



# COLLECTIVE ACTION

End Child Sexual  
Exploitation  
and Abuse

Southeast Asia,  
East Asia  
and the Pacific

## REGIONAL WORKSHOP

4 - 7 March 2024 Bangkok, Thailand



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## **Disclaimer:**

The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the participating organisations and do not necessarily reflect the views of ECPAT International.

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# INTRODUCTION

From March 4-7, 2024, a transformative workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, convened 113 participants from 34 countries spanning East and Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Pacific. The *Collective Action: End Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* workshop served as a pivotal gathering that transcended geographical boundaries to address the global crisis of sexual exploitation of children, including in the digital world. Bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders, including ECPAT members, Safe Online grantees, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations that represented 64% of the total participants, as well as experts, advocates, practitioners, international organisations, and philanthropic entities from around the world, the workshop marked a significant milestone in the ongoing movement to address the sexual exploitation of children.

With a strategic focus on evidence-based advocacy tools such as the “[Disrupting Harm](#)” data, the workshop aimed to analyse critical learnings and outcomes and strategise

on advancing policy recommendations. Additionally, it sought to enhance partnerships and empower civil society networks across sectors to amplify efforts in protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse. This comprehensive report encapsulates the valuable insights, formidable challenges, and collaborative advancements realised during the workshop, laying a foundation for future action and shaping a trajectory towards impactful initiatives in protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The digital era, while offering vast connectivity, also opens new avenues for exploitation, challenging us to evolve our approaches to protect children. The workshop’s unique contribution was to hold space to analyse the experiences from the ground by civil society organisations, its comprehensive, collaborative approach, drawing on diverse perspectives to deepen our understanding of sexual exploitation of children’s current landscape and identify gaps and opportunities for strengthening our response. The event also underscored the emergent opportunities





for regional coordination, particularly among Pacific civil society organisations. The discussions facilitated new networking avenues, notably among countries such as Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, setting a precedent for strengthened regional collaboration to tackle child sexual exploitation more effectively.

The workshop focused on bringing together civil society organisations from different countries to challenge the status quo and improve the fight against the sexual exploitation of children. While the issue of empowering children and survivors was a prominent topic of discussion, it is essential to note that there were no children in the room. Instead, the voices and needs of children were central as conveyed through evidence collected with them, and these informed the various sessions, even if children were not physically present. This dialogue highlighted the need for a more inclusive, rights-based approach that recognises the invaluable insights and experiences of those most affected by sexual exploitation. The initiative aimed to promote more effective and empathetic interventions by prioritising these perspectives. This approach represents a commitment to protect and empower those at the centre of advocacy efforts, primarily by strengthening the capacity and influence of civil society organisations at local and national levels.

Legal and policy reform was identified as crucial in adapting to the digital challenges of sexual exploitation of children, with a call for robust and flexible laws to address new forms of sexual exploitation of children. However, the key takeaway in the discussion is how far greater attention should be paid to implementing these laws and policies, paving the way for reaching children and effectively making a difference in their lives.

Moreover, the discussions highlighted the importance of cross-border cooperation and the invaluable insights grassroots organisations offer. Emphasising local, regional, and global efforts underlines the workshop's consensus on the power of shared knowledge and strategies in addressing this transnational issue.

This report, synthesising the workshop's outcomes, serves as a blueprint for ongoing efforts against the sexual exploitation of children. It calls for continued innovation, collaboration, and a unified vision to protect every child from sexual exploitation. The Collective Action Bangkok workshop marks a critical step in our collective journey, reinforcing our commitment to making a tangible, lasting impact in the lives of children worldwide.

# BROAD AND SPECIFIC TRENDS IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN:

## EAST ASIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND THE PACIFIC

The regions of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific are at a critical juncture, facing both unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the fight against the sexual exploitation of children. The advent of faster internet and the changing forms of travel and tourism have dramatically increased online and offline interactions, offering vast opportunities for education and connectivity and opening new avenues for exploitation. This digital expansion, juxtaposed with socio-economic factors, legal and cultural barriers, and the unique vulnerabilities of specific groups, underscores the complex dynamics at play.



## AT A GLANCE - TOP 20 EMERGING TRENDS AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES:

- 1. Increased Online Interaction and Risks:**  
Increased access across regions has heightened children's exposure to the risks facilitated by technology.
- 2. Sexual Extortion:**  
A marked rise in exploitation for financial gain, particularly affecting boys, highlights the urgent need for comprehensive intervention strategies.
- 3. Gaming Platforms as Conduits:**  
The use of gaming platforms for exploitation is increasing, and grooming strategies are becoming more sophisticated.
- 4. Community Engagement:**  
Grassroots mobilisation and community involvement play pivotal roles in safeguarding children and leveraging local knowledge and networks.
- 5. Cultural Shifts in Discussion:**  
Despite cultural resistance, more open discussions on previously taboo topics occur.
- 6. Faith-Based and Sports Settings Risks:**  
These traditionally trusted environments are increasingly recognised as settings for potential exploitation.
- 7. Internet Literacy:**  
Low digital literacy rates exacerbate the risks of online exploitation.
- 8. The Monetisation of Exploitation:**  
Easier payment methods for exploitative content, particularly on emerging platforms.
- 9. Migration and Tourism-Linked Exploitation:**  
Increased and diversified tourism and migration flows are linked to higher exploitation risks.
- 10. Rising Cases in Care Institutions:**  
Highlighting the growing need for robust safeguarding measures.
- 11. Contextualisation of Child Protection:**  
Regional characteristics influence engagement and necessitate culturally resonant approaches.
- 12. Mental Health Focus:**  
The vulnerability of children with mental health issues or disabilities to grooming and exploitation calls for tailored support strategies.
- 13. Localisation and Decolonisation in Child Protection:**  
Emphasising child participation and empowerment within culturally appropriate frameworks.
- 14. Normalisation and Prevalence of Sexual Exploitation of Children:**  
An increase in normalised sexually abusive behaviours through new platforms and technologies.
- 15. Technological Advances in Sexual Exploitation:**  
Recent technologies like deep fakes pose novel challenges for child protection.
- 16. Hybrid Forms of Sexual Exploitation:**  
The blurring lines between online and other forms of abuse complicate legal and support responses.
- 17. Need for Inclusive Educational Efforts:**  
Addressing gaps alongside comprehensive sexual education in parents' and children's understanding of online safety.
- 18. Resource Constraints:**  
Highlighting the need for more community-based initiatives, enhanced resources, and training to provide effective prevention and response to sexual exploitation of children effectively.

## IN DETAIL:

### Technological Exploitation: Sexual Extortion, Gaming, and Online Vulnerabilities

Technological advancements have brought significant challenges to online exploitation. **Sexual financial extortion** emerges as a critical concern, with a sharp increase in the sexual exploitation of children, particularly boys, for sexual gratification but also monetary gain. This form of exploitation, as highlighted, is notably lucrative and coupled with a high suicide rate among victims, indicating an urgent need for intervention strategies that address both the financial and sexual motivations behind sexual extortion.

