matt has committed an OCSEA related crime? N=50

As Figures 10 and 13 indicate, all (100%) participants agreed that Lucy is a victim of OCSEA and that Matt has committed an OCSEA-related crime. The majority also agreed that Joe is a victim of OCSEA (88% n=44) – see Figure 11. Although with less certainty than in previous questions, still 70% of respondents (n=35) agreed that Joe has committed an OCSEA-related crime, however 16% slightly agreed (n=8) and 30% (n=15) disagreed (n=7 - 14% strongly disagreed and n=8 - 16% slightly disagreed). One of the participants that perceived Joe as the perpetrator explained: *“Even if Joe has Lucy’s photos and he didn’t share those photos on the Internet, he is a perpetrator of OCSEA as well. Matt tried to get these photos and she is a real perpetrator of OCSEA”* (RA3-CA-15-A).

In additional comments respondents mentioned:

“Lucy and Joe are victims because they both have the right to have sex and they did not share this picture. But Matt is the perpetrator because she/he got pornography and shared it with others for any purpose” (RA3-CA-03-A);

“Both of them agreed to sending naked photo each other without threaten or pressure from someone. So perpetrator is Matt” (RA3-CA-21-A).

Summary

Participants overwhelmingly correctly identified the children as victims and adults as offenders across the four scenarios. However, in three questions there were some larger divergences.

In Scenario 3, where an uncle of a 10-year-old boy messaged him via Facebook and suggested a private meeting, during which he started touching the boy's private parts, 20% did not perceive the act as criminal. This is likely to be influenced by a number of inter-related issues, including traditional ideas about common 'childrearing' practices related to male children in Cambodia and gender norms. It is not uncommon for male infants to have their genitals touched, and in some cases kissed or sucked as a means of pacifying them. As boys get older it is also common for adult family members and others to touch their genitals over and under clothing, in the belief that it is a way of 'showing affection and love' and make jokes about their genitals. Boys often share that they dislike this, and may express discomfort, anger or become tearful – although adults may then tease or laugh at them. Many adult Cambodians do not consider this as a form of abuse, and it would appear in the majority of cases, that is not the intention – however, boys take messages from this that undermine their body autonomy- they learn that their bodies are not their own, and that others may touch them without permission - thus making them vulnerable to those who do intend to abuse them.

In addition, traditional ideas, attitudes, expectations and behaviour related to gender norms require boys to present as strong, invulnerable and able to protect themselves and others. Perceptions are changing, although invariably boys are not considered to be vulnerable to abuse, less likely to be victimised, less seriously affected, and far less likely to require support following abuse. There is a continued need for frontline service providers to receive training related to all forms of abuse, vulnerability, risk and the support needs of males of all ages.

The second question raised is related to the scenario (Scenario 1) in which an adult paid his 16-year-old female relative to undress while he filmed it and later posted it online. In this scenario, an unrelated individual, Mamo, who did not know the child or the other adult, watched the interaction online from home 30 miles away. Nearly all of the participants agreed that the child was a victim of sexual exploitation and that the adult who paid and filmed her had committed an OCSEA-related crime. However, out of 50 participants, 13 disagreed (26%) that Mamo had committed an OCSEA-related crime (Figure 4). Respondents comments relating to this scenario suggested these participants held beliefs that the intent of the third party in viewing the video are relevant (he may have only stumbled on the video rather than seeking it out).

Lastly, in Scenario 4, where two minors, Joe and Lucy, are in a consensual, sexual relationship, but Joe's friend Matt breaks into Joe's phone and shares naked photos of Lucy, we see the largest discrepancies amongst respondents. While 30% of the frontline workers did not perceive the male in the relationship Joe's actions as a criminal act, 70% did (Figure 12). The scenario clearly states that both Joe and Lucy exchange photographs within their relationship, and it is likely that gender expectations, where girls are more likely considered 'victims' and boys 'perpetrators' play a role in their chosen responses, alongside traditional expectations of women and girls, where purity and reputation are highly valued. While technically two children consensually photographing themselves naked is the crime of 'creating child sexual abuse material', there is ongoing debate about this characterisation. For example, if the images had remained between the two consenting parties, harm

may not have been experienced. In a 2020 study on self-generated sexual content, it was found that children thought sharing such images could even provide advantages in their relationships and/or increase their self-esteem.² On the other hand, when the materials are shared outside the couple, they may end-up circulating the web and being acquired by offenders.³ Additionally, the normalisation of children sharing sexual images, videos and sexualised online conversations may lead to victims underreporting because they may fail to perceive what is happening to them as abusive or exploitative.⁴

Given that participants were provided with definitions of OCSEA before reading the scenarios, some of those results raise a number of questions, and point to a need of providing awareness raising and case handling/training activities that consider issues through a more inclusive and nuanced gender lens for frontline workers in Cambodia. The definitions might have not been clearly understood, or other factors (such as cultural or legal) may have influenced participants perception of the situations described.

² ECPAT Sweden. (2020, May). [“I början vart det lite läskigt men nu är det vardag” En rapport om yngre barn och egenproducerat material.](#) [Translated from Swedish].

³ Bracket Foundation. (2019). Artificial Intelligence: [Combating online sexual abuse of children.](#) 10.

⁴ Palmer, T. (2015). [Digital Dangers: the impact of technology on the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.](#) Barnado's. 35.

Vulnerabilities

Based on their knowledge and experience, participants indicated whether they believed a list of factors about the child and society increased children's vulnerability to general sexual exploitation (i.e. all kinds) and more specifically to OCSEA.

