

BACKGROUND

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

- **Children are at risk online**

As with all spaces children inhabit, the digital environment exposes them to risks of sexual exploitation and abuse.

- **Numbers are unknown**

Because the evidence is lacking, it is difficult to assess the scope and nature of this crime, or determine what countries might do to prevent it. This limits our ability to design effective prevention and response strategies.

- **A clear picture of the scope and nature of child sexual exploitation and abuse is needed**

Informed by the 2018 [WeProtect Global Alliance Global Threat Assessment](#) and a desire to understand and deepen the impact of its existing investments, [the Fund to End Violence Against Children](#) decided to invest in research to strengthen the evidence base.

- **Evidence will be generated**

Disrupting Harm will generate new and unique evidence about the scope and nature of online child sexual exploitation and abuse in 14 countries in Southern and Eastern Africa and Southeast Asia.

- **In Southern and Eastern Africa, the project will work with:**

Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

- **In Southeast Asia the project will work with:**

Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Disrupting Harm will generate 14 comprehensive national reports that present the evidence in three separate but interconnected areas: **Context, Threats, and Children's Perspectives**. The project will be delivered through a partnership between three expert organizations and financially supported by the Fund:

1. Context, by ECPAT International

Desk Review: ECPAT will conduct a comprehensive secondary exploration of the existing research, legislation, policy and systems addressing online child sexual exploitation and abuse for each target country.

ECPAT will undertake the following primary research activities:

Government interviews: Conduct 10-12 in-depth interviews with senior national duty-bearers with a focus on law enforcement and justice, to understand the current legislative and policy environment, identify emerging issues and trends, recent progress, upcoming plans and priorities.

Non-law enforcement data: Collect and analyse quantitative data from a range of complementary sources to triangulate and supplement the threat assessment completed by INTERPOL.

Frontline workers' survey: Face-to-face surveys of 50 welfare staff per country to understand the scale, scope and context of online child sexual exploitation and abuse presenting in the caseloads of those on the welfare frontline:

- *What is the knowledge of frontline workers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse?*
- *Who are the victims involved (age, gender, background)?*
- *What proportion of welfare cases involve online child sexual exploitation and abuse?*

Access to justice and compensation: Interviews with 10 victims/survivors of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, 10 parents/caregivers and 10 justice stakeholders per country to understand how justice mechanisms may deal with cases of online child sexual exploitation and abuse:

- *What are the barriers and enabling factors for victims in accessing the justice system?*
- *What is the effectiveness for the justice system in resolving complaints?*

Girl and boy survivor experiences: A total of 40 female and 40 male survivors of online child sexual exploitation and abuse across four identified countries will be interviewed by an expert, trauma-informed practitioner. These activities will be strongly survivor-centred, and the experiences shared will be at the discretion of survivors. The intent is to bring survivor perspectives to the understanding of this issue, with a focus on the gaps identified in the other forms of data and specifically dimensions relevant to boys and rarely investigated.

2. Threats, by INTERPOL

For each country, INTERPOL's Crimes Against Children Unit will map the threats and technical enablers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g. child sexual abuse material production, distribution, possession, soliciting sex from minors, live streaming or distant child abuse). This will be followed by data collection involving both primary and secondary sources to determine and measure the scope and nature of the problem. Data will be collected from law enforcement agencies, specialised units such as Child Protection, Cybercrime, Internet Crimes Against Children, Anti-Human Trafficking, Juvenile Protection, as well as Ministries of Justice and Interior. Data compiled by INTERPOL and partners' foreign agencies will also be used. Furthermore, local, regional, and international partners, as well as regional public bodies, NGOs, Internet and content service providers and hotlines will be used as valuable sources of data. Where there is potential connection, INTERPOL and ECPAT will coordinate their analysis efforts in order to maximize efficiency.

Simultaneously, a needs analysis on the capacity of law enforcement agencies to fight online child sexual exploitation and abuse in the focus countries will be carried out.

The entire process will be underpinned by INTERPOL National Central Bureaus, INTERPOL Regional Bureaus, as well as the INTERPOL Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children, which meets annually to provide a forum for all stakeholders to exchange on threats, trends and best practices. Finally, all three organizations will combine their findings to generate an analysis to provide a specific insight in each focus country. Throughout the duration of the project, data will be collected and handled in accordance with INTERPOL's Rules on the Processing of Data.

3. Children's perspectives, by UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti

National household surveys:

UNICEF Office of Research will conduct nationally-representative household surveys with ~1,000 children and ~1,000 of their parents/caregivers in each of the 14 partner countries, together with UNICEF Country Offices. The purpose is to hear directly from children and parents about their online experiences, including both positive experiences as well as experiences of online violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF's [Global Kids Online](#) methodology will serve as the foundation for this survey, but it will be extended and updated through consultations with children, national stakeholders and governments.