The **gaming industry** can positively challenge traditional gender norms and roles, providing a nuanced context for exploitation but also advocacy and support, but also presents a unique avenue for exploitation, with grooming strategies in chat functions and platform mobility beginning to be understood. Key Findings from the [Multi-Sector Roundtable on Child Safety in Online Gaming in Seoul](#) in February 2024 presented both challenges and opportunities to strengthen child protection within the gaming industry, including:

- Gaming environments serve as spaces for diverse experiences: risk-taking, entertainment, relaxation, learning, socialising, and joy. These spaces also pose risks of negative influences like violence and harm, often tied to rigid gender norms.
- Recognising games' potential to empower and protect children is crucial. This necessitates the active involvement of gaming children, cross-sector collaboration, and a fresh perspective.
- The roundtable offers the roadmap for a child protection and gender-sensitive approach to child safety and empowerment in online gaming, including transforming narratives and fostering a shared language to harness games' positive impact and shield children; integrating child and youth engagement to gamify safety within gaming; facilitating exchange of knowledge, collaboration, and capacity enhancement across expertise domains; and encouraging a community of practice among initiatives sharing similar aims and activities.

Children's sense of safety in seeking help within gaming settings, precisely because they are behind a screen, reveals an opportunity for engagement and support that leverages these platforms' relative anonymity and community aspects.





## Community Engagement

The importance of community engagement has proven to be crucial in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. Our discussions revealed the profound impact of cultural, traditional, and religious factors in shaping child protection strategies. We must recalibrate our approaches when collaborating with community-based services across different countries to ensure these interventions are culturally resonant and compelling. While much of our sector's attention has traditionally been focused on creating a structural environment that is safe for children - through legislative reform, policy development, and the improvement of coordination mechanisms and databases - the workshop highlighted the crucial balance needed between these structural approaches and the empowerment of local communities. Discussions highlighted the power of grassroots mobilisation and the active involvement of local communities in child protection, a strategy in which civil society organisations excel because of their proximity to the people and ability to translate policies and laws into actionable results at the decentralised level.

This approach emphasises the importance of building on local knowledge, practices, and community networks to create a protective environment for children. By fostering a sense of collective responsibility and empowering community members to act, noteworthy progress can be made in preventing sexual exploitation and supporting survivors within their own cultural and social contexts. Recognising and promoting this bottom-up approach is essential, particularly in Asia, where civil society organisations play a significant role. Supporting these organisations can contribute to sustaining long-term efforts and ensuring effective outcomes for children, effectively balancing structural child protection systems with community-based prevention and response strategies.

### **CAMBODIA:**

Progress in acknowledging boys as victims, challenging entrenched social norms through community engagement and governmental partnerships. M'Lop Tapang's initiatives engage and educate parents and the community on child rights to help challenge social norms and break barriers.

### **FIJI:**

A participant from Fiji underscored the critical need to disrupt the cycle of male perpetrators by comprehensively understanding their behaviours and contributing factors. Civil society organisations in Fiji leverage data to develop outreach awareness packages tailored to diverse communities, carefully considering cultural nuances. Emphasis is placed on initiating transformative changes within the familial setting while adjusting strategies to align with the unique dynamics of each community, aiming towards meaningful change at both the individual and systemic levels, focusing on fostering a culture of respect, responsibility, and safeguarding.

### **THE PHILIPPINES:**

Community engagement hurdles stem from resource constraints and economic insecurities, fueling acceptance of harmful means for income generation. Economic empowerment solutions are essential to address these challenges. Limited parental capacity for learning about online safety amidst work pressures necessitates innovative support structures.

### **TAIWAN:**

Evolving attitudes towards online child sexual exploitation reveals a shifting community engagement. While in-person exploitation historically bore myths and stigma, a heightened awareness of online risks sparks community interest in education and prevention efforts.



## Socio-Economic Factors and Cultural Dynamics

Migration, tourism, and transnational trafficking are pivotal factors increasing vulnerabilities across these regions. Mongolia's insights into risks associated with tourism, travel and migration emphasise the need for comprehensive strategies that address the mobility of potential victims and perpetrators.

**CAMBODIA, JAPAN, and PAPUA NEW GUINEA** point to rising cases of sexual financial extortion and exploitation risks in orphanages, respectively, necessitating diverse response mechanisms.



## Adapting to Local Contexts

Adapting to local contexts emphasises customising child protection efforts to fit cultural specifics, highlighting the need for localisation, empowerment, and children’s active participation in combating the sexual exploitation of children. It underscores the importance of considering regional characteristics, like Manga (Comic) Culture in East Asia, when devising engagement strategies, highlighting the necessity of culturally resonant approaches. Effective engagement demands a deep understanding of local intricacies and promoting child involvement in culturally sensitive ways, recognising children as critical stakeholders in their rights.

### FIJI:

Fiji shows an excellent example by reframing child protection discussions in religious contexts that are appropriate to the local contexts and help effectively challenge harmful social and cultural norms.

### MALAYSIA:

In Petaling Jaya, the Ministry of Women creates a child-friendly “role model” city council that involves children and youth in shaping infrastructure to uphold children’s rights. This empowers children to advocate for their rights and contribute meaningfully to society.



## Mental Health and Vulnerability

Children with disabilities or presenting mental health issues are highlighted as particularly vulnerable to grooming and exploitation, both online and offline. Developing diverse mental health, psychosocial support and intervention models tailored to these children's needs requires urgent attention and innovation.

The emerging context of sexual exploitation of children in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific underscores the need for tailored, innovative solutions that address the multifaceted nature of these challenges. From the financial and sexual exploitation seen in sexual extortion to the nuanced challenges and opportunities posed by gaming platforms and the specific vulnerabilities of children with disabilities, these insights call for strategic collaboration, enhanced legal frameworks, and community engagement. Tailoring interventions to the socio-economic, gender norms, cultural, and technological contexts of these regions will be vital to advancing child protection efforts and safeguarding children against sexual exploitation effectively.

### THE PHILIPPINES:

In the legal framework of the Philippines, Section 3(a) of [Republic Act No. 11930](#), also referred to as the 'Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act', acknowledges explicitly the vulnerable position of disabled individuals aged 18 and above who lack the capacity to self-care or defend themselves against harm due to physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disabilities. This provision embodies a commitment to inclusivity and safeguarding, guaranteeing protection for disabled persons against abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, and discrimination.

### INDONESIA:

UNICEF Indonesia leads an initiative to include vulnerable children who are left behind, such as stateless or refugee children, in the [priority action of policy](#). Recognising the significance of civil society organisations to work with and protect refugee and asylum-seeking children, UNICEF Indonesia prioritises this issue, as seen in the strategy for birth registration, particularly targeting the most vulnerable groups.



# THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

The thematic discussions at the Bangkok Regional Workshop 2024 offered a deep dive into the complexities of combating the sexual exploitation of children in today's rapidly evolving society. These discussions illuminated the multifaceted challenges and underscored the imperative for multi-pronged, innovative strategies to protect children. Here, we explore the main themes, including technological risks, legal and cultural barriers, and the challenges specific vulnerable groups face, alongside brief findings and strategic recommendations for each.

## TECHNOLOGICAL RISKS AND ONLINE EXPLOITATION

### FINDINGS:

While a bearer of connectivity and access to information, the digital revolution has significantly amplified risks for children. Online platforms have become fertile ground for offenders, with the anonymity and vastness of the internet complicating efforts to track and prosecute offenders. Key insights pointed to an uptick in online grooming, the distribution of child sexual abuse material, and the alarming trend of 'self-generated' content coerced or manipulated out of children.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 👉 **Enhance Digital Literacy and Online Safety Education:** Equip children, parents, and educators with the knowledge and tools to navigate online spaces safely.
- 👉 **Strengthen Partnerships with Tech Companies:** Collaborate on developing and implementing more robust moderation tools, reporting mechanisms, and educational campaigns.
- 👉 **Advocate for Stronger Regulatory Frameworks:** Push for legislation mandating online platforms and private-sector companies to implement more robust child protection measures and support law enforcement efforts.



## LEGAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

### FINDINGS:

Participants noted the challenges posed by outdated legal frameworks that have not kept pace with technological advances, leaving gaps in protection against online sexual exploitation. In addition, entrenched cultural and gender norms contribute to a reluctance to openly discuss sexual abuse and engage in sex education, often resulting in underreporting of cases and a lack of support for survivors, especially boys.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Prioritise implementation of existing legal frameworks:** While continued legal reform is essential to address the rapidly evolving landscape of sexual exploitation of children, there is an urgent need to focus on the implementation of existing laws. ECPAT's unique position within the civil society movement is to advocate for a shift towards an era of robust implementation. This means effectively using existing legal frameworks, ensuring they are fully implemented and benefit the children they are intended to protect. This approach demands accountability and ensures that existing protections are noticed in the pursuit of reform.
- **Law reform and harmonisation:** Continue to advocate for modernising legal frameworks to include aspects of digital exploitation and ensure harmonisation with international standards. However, the focus should be balanced with practical implementation strategies to make these laws operational and effective.
- **Cultural awareness and community engagement:** Implement targeted awareness-raising campaigns to challenge and change cultural perceptions and rigid gender norms. Promote open discussion of sexual exploitation of children and work to destigmatise victimhood. These initiatives are critical to changing public attitudes and increasing community support for survivors.
- **Building the capacity of legal and judicial actors:** Develop and provide training programmes for law enforcement, the judiciary and legal practitioners that focus on the nuances of sexual exploitation of children, particularly in the digital age. These training initiatives should go beyond providing information on new legislation and include practical aspects of enforcement and application.



## BROAD VULNERABILITY, CONTEXTS AND SPECIFIC RISKS IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

### FINDINGS:

While all children are at risk of sexual exploitation in today's environment, the complexity of sexual exploitation of children has expanded beyond the realities traditionally associated with the most marginalised. Factors influencing the sexual exploitation of children now cut across all demographic groups - gender, economic background,

family type and educational level. Despite this universal risk, certain groups remain disproportionately placed in vulnerable situations due to systemic barriers such as lack of access to education, poverty, and discrimination. These include children with disabilities, children on the move, and children of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, highlighting the need for nuanced child protection strategies that are inclusive and adaptive.



## DIFFERENT IMPACTS ON DIVERSE GROUPS:

Sexual exploitation of children affects children differently and is shaped by societal norms and expectations. While girls are often targeted and face layers of gendered expectations and victim blaming, cases affecting boys are often under-reported due to stigma, biases, and misconceptions about their vulnerability. In addition, children of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities face unique challenges and risks, frequently exacerbated by discrimination and exclusion. Recognising and addressing these multiple impacts is critical to developing effective interventions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Tailor child protection responses:** Develop child protection interventions that are inclusive, universally accessible yet responsive and gender sensitive to the specific needs of all children. This approach ensures that no child is unprotected, regardless of background or experiences.
- **Strengthening support systems and services:** Focus on enhancing the overall capacity of child protection services to provide quality, accessible, child-friendly and trauma-informed care. This includes ensuring that services are decentralised and adapted to the diverse needs of children without segregating services based on risks, thereby avoiding the reinforcement of stereotypes or systemic segregation.
- **Promote inclusive policies and practices:** Advocate for inclusive policies and practices that uphold the rights of every child. Emphasise the development of systemic approaches that ensure equity and facilitate access to services for the most marginalised, supporting a framework that is both sustainable and effective.
- **Ensure rights-based, comprehensive care:** All children, regardless of how they are labelled, should have access to comprehensive care that meets high standards of quality and accessibility. The focus should be on creating supportive environments that are genuinely child-friendly and gender-sensitive and able to address the specific contexts of exploitation that children may face.

The thematic discussions at the Bangkok Regional Workshop 2024 highlighted the complex landscape of challenges in the fight against sexual exploitation of children but also the potential for considerable progress through collaboration, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to children's rights. The recommendations that emerged from these discussions provide:

- » A roadmap for collective action.
- » Underscoring the urgency of adapting to changing technologies.
- » Overcoming legal and cultural barriers.
- » Prioritising the empowerment and protection of all children, with particular attention to the most vulnerable.

As we move forward, the insights and strategies outlined here will be instrumental in shaping a safer future for children worldwide.





## FUTURE TRENDS AND EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES

### FINDINGS:

There needs to be more alignment between the current child protection models and the practical realities on the ground. Our future strategies must consider more realistic models that align with locally available resources and services, ensuring sustainability and efficacy. Looking ahead, participants highlighted the critical need to anticipate future technological advances and the innovative ways these technologies can be misused. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and deepfakes, pose new challenges as their potential for misuse in livestreaming, grooming, and extortion evolves. Alongside technological vigilance, empowering children and young people stands out as a critical strategy, advocating for their active participation in shaping solutions and policies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 👉 **Invest in research and technology monitoring:** Stay informed about technological advances and the changing ways these technologies are used. Invest in ongoing research to understand and anticipate trends in exploitation and ensure that child protection mechanisms are adaptive and forward-looking.
- 👉 **Empower children and young people:** Create an environment where they feel safe and encouraged to voice their concerns, participate in policymaking, and engage in awareness-raising campaigns. Their participation is crucial to developing effective, relevant policies that reflect their experiences and challenges.
- 👉 **Building resilient communities:** Strengthen community-based approaches to child protection by involving various stakeholders, including schools, local businesses, faith groups and families. Work together to create and maintain safe spaces that protect children from exploitation and support their well-being.