- **Factors about the child identified as increasing vulnerability to general sexual abuse and exploitation**

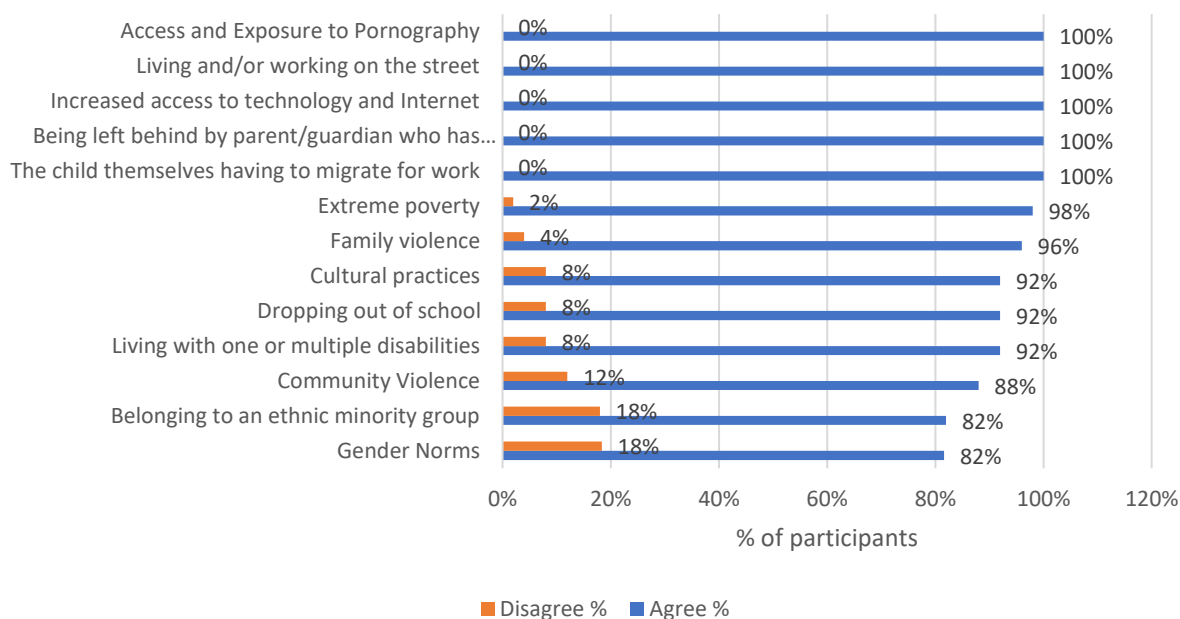


Figure 14. Participants' perceptions of factors about the *child* impacting children's vulnerability to general sexual exploitation. N=50

Figure 14 shows overwhelming agreement that almost all the factors listed were considered to impact children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. It shows that access and exposure to pornography (100%), living and/or working on the street (100%), increased access to technology and Internet (100%), being left behind by parent/guardian who has migrated for work (100%) and children having to migrate for work (100%) were rated by all participants as factors increasing children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. That was followed by extreme poverty (98%) and family violence (96%). Over 90% of participants also agreed that cultural practices in Cambodia, dropping out of school and living with one or multiple disabilities increase children's vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. While still over 80% perceived belonging to an ethnic minority group and gender norms as factors influencing vulnerability to child sexual exploitation, 18% of respondents strongly or slightly disagreed they have any impact in Cambodia.

Some of the factors additionally listed by participants that they believed strongly agreed increased children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation were:

- Living with a sibling
- Using the Internet but not knowing its disadvantages

- **Factors about the child identified as increasing vulnerability specifically to OCSEA**

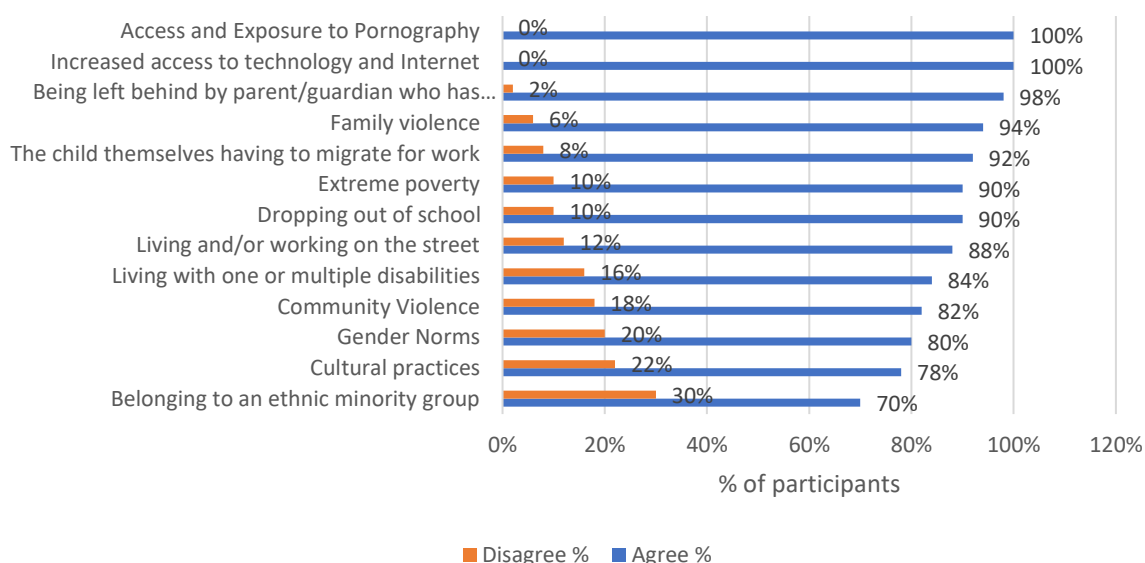


Figure 15. Participants' perceptions of factors about the *child* impacting children's vulnerability to OCSEA.
N=50

Similarly, as in the case of children's vulnerability to child sexual exploitation in general, all participants agreed that access and exposure to pornography (100%), increased access to technology and Internet (100%) and being left behind by parent/guardian who migrated for work (100%) increase children's vulnerability to OCSEA (Figure 15).

The rest of the factors were also highly rated, however their influence on OCSEA was rated as smaller compared to child sexual exploitation in general (e.g. cultural practices – 78% compared to 92% in the child sexual exploitation questions or belonging to an ethnic minority group – 70% compared to 82%). Interestingly, out of all the factors, belonging to an ethnic minority group, cultural practices and gender norms were selected in Cambodia as increasing vulnerability to OCSEA the least.

