

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Consultancy: **Exploring the sexual exploitation of children and related practices in humanitarian action** February– June 2023

To understand and document how framing the sexual exploitation of children under the larger scope of child protection or gender based violence may impact on the ability of actors operating in contexts of crisis to proactively identify, support and protect child victims of sexual exploitation.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations working together for the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children (SEC) in all its manifestations i.e. exploitation of children in prostitution, online child sexual exploitation, sale and trafficking of children for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and some forms of such as early and forced marriage. The ECPAT Network currently consists of 124 members working at national and local levels in 104 countries. Our strength lies in the diversity of our membership, collectively and individually working to address the issue. From large national coalitions to small grass-roots initiatives, we are committed to bringing together a broad range of expertise and perspectives to unravel the web that perpetuates this abuse.

The ECPAT International Secretariat coordinates the global work of the organisation and is based in Bangkok, Thailand. The Secretariat designs and implements global and regional level programmes, and undertakes programming, advocacy and research and facilitates a range of network initiatives.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

The increase of sexual and gender-based violence during and in the aftermath of humanitarian crisis have been widely documented in many different settings. Power inequalities, disruption of protective environments and social networks, weakening of family care structures due to displacement, loss of a parent or economic and physical insecurities are amongst the numerous factors that are putting children in more vulnerable situations in contexts of conflicts, natural disasters, but also disease outbreaks and in the mass displacements that are often accompanying these humanitarian situations.

Girls, boys but also children of different sexual orientations and gender identities are amongst the most vulnerable populations to sexual violence, documented in the forms of rape and sexual assaults, child trafficking, forced marriages or use of sexual violence for coercion or as a war weapon. Despite the scope and severity of the impact of these forms of sexual exploitation on the mental and physical health of many children, the range of factors including perceptions, norms, common beliefs and how these forms of violence are understood and addressed by the various actors are not well understood in humanitarian

settings. While some areas may have been better documented like child trafficking and child, early and forced marriage or the sexual exploitation of children by humanitarian workers, there isn't a wealth of information on the exploitation of children in prostitution, online grooming techniques to sexually exploit children, the use of technologies to sexually harm children, or sexual exploitation in the context of travel, tourism and voluntourism for instance.

The instrumentalization of sexual violence against children in contexts of armed conflicts is recognized as one of the grave violations against children in times of war and is considered also a form of sexual exploitation. But the stigma associated with it prevents many girls and boys to report cases. The gender dimensions of sexual violence and sexual exploitation against girls and boys throughout the phases of conflicts and the related impacts on the victims are nevertheless identified as areas needing further research and analysis to inform prevention and response interventions. While many efforts are placed on the development of services for those affected and prosecution, these often fail to reach victims of sexual exploitation.

The sexual exploitation of children has been defined in various internationally binding instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which refers to "all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" in its Article 34, and explicitly to "(b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials." This has been strengthened through various instruments such as the Optional Protocol to the UN CRC on the Sale of children, the Council of Europe Lanzarote Convention and the EU Directive amongst others. The Child Protection Minimum Standards define sexual exploitation as 'Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.'¹ Although there are considerable overlaps between the concepts of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation, the underlying notion of exchange of something (e.g. money, shelter, material goods, non-material things like protection or a relationship) is present in exploitation.² This tends to distort the perceptions different actors place on the child victims when s/he may be perceived as playing a role in her/his own victimization. The dynamics around sexual exploitation is different because prevention strategies and interventions to support child victims need to be understood differently from cases related to rape or incest for instance. It is argued that the way the sexual exploitation of children is diluted in overall approaches of child protection or gender based violence in particular in humanitarian action, does not allow for an adequate proactive identification of risks and underlying factors driving the sexual exploitation of children, and therefore results in poor prevention or response interventions by a range of actors, from humanitarian frontline workers to local community members, transport industry, providers of accommodations, technology companies and other private sector actors.

This study would aim to bring together what is already documented on the issue, both in terms of evidence and related practices, from secondary data and key informant interviews, and to collect primary data in two fields of humanitarian settings in an attempt to start building a body of knowledge and practice to

¹ 2019 Edition of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (CPMS) [cpms_annex - glossary.pdf \(alliancecpha.org\)](https://alliancecpha.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/cpms_annex_-_glossary.pdf)

² Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children. (2016). [Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#). Bangkok: ECPAT International.

inform future developments for improved protection of children from various forms of sexual exploitation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To understand and document how framing the sexual exploitation of children under the larger scope of child protection or gender based violence may impact on the ability of actors operating in contexts of crisis to proactively identify, support and protect child victims of sexual exploitation.

This work will contribute to building our understanding of how frontline and support workers in humanitarian contexts conceptualize the sexual exploitation of children, how do they perceive the issue in their contexts, and how equipped are they to respond to it.

To this end, ECPAT is seeking an experienced consultant to co-design and implement this research initiative.

SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The aim of this work is to start documenting the understanding of various actors around issues of sexual exploitation of children in particular in humanitarian settings, and how the issue is considered and addressed by different stakeholders.

The scope will include:

1. Documenting perceptions around child sexual exploitation of frontline and support workers and other local actors in humanitarian settings, such as community members, faith-based organizations, providers of accommodations, and other private sector actors – with a specific focus on Lebanon and Jordan. This would include a formative research on what the different actors know about child sexual exploitation in contexts affected by crisis, what forms of child sexual exploitation are manifested in their contexts, how are children at risk or victims of sexual exploitation perceived, and what are the common norms and beliefs associated with child victims of sexual exploitation;
2. Assessing existing capacities of frontline and support workers, both professionals and para-professionals including informal actors, to identify and respond to various forms of child sexual exploitation in humanitarian settings;
3. Identifying how perceptions and the narratives constructed around ‘saving the child victims’ may impact on the different actors’ abilities to identify, support and protect girls and boys in these contexts.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The deliverables will include:

1. A detailed workplan
2. A detailed methodology co-constructed by ECPAT Research team with detailed data collection methods and tools

3. A concise overview of existing literature, policies and strategies to address the issue of sexual exploitation of children in humanitarian settings, in particular in Jordan and Lebanon
4. A draft report presenting main findings and analysis from the global level and from the field research
5. Documented narratives of local actors on perceptions of sexual exploitation of children
6. A finalized report incorporating feedback from ECPAT, containing
 - a. Analysis of the framing of child sexual exploitation phenomenon
 - b. Overview of the types of responses available in the context of humanitarian crisis
 - c. Perceptions, social and gender norms and beliefs of the various actors on child sexual exploitation in the contexts of humanitarian crisis
 - d. Reported approaches by local actors to prevent and address sexual exploitation of children in their local contexts
 - e. Key recommendations for further research and developments
7. A summary paper with key findings and recommendations for wider dissemination

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The selected consultant will propose a methodology, structure and timeline for the deliverables, in close consultation with the ECPAT Research team. At a minimum, the methodology is expected to include:

1. **Key Informant Interviews at global level:** A series of at least 20 key informant interviews (KII). KIIs will be with specialists from key agencies intervening in humanitarian contexts from multiple sectors (child protection, GBV, livelihood, shelter, education, etc.). Key informants will be selected in consultation between ECPAT International and the Consultant.
2. **Two field visits to conduct the research:** Two field visits should be conducted in Lebanon and Jordan to collect information from a range of local actors operating in contexts of crisis, frontline workers, community and faith-based actors, etc. This may include key informants' interviews, individual interviews, focus group discussions with various stakeholders, the development of vignettes for perceptions analysis, etc. This will be defined based on methodology and tools developed by the Consultant with ECPAT International team.

GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How is the sexual exploitation of children currently framed and conceptualized by different humanitarian actors and how does it impact on the sector's abilities to properly understand the issue and respond to it?
2. What are the common beliefs, norms and perceptions around child victims of sexual exploitation held by different groups of stakeholders at the forefront of phenomenon of child sexual exploitation?
3. How are these common beliefs, norms and perceptions impacting the development and implementation of prevention and support interventions?
4. How do current efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence address the specific dynamics around sexual exploitation of children?
5. What is missing in the current strategies, policies and plans to adequately address the specific dynamics of sexual exploitation as a distinct phenomenon from sexual or gender-based violence?

6. What do we need to learn to do this work better? What models and good practices can we currently document that effectively help to address sexual exploitation of children?
7. How can we become more intentional and proactive in identifying, preventing and responding to the sexual exploitation of children in humanitarian settings?

TIMETABLE

The assignment should be conducted between February and June 2023. A detailed plan and timeline will be defined and agreed with the Consultant at the start of the assignment.

CONSULTANT PROFILE

- Experienced researcher with evidence of delivering similar assignments
- Humanitarian settings experiences, ideally in the Middle East
- Demonstrated knowledge and research on child sexual exploitation and abuse
- Advanced writing skills in English
- Capacity to operate in Arabic is highly desirable

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- This is a home-based position using own equipment and communication tools; the consultant should be available for online calls including with different time zones.
- Field visits can be budgeted separately
- All discussions and documents relating to this Terms of Reference will be treated as confidential by the involved parties.
- The Consultant is expected to act at all times in a manner consistent with the values of ECPAT International and in compliance with the organisation's policies and procedures including Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: please send to vacancy@ecpat.org

- **CV and short cover email**
- **A brief proposition of your approach**
- **A financial proposal** (with daily fee)

Mention in the subject header: **Your name** and **Humanitarian Context**

Deadline: no specific deadline; applications will be reviewed regularly until a suitable candidate is identified. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply early.

ECPAT International is committed to keeping children safe. The selection process reflects our commitment to the safeguarding of children.