# KEY FINDINGS: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

The Bangkok Regional Workshop 2024 provided a platform for critical discussions, offering profound insights into the battle against the sexual exploitation of children. This section presents an in-depth analysis of the contributions, challenges, and innovative solutions highlighted by participants, focusing on the effectiveness and implementation gaps in current child protection measures by civil society organisations and governmental bodies.

## 1. DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD PROTECTION

- 👉 **Insights from civil society organisations:** Notable for their grassroots connections, civil society organisations offered firsthand accounts of the evolving nature of sexual exploitation of children, stressing the increased sophistication of online exploitation tactics. Success stories from ECPAT Philippines and Plan International Vietnam highlighted proactive legislative advocacy and youth engagement strategies, emphasising the importance of survivor-centred approaches and digital safety education.
- 👉 **Governmental Body Contributions:** Representatives underscored efforts toward legal reforms and the challenges in enforcement, highlighting successful collaborations with civil society organisations to bolster child protection frameworks. Though promising, the commitment to integrating technology in combating the sexual exploitation of children was noted as inconsistent across different regions, pointing to a need for enhanced cooperation and resource allocation.



## 2. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The rapid pace of digital innovation presents both opportunities and challenges in the sexual exploitation of children prevention. Participants noted the double-edged sword of technology: while digital platforms have become tools for education and awareness, they also serve as avenues for exploitation.

- **Online Sexual Exploitation Trends:** Reports from Malaysia and Cambodia revealed an uptick in self-generated child sexual abuse material necessitating targeted digital literacy campaigns and enhanced moderation practices on social media platforms.
- **Collaboration with Tech Companies:** Success stories highlighted partnerships in developing AI-driven tools for child sexual abuse material detection and reporting, though challenges remain in standardising these efforts across platforms.
- **Data Sequencing and Service Delivery Issues:** The workshop identified critical data sequencing issues affecting service delivery effectiveness. We advocate for improved data management practices and accountability in service provision, ensuring that interventions are targeted and timely.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND CULTURAL NORMS

The [ECPAT Workshop in Nairobi on May 8-11, 2023](#), emphasised the importance of shifting focus from research to involving local actors, improving intelligence quality and empowerment. The focus on legal reforms, budget commitments, community capacity building, and engaging neighbouring countries discussed during the Nairobi workshop highlighted the need for comprehensive change and stronger cross-border cooperation. Similarly, the Bangkok Regional Workshop emphasised the critical role of adaptive strategies, local empowerment, legal adaptations, and cross-border collaboration in combating the sexual exploitation of children, shaping a proactive path for future collaborative efforts.

The Bangkok Regional Workshop illuminated the disparity between existing legal frameworks and the multifaceted realities of sexual exploitation of children. The slow pace of legal reforms and the challenge of implementing comprehensive policies were identified as significant barriers.

- **Legal Gaps:** In examining legal frameworks, proactive legal reforms in Vietnam and the Philippines highlight the ongoing efforts to address the sexual exploitation of children. Despite these efforts, gaps remain in how current laws encompass the complexities of the sexual exploitation of children, especially in digital contexts. This reveals a broader need for foundational improvements in legislation to ensure comprehensive coverage and inclusivity.
- **Implementation Challenges:** The discussions notably shifted focus to the implementation of laws. It was clear that despite legislative progress, a significant gap exists between law refinement and actual enforcement. Highlighting the imbalance, the need for better support, training, and resources to ensure effective law execution was emphasised. This points to an urgent call for actions that not only enact laws but also operationalise them effectively, making a tangible difference in protecting children from sexual exploitation.
- **Cultural Sensitivities:** Efforts to address the sexual exploitation of children within conservative and diverse cultural contexts highlighted the importance of culturally sensitive approaches, particularly in engaging communities, challenging gender norms and destigmatising victimhood.

## 4. SPECIFIC GROUPS MORE EXPOSED TO RISKS

The workshop highlighted the unique challenges faced when incorporating survivor voices, particularly from the Pacific region, where cultural sensitivities may restrict open dialogue. Acknowledging these challenges is crucial as we strive to ensure our strategies remain inclusive and empathetic towards survivors' experiences. Certain groups, such as children with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ children, and displaced children, are consistently at increased risk of sexual exploitation. Discussions highlighted not only the common risks these groups face but also the importance of understanding how intersecting factors and biases - such as gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, and displacement - compound these risks uniquely for each group.

- 👉 **Inclusive child protection strategies:** The need for services addressing the multiple and intersecting risks marginalised children face was a key theme. Participants advocated for the development and implementation of inclusive policies and practices that respond to the nuanced needs of all children, including boys, girls and LGBTQIA+ children. These policies should recognise and address the specific ways in which different identities and circumstances intersect to exacerbate exposure to sexual exploitation.
- 👉 **Empowerment and representation:** Empowering diverse groups of children through education, advocacy, and direct participation in policymaking emerged as a critical approach to improving child protection. Ensuring that children from all backgrounds, especially the most marginalised, have a voice in developing solutions that affect their lives is essential. This empowerment fosters a sense of agency and ensures that safeguards are directly informed by the experiences and needs of those they are intended to protect.

#### **SAMOA:**

The Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) integrates a gender-responsive and empowerment approach into their services and appoints a Disability Support Officer to provide vital disability support services within the organisation. This support programme extends to individuals with disabilities in the community and children at the Campus of Hope, a facility for survivors of violence. The program also encompasses caregiving training for community carers of individuals with disabilities.

#### **THAILAND:**

In cooperation with the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), ECPAT International's 2021 study, '[Global Initiative to Explore the Sexual Exploitation of Boys: Thailand Report](#),' delved into the intersectionalities of sexual exploitation among youths with diverse SOGIE in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Participants of the study predominantly were from vulnerable backgrounds, engaged in sex work for survival, living or working on the streets. The report underscored the urgent need for enhanced welfare services, oversight of shelters, gender-responsive criminal justice, legislation review on sex work, vocational training for third-gender individuals, gender-inclusive employment laws, and increased SOGIE-diverse providers in rural and urban areas of Thailand.



## 5. COLLABORATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The significance of multi-sectoral collaboration emerged as a key theme, with civil society organisations and governments acknowledging the value of joint efforts in enhancing child protection strategies.

- **Multi-sectoral Partnerships:** Examples of successful collaborations between civil society organisations, governments, and the private sector demonstrated the potential for shared initiatives to combat the sexual exploitation of children more effectively.
- **Capacity Challenges:** Despite successes, civil society organisations and governmental bodies face substantial challenges in capacity building, resource allocation, and the consistent application of child protection measures across different contexts.

### FIJI:

In Fiji, a collaborative effort led by non-governmental organisations is actively involved in tackling child sexual abuse and neglect, supported by regional entities and UNICEF. Emphasising an integrated team approach, the initiative focuses on crafting comprehensive strategies tailored to the specific needs of communities and providing policy recommendations. Nevertheless, civil society organisations have raised concerns regarding the suitability of particular programs in addressing Fiji's unique requirements and incorporating cultural and religious sensitivities. Notably, a prevailing perspective on child protection is deeply rooted in biblical and religious doctrines, underscoring the importance of framing child safeguarding issues within the framework of local cultural and religious beliefs for increased receptivity. Hence, fostering extensive dialogues with local civil society organisations and partners is essential to ensure comprehensive consideration and seamless integration of these elements into program development processes.