Additional factors mentioned by participants that they strongly agreed increased children's vulnerability to OCSEA were:

- Children using illegal drugs
- Parents being too busy to "play with phone"

When participants were asked about the **similarities and differences in children's vulnerability to OCSEA and sexual exploitation in general**, they mentioned that children from minorities might be less vulnerable to OCSEA because of reduced Internet access and that low knowledge about OCSEA increases children's vulnerability to that crime. Some of the responses included:

Similarities:

"It is similar because sexual abuse can occur in any form" (RA3-CA-39-A);

“It is the same abuse because it affects the rights of children and their values, and it is sexual exploitation of children, but online has led to an increase in sexual abuse” (RA3-CA-32-A);

“Online sexual exploitation is the same as the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation in general, children living in ethnic areas, people who use the Internet more, children who live on the streets, etc. It can be a bit different, just that children who drop out of school or migrate cannot become victims of online sexual exploitation” (RA3-CA-44-A).

Differences:

“Because children have limited knowledge about online” (RA3-CA-38-A);

“Child Vulnerability to Online Sexual Exploitation - It is easier for perpetrators to seduce child victims than in the general case of sexual exploitation” (RA3-CA-47-A);

“Different because considering the vulnerability of the online system, children are really at risk. Nowadays, children like to use the Internet and like to express or follow the compliments of some opportunists to show any inappropriate activities” (RA3-CA-46-A);

“For me, I think differently, because online is to make the child who suffers through this system and will suffer embarrassment globally, lose his dignity, and personal privacy” (RA3-CA-43-A);

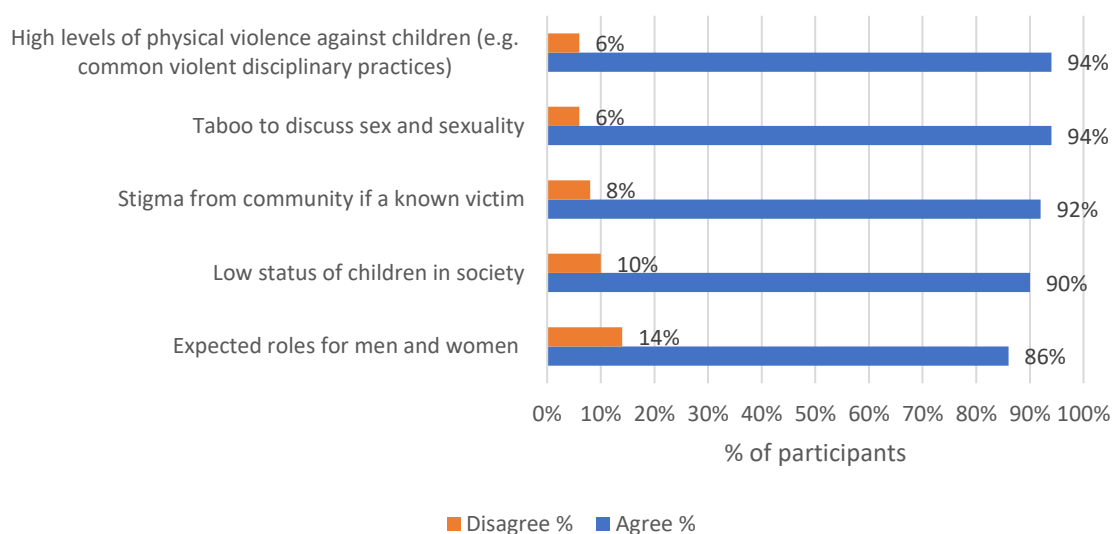
“For me, it's different because online sexual exploitation puts children at greater risk than general sexual exploitation. Most people who live with the smartphone technology can find pornographic videos many times, which is one of the reasons why children are more vulnerable online than general sexual exploitation” (RA3-CA-50-A);

“Minority groups have less access to telephones and the Internet” (RA3-CA-42-A);

“Online sexual exploitation is different because this type of exploitation is so fast and easy to share that it increases the type of exploitation. On the other hand, a large number of children do not fully understand this type of exploitation” (RA3-CA-41-A);

“Online sexual exploitation is secret and takes a long time to seek a suspect's identity. Sexual Abuse in general is easy to notice than online sexual exploitation” (RA3-CA-18-A).

- **Factors about the society identified as increasing vulnerability to general sexual abuse (any types)**



*Figure 16. Participants' perceptions of factors about the *society* impacting children's vulnerability to general sexual exploitation and abuse. N=50*

Over 90% of respondents agreed that high levels of physical violence against children (94%), taboos around discussing sex and sexuality (94%), stigma from the community (92%) and low status of children in society (90%) increase children's vulnerability to child sexual exploitation in Cambodia (Figure 16). Expected roles for men and women was also a highly rated factor (86%), however 14% disagreed that it increases children's vulnerability to child sexual exploitation in Cambodia.

Additional factors about society mentioned by participants that they believed increased children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation included:

- Experiencing domestic violence
- Illegal drugs in communities
- Lack of Information about sexual abuse of boys
- Legal factors

- Factors about the society identified as increasing vulnerability to OCSEA

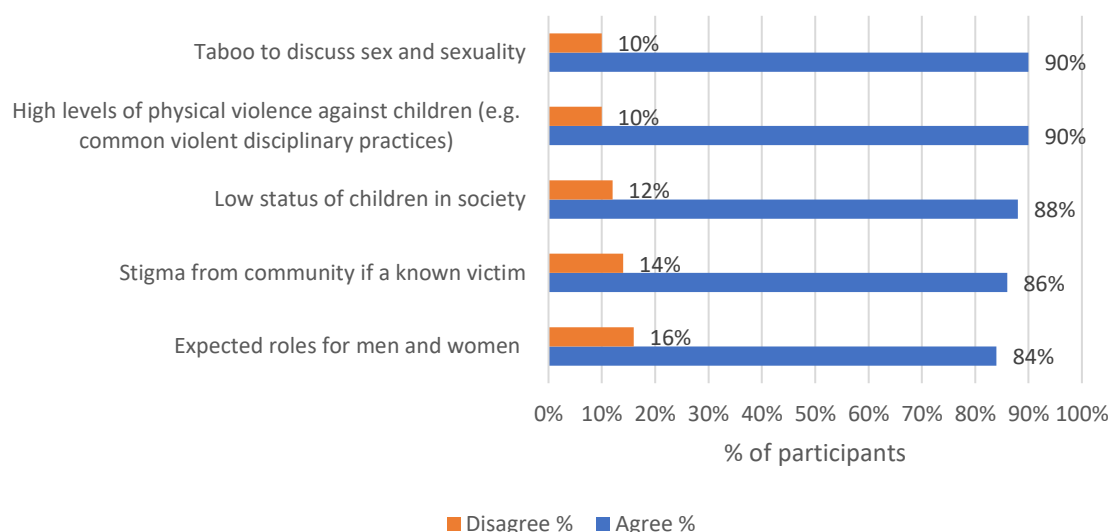


Figure 17. Participants' perceptions of factors about the *society* impacting children's vulnerability to OCSEA.
N=50

Societal factors increasing the vulnerability to OCSEA were largely rated similarly to those increasing the vulnerability to child sexual exploitation in general. 90% of respondents found taboos around discussing sex (*"Social factors prohibit to talk about sex with children and youth. That makes children unaware of the impact and risks of sexual abuse"* (RA3-CA-47-A)) and sexuality (90%) and high levels of physical violence against children (90%) as having the biggest influence. That was closely followed by low status of children in the society (88%), stigma from the community (86%) and expected roles for men and women (84%).