General research questions:

- What is the level of Internet access among children?
- What activities do children do online?
- How can children benefit from digital technology, and who are more or less likely to do so?
- What types of digital skills do children have?
- How do parents, teachers, and friends support or restrict children’s Internet use?
- What are the common risky activities and behaviours that children engage in online?

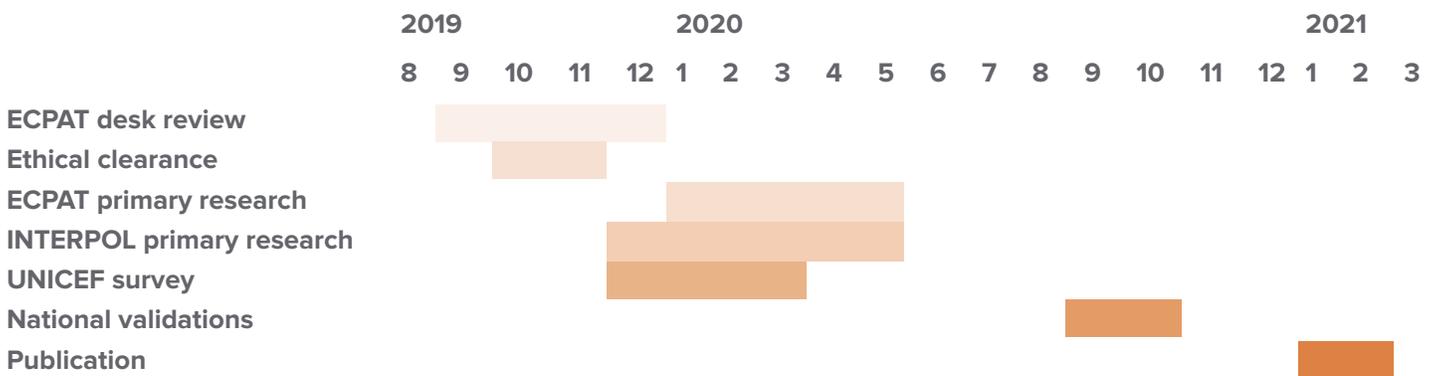
Research questions specific to online child sexual exploitation and abuse:

- What forms of online child sexual exploitation do children experience, and how common are these experiences?
- Who are the perpetrators of different forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse?
- Which are the most common sites (types/platforms) where children have these experiences?
- Who do children report to, or who would they report to, in a case of online sexual exploitation and abuse?
- What are children’s knowledge and perceptions of existing report services and mechanisms?
- Is there an overlap between experiences of offline and online violence among children? Are there shared vulnerabilities?

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

Each national report will combine research findings from the three evidence areas and produce key insights to inform discussions with national stakeholders and Governments about further action. The project will engage national and international partners from inception to finalization, to capture the context, threats and perspectives of online child sexual exploitation and abuse with a view to enhance prevention and response strategies.

TIMELINE - 25 MONTHS FROM MARCH 2019 UNTIL MARCH 2021



ROLE OF NATIONAL PARTNERS

Disrupting Harm will be implemented in coordination with ECPAT, UNICEF, and INTERPOL national offices in each of the 14 countries. National partners will liaise with government counterparts from the beginning of the project, to ensure that national priorities are reflected in the research. Our organizations recognize the importance of local knowledge when aiming for results that can have a lasting impact for children. The purpose of national engagement is to:

- Ensure that national governments and other partners are informed about the project and have opportunities to influence which questions are asked during the research process. Formal consultations on methodology will be conducted **during September 2019**.
- Help the research teams interpret data and host national stakeholder consultations to discuss key findings with experts and relevant Ministries. We expect national stakeholder consultations will be conducted between **September and October 2020**.

ABOUT THE FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

- The **End Violence Fund** was established in 2016 as an investment initiative linked to the **Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children**.
- One of the key objectives of the End Violence Fund is to tackle online child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- To achieve this, the End Violence Fund works in close collaboration with the **WeProtect Global Alliance to end child sexual exploitation online (WPGA)** and is informed by its **Model National Response**.
- This project brings the End Violence Fund's total number of grantee partners focusing on online child sexual exploitation and abuse to 37 across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, including regional and international initiatives. To date, online child sexual exploitation and abuse focused investments total US\$32.2 million.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

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For further information about evidence area #2 (Threats) - Marjo Reyes, Project Manager *Disrupting Harm*, INTERPOL, m.reyes@interpol.int

For further information about evidence area #3 (Children's perspectives) - Daniel Kardefelt-Winther, Research Lead, Children & Digital Technology, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, dkardefeltwinther@unicef.org

For information about the terminology used in this document, please consult: <http://luxembourgguidelines.org/>