### VIETNAM:

The Vietnamese government has adopted new legislation, such as the Law on Internet Safety and Data Protection Law. It has also established a network of organisations on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. However, capacity building at the local level is a challenge, and the current child protection system needs to adapt to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

## 6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Looking forward, participants underscored the importance of innovative approaches to child protection, stressing the need for adaptability in the face of evolving sexual exploitation tactics and digital landscapes.

- **Embracing Technology for Protection:** The call to leverage emerging technologies for education, reporting, and prevention strategies was clear, alongside the cautionary note on ensuring these innovations do not inadvertently harm children.
- **Sustainable Solutions and Empowerment:** The workshop emphasised the need for sustainable child protection solutions that prioritise the empowerment of children and youth, encouraging their active participation in advocacy and decision-making processes.

### CAMBODIA:

There is a positive shift in the recognition of boys as victims of abuse, which marks a departure from previous perceptions. This change is primarily attributed to community awareness initiatives, government involvement, and training programs. Efforts are underway to challenge long-standing traditional norms and address emerging gaps, such as online exploitation of boys. Collaboration within the civil society (CSO) network is crucial for a more cohesive and systematic approach to addressing this issue. M'Lop Tapang, a key player working with vulnerable families and children, conducts programs that bring parents together to educate them on children's rights and inappropriate and appropriate touch and utilises these platforms to raise awareness on the potential exploitation of boys. In parallel, APLE focuses on enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies and providing policy recommendations to combat online exploitation. Cambodia has shifted towards a more integrated approach, fostering robust collaboration within the CSO network to address the issue effectively and sustainably.

The Bangkok Collective Action Workshop 2024 provided unparalleled insights into the complex dynamics of addressing the sexual exploitation of children. It offered a vital platform for global perspectives on the successes and challenges those on the front lines encountered. The discussions during the workshop made it clear that engaging directly with children and youth is paramount. This approach involves moving beyond mere discussions to truly inclusive actions that integrate their perspectives into policymaking and developing child protection strategies.

This ensures their voices are not only heard but actively shape the outcomes.

Moreover, the workshop illuminated the rapidly evolving challenges presented by digital technologies. These include the misuse of artificial intelligence and deepfakes and the changing tactics in grooming and sexual extortion conducted online. These discussions made it clear that we must monitor technological advancements proactively and adapt our strategies to stay ahead of exploiters who continually refine their methods.

We also discussed the crucial role of legal reforms and the practical application of laws. There was a strong call for a shift from continuous legislative drafting to robust

implementation, stressing that protections for children might only be realised with the effective enforcement of existing frameworks. This emphasis on implementation proves that we must ensure that laws on the books are brought to life in ways that genuinely protect children. As we move forward, the lessons learned and strategies discussed at the workshop will be instrumental in shaping a more effective, inclusive, and adaptable approach to safeguarding children against sexual exploitation. The insights gained make it clear that we must work together across all sectors. We must empower those at the grassroots level, including children, to ensure that child protection measures are designed well and effectively implemented to achieve tangible results.



### ENHANCE MULTI-SECTORAL AND CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIPS

- ✦ Establish formal platforms and mechanisms for ongoing collaboration between government agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, and international organisations to streamline efforts against sexual exploitation of children.
- ✦ Foster regional and international networks and cross-border cooperation to share best practices, resources, and data and coordinate the cross-border awareness raising and advocacy campaigns, emphasising the importance of a unified approach to addressing cross-border and borderless exploitation, such as child trafficking and online sexual exploitation of children.

### THE PHILIPPINES:

[The Republic Act No. 11930](#) (Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act) in the Philippines coordinates efforts among various stakeholders to combat online child exploitation. This law safeguards Good Samaritans, mandates industry policies, requires collaboration with law enforcement, and establishes a National Coordination Centre to prevent abuse and support child protection. Furthermore, the law recognises the crucial role of civil society organisations and mandates programs to encompass essential technical and material support services for non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations.

### LAO PDR:

Village Focus International addresses child trafficking in Laos PDR by collaborating with civil society organisations in the country of origin. This includes partnering with CSO networks like the Child Rights Coalition Asia in countries like Thailand through projects like Down to Zero, aiming to prevent and address child trafficking during the entire migration cycle.

### STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ✦ Implement community-based programs that empower local stakeholders to recognise and respond to signs of sexual exploitation of children, leveraging local knowledge and networks for prevention and response.
- ✦ Encourage community-led initiatives involving parents, teachers, and local leaders in creating safe online and offline environments for children.
- ✦ Our global agendas must align seamlessly with local realities. This workshop has highlighted the need for policy and practice frameworks that respect and enhance local strategies and insights, fostering a more globally inclusive approach to child protection.



### FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

- ✦ **Prioritise Effective Application of Laws:** Shift significant attention to the practical application and enforcement of existing legal frameworks, recognising that the refinement of laws must go hand in hand with their effective on-ground implementation.
- ✦ **Enhance the role of civil society organisations in Monitoring:** Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to serve as watchdogs, ensuring accountability in applying child protection laws. This involves empowering civil society organisations to monitor, report, and advocate for the complete execution of legal frameworks, addressing any lapses or inefficiencies in their application before considering further legal refinements.

### NEW ZEALAND:

ECPAT Child Alert NZ has developed and disseminated a comprehensive two-page practical guide for survivors - the "Map of Referral Pathways in Aotearoa New Zealand for Victim-Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation Materials." This tool is meticulously designed to educate and navigate survivors through the multifaceted stages of support and services available, aiming to empower and assist survivors in accessing the necessary assistance and resources effectively under the existing law.

### UPDATE AND HARMONISE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS:

- ✦ **Advocate for Legislative Review and Revision:** Push for the examination and modification of current laws to address and close protection gaps for children against sexual exploitation, making sure they keep pace with technological developments and align with international norms.
- ✦ **Promote Legal Harmonisation:** Encourage the alignment of laws across different jurisdictions to enhance collaboration and effectiveness in tackling cross-border sexual exploitation of children cases.

### MALAYSIA:

Following the release of the Disrupting Harm report, End CSEC Malaysia, an ECPAT member in Malaysia, has observed significant advancements in combating Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. These developments include legislative amendments to replace the term "child pornography" with child sexual exploitation, encompassing online sexual extortion and live streaming. Prosecution efforts have been broadened to target individuals involved in viewing and distributing child sexual materials. There is a collaboration between the Ministry of Communication and technology companies that aims to eliminate child sexual abuse material from online platforms.