Additional factors about the society mentioned by participants they strongly agreed increased children's vulnerability to OCSEA were:

- Lack of knowledge about the issue
- Living in an orphanage
- Using the Internet
- Parents being busy and letting children use smartphones

When participants were asked specifically **why societal factors increase vulnerability to OCSEA differently to sexual exploitation generally** they often did not talk about differences, but rather the risk factors and impact of the crime in general. Some of the responses included:

"It's different. The sexual abuse exploitation offline makes the children cannot forget and suffer more severe than online sexual abuse exploitation" (RA3-CA-31-A);

"Because social factors have a greater impact on the vulnerability of child sexual abuse and exploitation. On the other hand, social factors are less likely to be involved with online child sexual and exploitation online including they think it's not a big deal" (RA3-CA-34-A);

“Today, the most parents are unaware of online sexual abuse and they often allow their children to use smart phones from an early age that make children more vulnerable” (RA3-CA-46-A);

“The technology is popular and there are no laws to control for this technology” (RA3-CA-13-A);

“Because some families do not know how to use technology as children. Families think online cannot be abused and do not understand online abuse” (RA3-CA-12-A).

Reporting

In order to explore what influences decisions about reporting cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse, participants were asked to indicate whether they believed particular social and cultural factors influenced reporting both on general child sexual exploitation (all kinds) and specifically related to OCSEA in Cambodia.

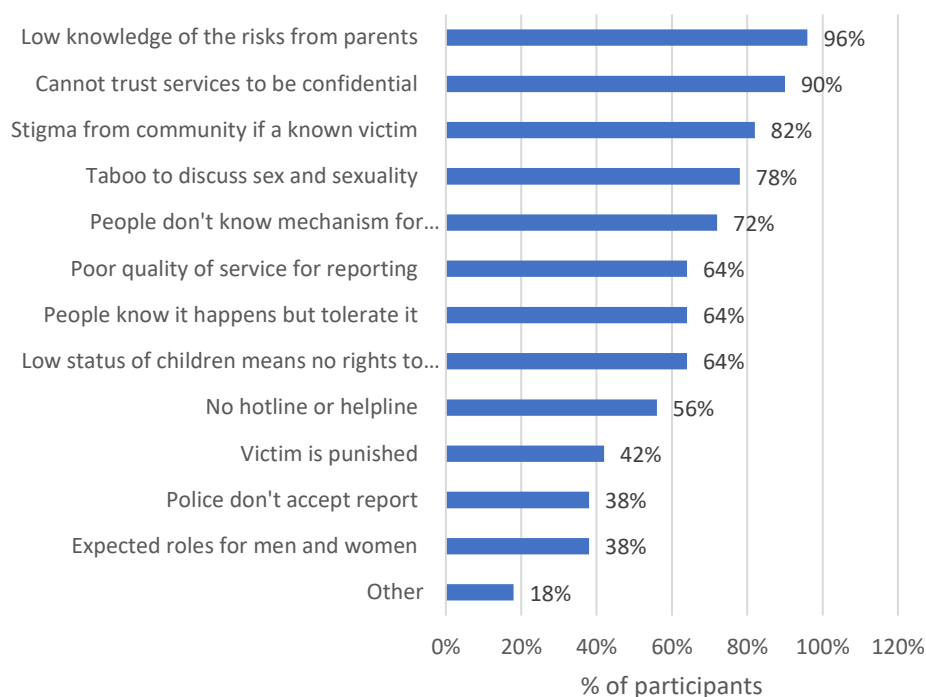


Figure 18. Social and cultural influences on reporting *child sexual exploitation in general* N=50

As Figure 18 shows, low knowledge of risks from parents (n=48 – 96%) and not trusting services to be confidential were perceived as main factors **influencing reporting of child sexual exploitation**, an interesting finding given that respondents came from organisations providing a range of services. That was followed by stigma from the community (n=41 – 82%), taboos around discussing sex and sexuality (n=39 – 78%) and not knowing the mechanism for reporting (n=36 – 72%). Police not accepting reports and expected roles for men and women were found to have the smallest influence, however still as many as 40% claimed these factors also contribute to the decisions about reporting.

Other factors mentioned by participants that influence reporting child sexual exploitation in general included:

- Being ashamed
- Not trusting the justice system
- The influence of people in the position of power

In cases specifically of OCSEA (as opposed to general child sexual exploitation) ‘low knowledge of the risks from parents’ was also selected by participants as the factor influencing reporting the most (n=43 – 86%), however it was followed by ‘not knowing the mechanism for reporting’ (n=40 – 80%)

and poor quality of service for reporting (n=36 – 72%) – Figure 19. Not knowing the mechanism for reporting (80% OCSEA, 72% child sexual exploitation), poor quality of service for reporting (72% OCSEA, 64% child sexual exploitation) and no hotline or helpline (70% OCSEA and 56% child sexual exploitation) were rated as having a bigger influence on reporting in cases of OCSEA compared to child sexual exploitation in general.

These results might suggest that organisations are either not aware of the services others provide, or that they believe that others – children and families - are not aware of them.