### THAILAND:

Evidence-based reports such as Disrupting Harm have influenced legislative changes in Thailand. Notably, an essential amendment to a ministerial regulation on special case investigations now designates child sexual abuse material as a special case within the purview of the Department of Special Investigation under the Ministry of Justice. This legislative adjustment underscores a significant step towards strengthening the legal framework to combat child sexual exploitation in Thailand.

### IMPLEMENT CHILD-SENSITIVE AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE JUSTICE:

- ✦ **Develop Sensitive Legal and Court Systems:** Establish procedures and judicial systems that prioritise the well-being of child victims/ survivors, appropriate to their gender, aiming to reduce trauma and uphold their dignity and safety during legal processes.
- ✦ **Enhance Training for Service Providers, including Justice Personnel:** Provide comprehensive training on children's rights, gender equality, the root causes and consequences of sexual exploitation, and implementing child-sensitive, trauma-informed, and gender-sensitive approaches in service provision, including policing, investigations, and court proceedings.





### INDONESIA:

Child-sensitive and gender-responsive justice transcends mere procedural aspects to encompass justice personnel's abilities, knowledge, and expertise in handling cases and victims with sensitivity. PKPA Indonesia engages with ECPAT Indonesia, with support from Kindernoithilfe (KNH), to develop an e-training module for law enforcement on protecting children from Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. This initiative builds upon training modules for [children, peers, teachers, and educators](#), covering child rights principles, national policies, child-friendly approaches, and child protection strategies.

### SAMOA:

Child-sensitive justice transcends the courtroom, encompassing victim recovery and reintegration processes. The Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), established in 2005 by prosecutors, is the sole non-governmental organisation in Samoa dedicated to assisting abuse survivors. This organisation not only prevents abuse but also supports child victim recovery through shelter services for children. Their approach includes highlighting 'stories of change' to empower children to share their experiences, using storytelling where the child takes on the protagonist's role. Noteworthy observations indicate that abused children are often reunited with their families, typically following a brief integration period of approximately six months. In response to this, SVSG has adapted its reintegration methods to involve comprehensive discussions with the entire family,

equipping them to provide support to a traumatised child. The organisation strategically emphasises prevention alongside recovery, targeting social behaviours in communities with high rates of child abuse. They conduct engaging sessions with parents and adolescents, primarily focusing on fostering lasting behavioural changes.

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG):

In Papua New Guinea, Femili PNG emphasises the critical importance of collaborative efforts among service providers, including the police, welfare services, and various civil society organisations, mainly when dealing with highly traumatised survivors. The effectiveness of survivors' recovery is intricately linked to the quality of care and support delivered by first-line responders. Data collected continually from Femili PNG is a vital tool for advocacy, shedding light on the pressing need for safe spaces for children and specialised accommodation facilities. Despite existing laws, policies, and mechanisms, more investments must be made towards building infrastructure and establishing robust mechanisms for comprehensive child protection in PNG. Furthermore, a significant challenge lies in bolstering the capacity of professionals handling sensitive child welfare cases, emphasising the urgency for capacity-building initiatives within the sector.

### EMPOWER CHILDREN AS ACTIVE RIGHTS-HOLDERS, NOT JUST STAKEHOLDERS

- Integrate child participation in all programme and policy development stages, ensuring children's insights and experiences inform safeguarding strategies and interventions.
- Establish platforms and mechanisms that allow children to safely express their views and contribute to decision-making monitoring and accountability processes related to their protection.

#### NEPAL:

Child participation is enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal, granting children agency in decision-making processes. Across 753 local units of governance in all the seven provinces, children are invited to serve as advisors, a practice in place for a decade. Child Workers In Nepal (CWIN) also worked with adolescents as peer educators, reaching 75,000 vulnerable children through Psychosocial First Aid (PFA). This approach has a significant impact on children facing challenges like sexual exploitation, substance use, and homelessness, facilitating positive transformations in their lives

### SUPPORT SURVIVOR-LED ADVOCACY AND PROGRAMS

- Provide platforms and support for survivors of child sexual exploitation to lead advocacy efforts, share their experiences, and participate in designing and implementing child protection initiatives.
- Foster leadership and capacity-building opportunities for survivors, recognising their unique contributions to raising awareness and influencing policy and practice.

#### NEW ZEALAND:

Recent legislative changes in New Zealand, highlighted by ECPAT Child Alert NZ, emphasise children's active engagement in the legislative drafting process. This goes beyond superficial involvement to meaningful participation, ensuring children's views shape strategies impacting them. The responsible Minister must consult with children or their representatives before adopting or altering strategies affecting children, ensuring their perspectives are considered. Children can be present in the room during the law-drafting process, underscoring the importance of including their voices and perspectives in shaping strategies and legislation.



### PROMOTE SAFE ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS:

- **Advocate for Robust Safeguards:** Encourage technology companies to establish and enhance protective measures against sexual exploitation of children, focusing on age verification and effective user reporting systems.
- **Support Digital Literacy:** Champion initiatives aimed at increasing digital literacy for children and caregivers, empowering them with essential skills to recognise and navigate online risks.

### NEPAL:

Voice of Children Nepal empowers children by promoting digital literacy and addressing online child sexual exploitation and abuse through an innovative approach. They use the Snake Ladder Game to educate children about online risks and empower them to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse effectively.

### TAIWAN:

Likewise, in Taiwan, ECPAT Taiwan employs a board game to educate children on digital literacy and online data protection. These creative strategies engage children in meaningful conversations and make the learning experience enjoyable and interactive.

### FOSTER CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:

- **Promote Human Rights Due Diligence:** Urge businesses to integrate human rights due diligence into their operations and throughout supply chains as a cornerstone for preventing and addressing the sexual exploitation of children. This involves identifying, preventing, and mitigating adverse impacts on children's rights, aligning with the UN Business and Human Rights Principles.
- **Position Children's Rights Centrally:** Advocate for businesses to prioritise children's rights within their operational frameworks, supply chains, and decision-making processes. This engagement goes beyond traditional Corporate Social Responsibility CSR policies to embed a rights-based approach at the core of corporate strategy.

### THAILAND:

A comprehensive collaboration spearheaded by the ECPAT Foundation Thailand and ECPAT International, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, and generously supported by the Government of the Netherlands and the TUI Care Foundation through the DCI-ECPAT Netherlands Office, has successfully advanced due diligence practices in the travel and tourism sector. This initiative engages children in proposing recommendations and raising awareness and advocates businesses to integrate child rights into the business models through staff training, adopting codes of conduct, and partnerships with governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations working on child rights. The concerted efforts have been pivotal in preventing and protecting children from sexual exploitation in the travel and tourism industry. Positive outcomes include heightened awareness among staff, executives, and community members in the targeted area of Phang Nga.

### ENHANCE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

- **Facilitate Meaningful Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between the private sector and child protection organisations to harness collective resources, expertise, and technologies effectively in the fight against sexual exploitation of children.
- **Incorporate Children's Perspectives:** Ensure the private sector considers children's viewpoints when developing services, operations, and policies. This entails consulting with children and incorporating their insights to create safer, more inclusive environments that reflect their needs and rights.