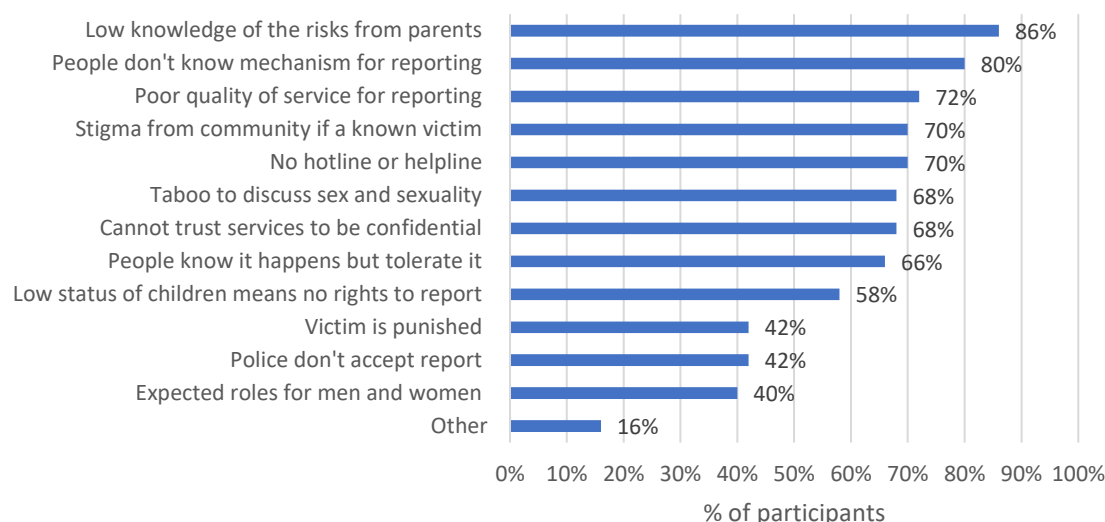


Figure 19. Social and cultural influences on reporting OCSEA N=50

Other factors mentioned by participants that influence reporting OCSEA included:

- Not feeling confident about reporting or ashamed
- Money and timing
- Threats from people in power
- Poor knowledge on the issue

When given the opportunity provide additional comments, frontline workers talked about the culture of silence around sex and fear of consequences of disclosure in Cambodia, with one respondent saying: *“It is like a culture not to talk about sex. The percentage of unreported sexual abuse cases is high because sometimes children are scared or shy to talk about this and when the case has happened, they are blocked to speak out because of this culture”* (RA3-CA-14-A). Others talked about the limited attention paid to the issue and the focus on cases involving girls, with one participant commenting *“Because in Cambodia it is less noticeable that children are also victims of sexual abuse. Thus, when children are abused, it is not reported and children report it unnoticed. And most organisations work with girls, and the authorities or ministries also focus on girls, so when there is an organisation, which focuses on boys and girls, the number of children increases”* (RA3-CA-03-A). Additionally, one participant pointed to the different possibilities for reporting in urban and rural settings in Cambodia:

“Sometimes it will be difficult for the rural areas to report because the level of education is low and they rarely think it can happen” (RA3-CA-14-A).

Availability of Support

Respondents were asked to evaluate the overall **availability and quality** of medical, psychological, legal and reintegration services for child victims of OCSEA in Cambodia.

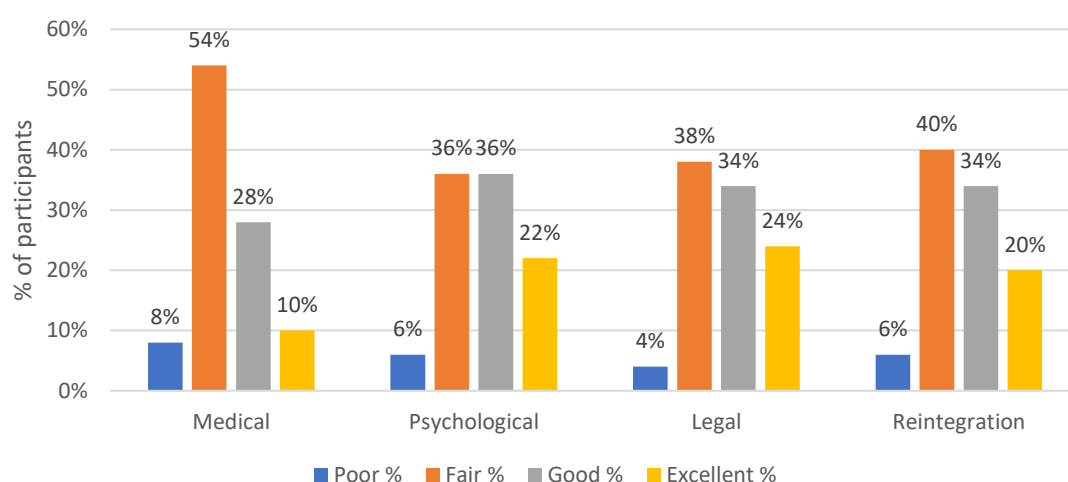


Figure 20. Perception of Availability of Services N=50

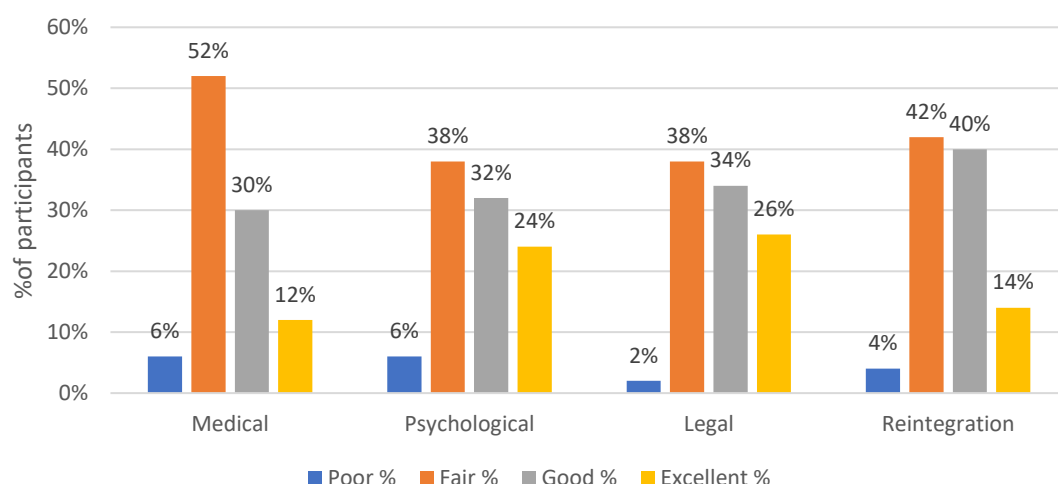


Figure 21. Perception of Quality of Services N=50

Figures 20 and 21 show that both in terms of availability and quality, psychological and legal services in Cambodia were rated the highest. 58% of respondents rated the availability of those services as either good or excellent and 56% rated the quality of psychological services as good or excellent. Similarly, 60% of respondents rated the quality of legal services as good or excellent. Medical services received the lowest ratings, with 62% rating their availability as poor (8%) or fair (54%) and 58% rated their quality as poor (6%) or fair (52%). Reintegration services were rated most often as fair or good both in terms of availability (40% as fair and 34% as good) and quality (42% as fair and 40% good).

When respondents were given the option to explain their appraisals of the quality and availability of services above, in doing so they noted the following:

“The medical sector is still slow and underdeveloped to meet customer needs” (RA3-CA-47-A);

“As I mentioned, it is not common for clients to receive professional support when they have problems. Professionals still have a limited knowledge of how to support them with Psychology and Medical care” (RA3-CA-14-A);

“Child victims need services relevant to their situation” (RA3-CA-13-A).

To better understand what affects the availability of support services for children, respondents were asked to indicate to what extent particular factors they believed had an influence on the availability of services for children.

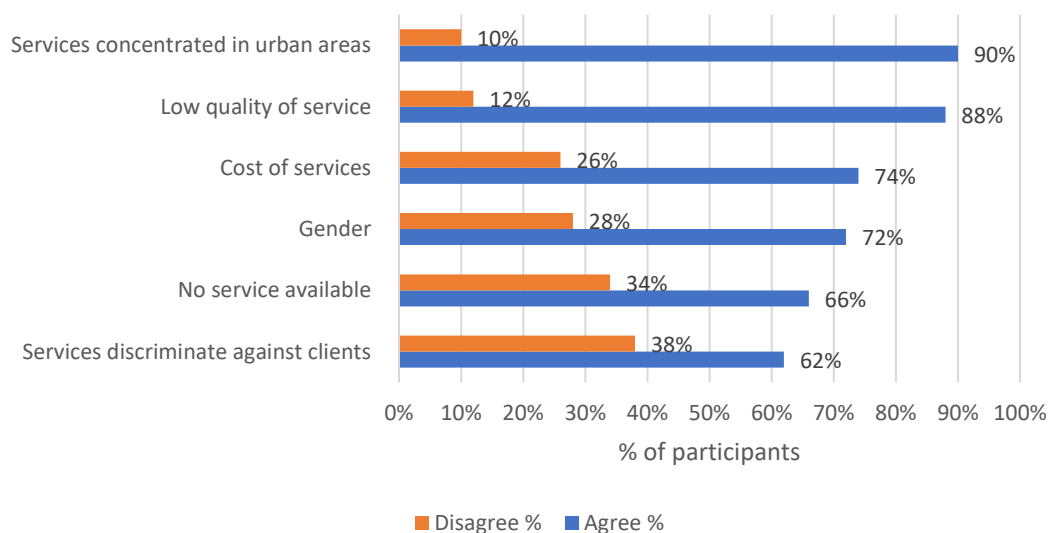


Figure 22. Factors affecting the availability of support services for child victims of child sexual exploitation
N=50

Figure 22 above indicates that factors perceived as having the biggest influence on the availability of support services for children recovering from child sexual exploitation was the location – services are concentrated in urban areas (90% strongly or slightly agreed) closely followed by low quality of service (88%). That is surprising, since at the same time more than 50% of participants rated the quality of most services as either good or excellent (Figure 29).

More than 60% of participants also agreed that cost of services (74%), gender (72%), unavailability of services (66%) and the fact that services discriminate against clients (62%) have an influence on the availability of services for victims of child sexual exploitation.

Participants mentioned additional factors such as:

- Limited capacity of service providers
- Lack of collaboration
- Issues with the legal system
- Lack of knowledge about reporting

When participants were asked to indicate to what extent those same factors affect the availability of support services for child victims of OCSEA, the results were similar (Figure 23).

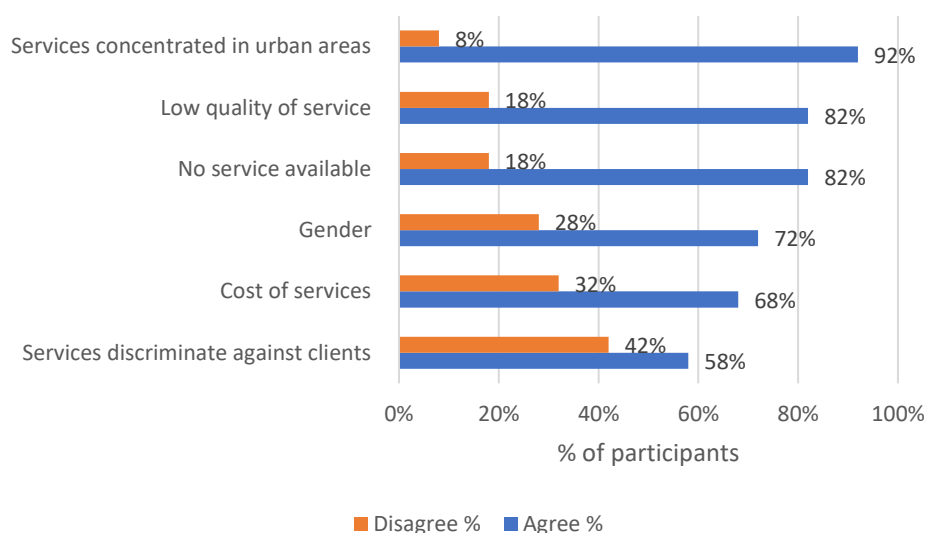


Figure 23. Factors affecting the availability of support services for child victims of OCSEA N=50

The concentration of services in urban areas was also was rated as having the highest influence on availability of support services (94%) in regards to OCSEA cases. That was followed by low quality of services (82%), services being unavailable (82%), gender (72%) and cost of services (68%). Biggest discrepancy was found in the discrimination factor - while 58% of respondents either strongly or slightly agreed that services discriminate against clients, 42% disagreed.