### SUPPORT GLOBAL STANDARDS AND PROTOCOLS

- Advocate for the endorsement and effective implementation of international standards and protocols about child protection, urging nations to actively engage in global initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing sexual exploitation of children, with collaborative involvement of local civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations.
- Strive to foster capacity-building initiatives within and across the countries to enhance legal, institutional, and operational frameworks in alignment with international norms for child protection through the collective participation and leadership of local civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations.

### JAPAN:

ECPAT/STOP Japan acknowledges the gradual progress towards ending sexual exploitation in the country in line with international standards. Despite this progress, there remains a notable pace of advancement. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has put forward approximately six recommendations, including the incorporation of 'childlike' child sexual abuse material. Yet, little action has been taken thus far, especially concerning deep fake CSAM. In response to recommendations from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the government has allocated funding for child crisis centres, aligning with a subset of the Committee's observations. Presently, the government is actively addressing three out of the six recommendations, signifying a more substantial commitment to enhancing efforts to combat sexual exploitation and safeguarding the rights and well-being of children in Japan.

### ENHANCE GLOBAL DATA SHARING AND RESEARCH

- Support the development of global data-sharing mechanisms that respect privacy and data protection standards, facilitating the exchange of information on trends, threats, and practical strategies against sexual exploitation of children.
- Invest in research to fill knowledge gaps regarding the sexual exploitation of children, including studies on emerging trends, the impact of digital technologies, and the effectiveness of intervention strategies.



### CHAMPIONING LOCALISATION AND DECOLONISATION IN STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

In our pursuit of a unified front against sexual exploitation of children, it is paramount to champion initiatives that wholeheartedly support the localisation and decolonisation agenda. Recognising the critical role played by civil society organisations as frontline defenders in this battle, our strategies must pivot towards supporting these local entities, ensuring they have the necessary resources, autonomy, and respect to lead efforts within their communities.

#### EMPOWER LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS:

- **Provide Sustainable Support:** Direct funding and resources to local civil society organisations, prioritising long-term sustainability over short-term projects. This support should be financial and encompass capacity building, access to international networks, and advocacy platforms.
- **Respect and Uphold Local Expertise:** Acknowledge and elevate the expertise of local civil society organisations in crafting culturally resonant and community-specific child protection strategies. This approach necessitates a shift from a top-down methodology to one that values local knowledge and solutions.

#### DECOLONISE CHILD PROTECTION EFFORTS:

- **Promote Equity in Partnerships:** Ensure collaborations between international organisations and local civil society organisations are characterised by equity, mutual respect, and shared decision-making. This involves dismantling hierarchical dynamics and recognising the sovereignty of local groups when leading their initiatives.
- **Integrate Decolonisation Principles:** Embed decolonisation principles into all aspects of strategic collaboration, from project planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. This includes challenging and changing narratives that perpetuate inequality and ensuring that programs are designed with, not for, communities.

#### ADVOCATE FOR LOCALISATION IN POLICY AND PRACTICE:

- **Influence Policy for Local Empowerment:** Advocate for policies at the international and national levels that prioritise localisation, ensuring that local civil society organisations are recognised as critical stakeholders in child protection. This advocacy should also push for regulatory environments that enable, rather than restrict, the work of civil society organisations.
- **Encourage Local Leadership:** Foster environments where local leaders and civil society organisations are at the forefront of discussions, decision-making, and implementing child protection measures. This leadership role empowers communities and ensures that interventions are relevant, effective, and sustainable.

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS



The evolving landscape of child protection necessitates foresight and adaptability. As we move forward, several vital areas emerge that are critical to shaping future strategies:

- The empowerment of civil society organisations
- Navigating technological challenges
- Embracing advancements across the broader field of child protection

These components offer a roadmap for innovation, enhanced protection mechanisms, and a collaborative approach to safeguarding children against sexual exploitation.

## EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS FOR IMPACTFUL ADVOCACY

### STRENGTHENING CAPACITY AND NETWORKS:

- Civil society organisations will further strengthen their operational capacities in the future, leveraging digital tools for advocacy, data collection, and networking. Investment in capacity development programs will equip civil society organisations with the skills to effectively navigate legal, technological, and social challenges.
- Expanding networks and collaboration among civil society organisations will be crucial. Organisations can share resources, strategies, and insights by fostering regional and global partnerships, enhancing their collective impact on child protection efforts.

### ENGAGING IN POLICY INFLUENCE AND REFORM:

- Civil society organisations will be increasingly pivotal in shaping child protection policies and legislation. Through evidence-based advocacy and strategic alliances, civil society organisations can influence policy reforms, ensuring that laws reflect the realities of technological advancements and the evolving nature of child exploitation.

### EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES:

- Future directions will emphasise the empowerment of children and survivors in designing and implementing child protection strategies. By incorporating their voices and experiences, civil society organisations can ensure that programs are responsive and respectful of the needs of those they aim to protect.

## NAVIGATING TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

### ADDRESSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- Addressing the digital divide will be essential as technology becomes more integral to child protection efforts. Ensuring equitable access to digital resources and education across different regions and communities will be a priority, enabling all children to benefit from online safety measures.

### INNOVATING FOR ONLINE SAFETY:

- The rapid pace of technological innovation presents both opportunities and challenges. Future strategies will involve developing advanced tools and platforms for detecting and preventing online exploitation, using AI (Artificial Intelligence), machine learning, and blockchain technology to safeguard children in digital spaces.

### COLLABORATING WITH THE TECH INDUSTRY:

- Strengthened collaboration between civil society organisations and the tech industry will be vital in addressing technological challenges. By working together, these entities can develop effective content moderation policies, help-seeking and reporting mechanisms, and educational campaigns tailored to the needs of children and families.

#### **SOUTH KOREA:**

In 2023, ECPAT Korea/Tacteen Naeil collaborated with Meta (Facebook), supported by ECPAT International, to effectively identify and report Facebook pages utilised to groom vulnerable children online (known as the 'Helper' Phenomenon) for prompt closure. Enhancing collaboration and coordination between civil society organisations and technology companies is critical to facilitating information sharing, proactively preventing, and swiftly responding to child sexual exploitation.



## ADVANCEMENTS IN THE BROADER FIELD

### INTEGRATING CHILD PROTECTION ACROSS SECTORS:

- An integrated approach to child protection involving education, health, justice, and technology sectors will be vital. By embedding child safety principles across different domains, stakeholders can create a comprehensive protective environment for children.

### LEVERAGING DATA FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING:

- Data analytics and big data will become more prevalent in child protection efforts. By harnessing data, stakeholders can gain insights into trends, risk factors, and the effectiveness of interventions, informing strategic decisions and policy development.

### FOSTERING INNOVATION AND ADAPTABILITY:

- The child protection field will increasingly prioritise innovation and adaptability. By embracing new methodologies, technologies, and collaborative models, stakeholders can stay ahead of emerging threats and ensure that protection mechanisms remain practical and relevant.