Respondents additionally mentioned factors such as:

- Rural areas not having Internet access
- Timing and money issues in the victim's family
- Authorities' limited knowledge about technology
- No trust to service providers

Investigations and Convictions

Participants were asked to estimate the amount of OCSEA cases they managed in the last 12 months and determine approximately how many of those resulted in investigations and convictions. It should be noted that these indications were merely estimates and not reliable counts of official cases.

11 participants indicated that in the last 12 months, at least one case of OCSEA they managed directly resulted in a complaint filed to the local police/judicial authorities (69 case total).

12 participants indicated that in the last 12 months, at least one of the cases they managed resulted in an investigation (total 45 estimated cases)

6 participants indicated that in the last 12 months, at least one of the cases they managed resulted in a conviction (total 20 estimated cases).

The numbers of reported cases represent only a fraction of the number of OCSEA incidents that we expect are occurring, the majority of which continue to never come to the attention of social workers or law enforcement.

Law Enforcement and Government Support

In order to understand frontline service workers perceptions of responses by local law enforcement on the issue of OCSEA, respondents were asked to answer, “Based on your work, which best describes local law enforcement’s: 1) awareness of OCSEA crimes; and 2) response to OCSEA crimes. Their responses to this question are depicted in Figure 24.

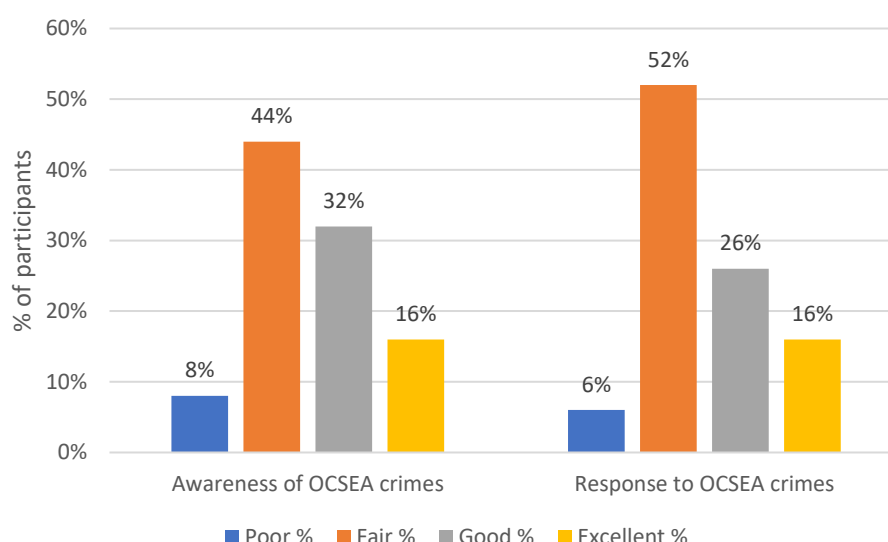


Figure 24. Participants’ perceptions of local law enforcement awareness and response to OCSEA N=50

While 52% of participants rated law enforcement’s awareness as either poor (8%) or fair (44%), 48% rated it as good (32%) or excellent (16%). In the case of response to OCSEA crimes, 58% described it as poor (6%) or fair (52%) and 42% as good (26%) or excellent (16%).

Throughout the qualitative responses across the entire survey, limited awareness was mentioned as a major obstacle to providing adequate services to child victims and engaging in other key activities to address OCSEA. Respondents mentioned that:

“Authorities’ understanding [of OCSEA] is limited” (RA3-CA-10-A);

“Do not understand OCSEA yet” (RA3-CA-11-A);

“Because the knowledge of OCSEA is still limited to some areas and it needs to be widely shared if we want to be better. We should conduct more training to the staff or communities about this to make them more understanding” (RA3-CA-14-A);

“Limited of responding from official or authority” (RA3-CA-47-A).

To better understand the ratings above, participants were asked about their perceptions of the quality of efforts to address OCSEA (Figure 25).

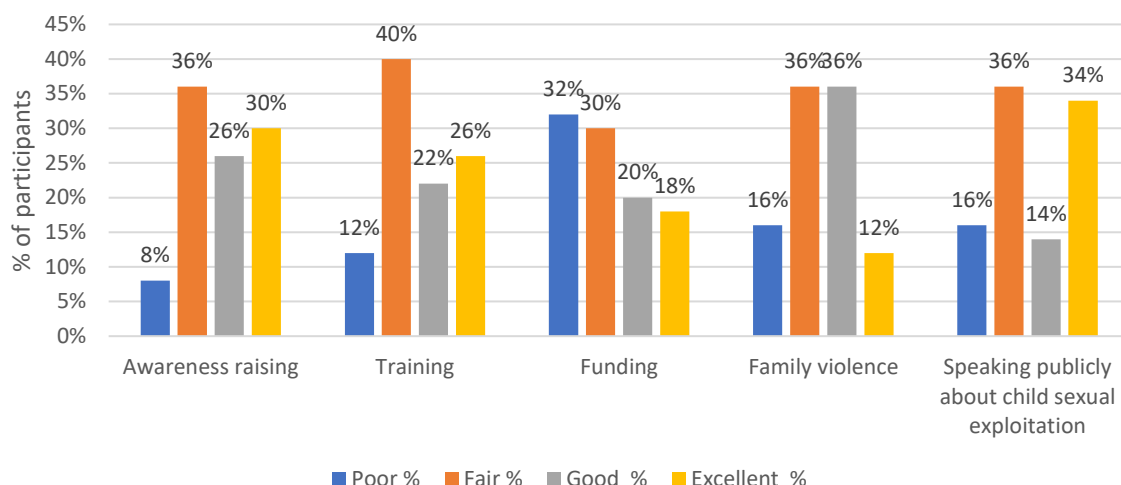


Figure 25. Participants' perceptions of quality of government efforts to address OCSEA N=50

As illustrated in the graph above, the government of Cambodia was given quite mixed rankings when respondents were asked to appraise the activities to address OCSEA in the country. Poor and fair ratings were given as often as good and excellent ratings in nearly all areas. Funding was given the lowest rating with 32% rating it as poor and 30% as fair. Awareness raising received the highest ratings (30% as excellent and 26% as good) however 44% still rated it as poor (8%) or fair (36%). 34% of respondents rated speaking publicly about child sexual exploitation as excellent, at the same time 36% rated it as fair. Most participants perceived the government's efforts to combat family violence as either fair (36%) or good (36%). These findings are unclear and surprising and will need to be taken in context of other data gathered in Disrupting Harm activities to fully understand.

One participant suggested laws and standards around online protection are lacking in Cambodia:

"Governments should be organised and have clear standards of protection and intervention. Further restrictions on the use of online systems. Otherwise, it could happen with more and more online abuse like it is today" (RA3-CA-08-A).

Next, frontline workers surveyed were asked to assess the collaboration on OCSEA between non-government sectors such as NGOs, tourism companies, Internet companies etc. The results are illustrated in Figure 26.

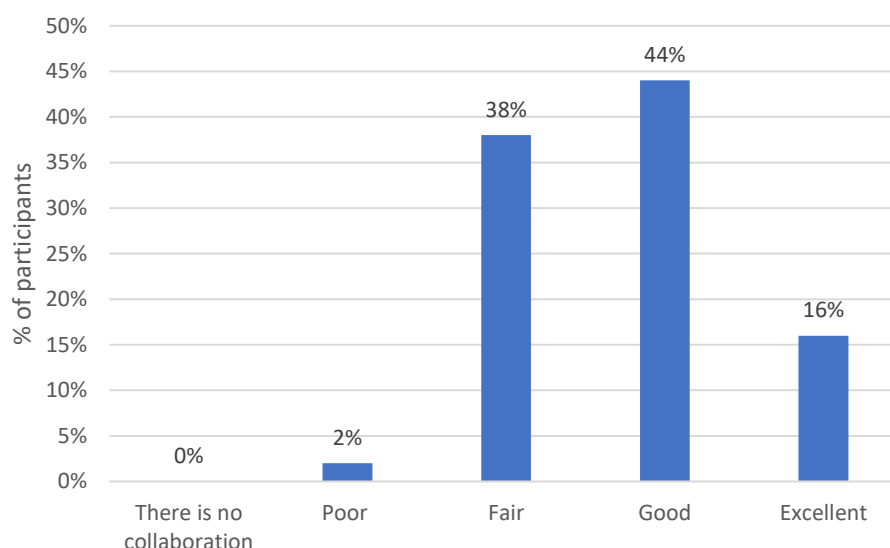


Figure 26. Participants perceptions of collaboration on OCSEA between non-government N=50

While 60% of respondents (n=30) rated the collaboration between providers as good (n=22 – 44%) or excellent (n=8 – 16%), 40% rated it as fair (n=19 – 38%) or poor (n=2 – 4%).

Interestingly, in a 2018 study conducted by APLE Cambodia, it was found that there are big gaps in any proactive collaboration with police, civil society, U.S. Homeland Security and other relevant partners to respond to OCSEA. The lack of cooperation between e.g. U.S. Homeland Security (which receives all National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children referrals) and local enforcement means that no practical actions can be taken on reported OCSEA from online platforms.⁵

⁵ Cambodia National Council for Children. (2019). [Initial Situational Analysis on Online Child Sexual Exploitation \(OCSE\) in Cambodia](#).

Public Awareness

Lastly, the survey attempted to ascertain the levels of public awareness around the issues of OCSEA in Cambodia. In order to do so, frontline workers were asked to subjectively appraise young people's awareness, parent's awareness and the general public's awareness of OCSEA – their responses are illustrated in Figure 27.

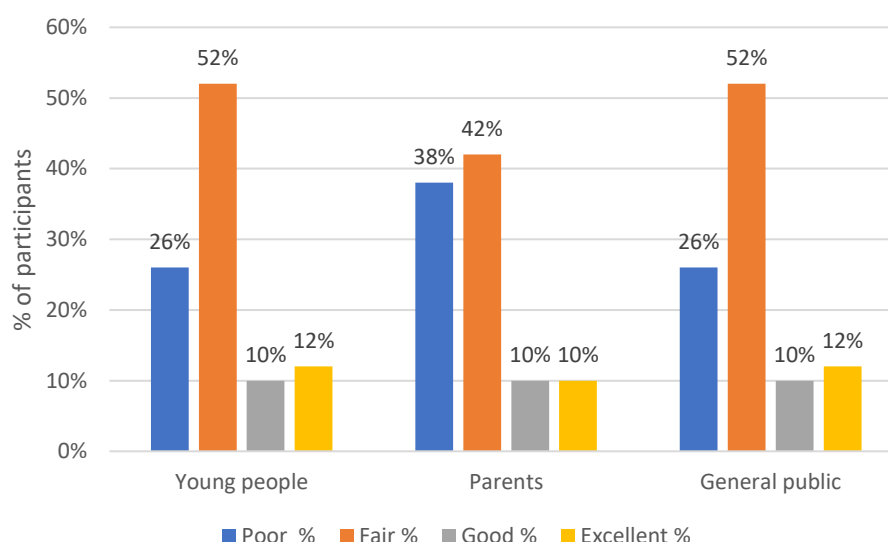


Figure 27. Awareness of OCSEA N=50

Figure 27 shows that the majority of participants described young people's, parent's and the general public's awareness of OCSEA as either poor or fair, with parents being rated as having the poorest knowledge on the issue (38%). Young people's and the general public's awareness were rated identically – with 78% rating it as poor (26%) or fair (52%) and 22% as good (10%) or excellent (12%). These results suggest that awareness raising activities in Cambodia are much needed.

Respondents were given the option to provide additional comments to qualify their answers above. Some of the responses included:

"The understanding of online sexual abuse and exploitation is limited in Cambodia" (RA3-CA-02-A);

"Because in Cambodia young people do not know or do not understand its effects" (RA3-CA-13-A);

"If people knew a lot about OCSEA that would help save the children from online abuse" (RA3-CA-15-A);

"As advertising has become more widespread, promoting and preventing all forms of exploitation and abuse of children, people are beginning to understand and become more aware and cautious. However, some people still need to learn more about it" (RA3-CA-35-A);

"Most people do not understand the rights of child victims of OCSEA that is why most people do not respect the rights of child victims or the confidentiality of child victims" (RA3-CA-47-A).