Looking ahead, the empowerment of civil society organisations and more comprehensive cooperation, the strategic navigation of technological challenges, and the embrace of broader field advancements will be instrumental in shaping the future of child protection. As stakeholders venture into this future, the pathways for innovation and enhanced protection mechanisms highlighted here offer both a vision and a call to action. By fostering collaboration, leveraging technology responsibly, and prioritising the needs and rights of children, we can build a safer world where every child is protected from exploitation and empowered to thrive.



# CONCLUSION

The majority of participants deemed the outcomes of partnerships and networking crucial, reflecting a notable interest among ECPAT members, non-members, and broader stakeholders in maintaining up-to-date strategies for combating child sexual exploitation. This underscores the importance of knowledge-sharing, continuous learning, and adaptation to effectively address the evolving challenge collaboratively. The participants' feedback from the post-event survey revealed that the Bangkok Regional Workshop successfully helped participants accomplish these dual objectives.

Drawing upon the rich insights and collaborative outcomes of the Bangkok Regional Workshop 2024, this report stands as a testament to the collective resolve and innovative spirit of all stakeholders committed to combating the sexual exploitation of children. The conclusion synthesises the key findings, underscores the needs and impact of our united efforts, and reaffirms our call for sustained commitment and action in this crucial fight.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The report delves into the multifaceted nature of the sexual exploitation of children, presenting comprehensive analyses across technological risks, legal, cultural and gender barriers, and the unique challenges faced by vulnerable groups. Our discussions highlighted the critical need for enhanced digital literacy, robust legal frameworks, and tailored support mechanisms that respect and respond to the diverse needs of all children. Significantly, the report illuminates the indispensable role of child and survivor voices in shaping effective protection strategies, advocating for their active participation in decision-making processes.

## NEEDS AND IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

The workshop displayed the power of collaboration, bringing together civil society organisations, government entities, the private sector, and international organisations. This unity in diversity has fostered innovative solutions, from leveraging technology to protect children online to advocating for legal reforms that address the evolving landscape of exploitation. Our collective efforts have not only strengthened existing child protection mechanisms but have also paved new pathways for safeguarding children against exploitation.

## ONGOING COMMITMENT AND ACTION

As we progress, the urgency for continued commitment and action remains paramount. The fight against sexual exploitation of children is dynamic, with emerging technologies and evolving societal norms presenting both opportunities and challenges. Our report calls for a steadfast dedication to innovation, adaptability, and, most importantly, collaboration. By building upon the groundwork laid during the workshop, we can ensure that our strategies remain effective and responsive to the needs of children at risk of exploitation.

## A CALL TO ACTION

In closing, this report serves as a rallying cry for all stakeholders to redouble their efforts in the fight against sexual exploitation of children. We are called upon to:

- Recognise the impactful work of civil society organisations and ensure they have sufficient resources to change children's lives.
- Ensure the solutions and strategies are adapted to the local and national contexts while responding to emerging challenges and needs.
- Prioritise and uphold the empowerment and active involvement of children, especially those who are most impacted, marginalised, and disregarded, such as child victims/ survivors, children in conflict with the law, and children with disabilities, throughout our initiatives.

- Foster stronger partnerships and deepen our collaboration across sectors and borders.
- Embrace technological advancements as tools for prevention and protection while vigilantly safeguarding children against grooming, threats, and exploitation.
- Advocate for comprehensive legal reforms and effective implementation of laws that offer robust protection for children.
- Commit to ongoing learning, information and knowledge sharing, and innovation, ensuring the latest evidence and best practices inform our approaches.

The Bangkok Collective Action Workshop 2024 marks a significant milestone in our collective journey towards a world where every child is shielded from sexual exploitation. The insights and recommendations in this report chart a course for future action rooted in collaboration, innovation, and child-centred approaches. Together with the knowledge, tools, and collective will, we can make a lasting impact. Let us advance with renewed determination, united in our dedication to protect the most vulnerable among us and to construct a safer, more equitable world for all children.

## About

### *ABOUT ECPAT INTERNATIONAL:*

**ECPAT International** stands as a united front of over 120 civil society organisations spread across more than 100 nations, each passionately committed to the shared vision of eradicating the sexual exploitation of children. Harnessing the power of over three decades of experience in multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership management, our expansive network operates on national, regional, and global levels. We relentlessly drive forward, fuelled by the conviction that every child deserves a world free from sexual exploitation.

### *ABOUT SAFE ONLINE:*

**Safe Online** is the only global investment vehicle dedicated to keeping children safe in the digital world. With a focus on innovative solutions and research, Safe Online collaborates with partners to address digital threats and shape a safer digital world for all children and young people. Since 2017, Safe Online has invested nearly US\$100 million in over 100 projects with impact in more than 85 countries; it has also received substantial funding in the Southeast Asia region with 20 projects for over US\$ 20 million.

### *ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC):*

UNODC is mandated to support Member States in preventing and responding to crime and violence and strengthening their justice systems, including ensuring that justice systems better serve and protect children. In January 2023, the General Assembly adopted the resolution [A/RES/77/233](#), which specifically requested UNODC to assist Member States in their efforts to prevent and respond to child sexual exploitation and abuse. In June 2023, UNODC organised a comprehensive Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the Removal of child sexual abuse material from the internet, bringing together governments, civil society organisations, development banks as well as the private sector to foster cooperation and public-private partnerships to remove and combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online proactively. The event led to the adoption of the [Call to Action Statement](#) for Removing child sexual exploitation and abuse materials, which 73 Member States have signed. In November 2023, the Office launched its new [Strategy to End Violence against Children 2023-2030](#), jointly developed with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, which focuses on four contexts where children are often exposed to crime and violence: insecurity, justice systems, cyberspace and children on the move.

### ABOUT KINDERNOTHILFE (KNH):

KNH, German for “Supporting children in need,” has grown dramatically since 1959. Beginning with just five child sponsorships in India, its work now reaches over 2.1 million children and youth in 609 projects in 32 countries on four continents. Tens of thousands of donors provide ninety per cent of Kindernothilfe’s funds. KNH sees its work as part of the global ecumenical development collaboration. Kindernothilfe, headquartered in Germany, cooperates with Kindernothilfe organisations in Austria, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

### ABOUT DOWN TO ZERO:

The **Down to Zero Alliance** is stepping up the fight against child sexual exploitation. The Alliance is committed to protecting children and preventing sexual exploitation in twelve countries in Asia and Latin America. Terre des Hommes (leader), Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia), Conexión, Defense for Children - Ecpat, Free A Girl and Plan International work in the Down to Zero Alliance together with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to combat the sexual exploitation of children to deal with. Down to Zero implements the program *Step Up the Fight Against Sexual Exploitation of Children (SUFASEC)*, which empowers children and young people to defend their rights, support communities to become safer and protect their children from sexual exploitation, and help governments improve and implement relevant policies, laws and regulations.



