



THEORY OF CHANGE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

ECPAT International (EI) is leading a civil society movement that aims to prevent and respond to the sexual exploitation of children. The Theory of Change described below reflects the approaches taken, intermediate steps and expected changes that articulate ECPAT International's contribution to ending sexual exploitation of children (SEC). The Theory of Change reflects how ECPAT International is responding to the current landscape of SEC, and this Theory of Change will be updated at regular intervals to reflect the organisation's evolving response. Therefore, this document will be subject to ongoing review and reflection on an annual basis as ECPAT International continues to learn and adapt in response to a growing body of evidence on what works to prevent SEC.

A Review of the Current Context:

Child sexual exploitation is a pervasive global issue that affects children from all social and economic backgrounds. The complexity of this problem is driven by a multitude of social, economic, cultural, and political factors. Poverty, lack of access to education, displacement, gender inequality and weak child protection laws are key risk factors. These elements frequently intersect, creating environments where children are vulnerable to exploitation. Physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children has significant economic consequences, with costs estimated to be as high as 8% of the global gross domestic product (GDP)¹.

What We Aim to Do:

ECPAT International's objective catalyse change in the global environment that would support all children to live and flourish without the threat of sexual exploitation. This necessitates the creation of environments that are conducive to the growth and empowerment of children to be part of the solution, while simultaneously providing them with a protective environment.

¹ [Violence against children \(2020\) unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org/sexual-exploitation)

How We Will Achieve This:

1. GENERATING COMPELLING EVIDENCE:

ECPAT International bridges the gap between research, practice, and policy by generating and disseminating evidence that centre the experiences of children and local practitioners. Such evidence is of the utmost importance for the formulation of effective prevention and response strategies.

2. LEADING EVIDENCE-BASED CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY:

We facilitate the formation of a collective movement across sectors, stakeholders, and geographies, with the objective of challenging existing narratives and advocating for solutions that are child-centric. This includes the empowerment of our members and partners through the implementation of capacity-strengthening initiatives and the fostering of horizontal learning and evidence sharing.

3. CONVENING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CSOS' COLLABORATION:

We create platforms for learning and action, bringing together civil society organisations (CSOs) to collectively tackle SEC. This strategy enhances the network's recognition and credibility on national and international platforms, fostering new collaborations and innovations.

Who We Will Work With

Our approach involves engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders:

- » **CHILDREN:** By centring their voices and experiences, we ensure that prevention and response strategies are informed by those most affected.
- » **PRACTITIONERS:** We collaborate with service providers, social workers and paraprofessionals, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, and advocates to design and implement effective SEC prevention and response services.
- » **PUBLIC:** We mobilise communities to hold governments and private sectors accountable for effective policy implementation.
- » **PRIVATE SECTOR:** We work with businesses to implement regulations, conduct due diligence, and raise awareness about SEC.
- » **CIVIL SOCIETY MOVEMENTS:** We bring together CSOs to lead advocacy movements that effect transformative change.
- » **POLICYMAKERS:** We engage and motivate policymakers to take urgent action through compelling evidence and multi-sectoral dialogue.

Assumptions:

Our work is built on three key assumptions:



1 Child-Centred Approaches:

These lead to more effective prevention and response strategies



2 Multi-Sectoral Movements:

Collaboration across sectors and geographies is essential to ending SEC.



3 Advocacy and Public Pressure:

These will drive decision-makers and private sector actors to implement effective SEC prevention and response strategies.

ECPAT International is committed to gathering evidence and transparently sharing learning about its successes and failures, to generate and disseminate learnings about when, how, and why these strategies are effective in bringing about meaningful, lasting change to end child sexual exploitation.

CONCLUSION

This Theory of Change provides a structured framework for strategic planning, decision-making, and resource allocation. By aligning our projects with this framework, ECPAT International ensures that our efforts are coherent, impactful, and focused on ending

the sexual exploitation of children. It allows us to communicate our objectives clearly to stakeholders, build trust, and demonstrate accountability, ensuring that our mission remains at the forefront of global child protection efforts.



TAKING STOCK OF THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

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ECPAT International (EI) defines sexual exploitation of children when a child (under 18) '[...] is involved in a sexual activity in exchange for something (e.g., money or other gains like food, housing, clothing, protection or even the promise of such) received by a third party the perpetrator, or by the child her/himself.'²

Child sexual exploitation and abuse is a global issue affecting children from all walks of life, everywhere. Research has established that no country is immune. However, we recognise that the push/pull and risk factors that could lead to child sexual exploitation and abuse are complex and often reflect the social, economic, cultural, religious, gender, technological and political conditions in a country. These factors frequently intersect with each other and overlap with development issues associated with Global South countries. Key development-related risk factors of child sexual exploitation and abuse include:

- » Poverty, economic disparities or increased economic insecurity.
- » Lack of or limited access to safe and quality education and basic support services
- » Being a victim of other forms of violence against children.
- » Belonging to marginalised or ethnic minority groups.
- » Working or living in or near high-risk environments such as slums or night-time entertainment districts.
- » Displacement or forced migration due to land encroachment, disruption to traditional ways of life, armed conflicts, natural disasters, and impacts of climate change.
- » Belonging to a context in which children must work to support the family.
- » Consumerism/Materialism: the development of a culture which condones the commodification of individuals (mainly women and children) to acquire material wealth.

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

- » Harmful social and gender norms or social tolerance towards sexual exploitation of children.
- » Lack of comprehensive sexuality education.
- » Gender inequalities and discrimination.
- » Weak child protection laws and policies and enforcement of existing frameworks.
- » Systems and services that do not put children's needs at the centre of the intervention and do not address them adequately.
- » Information, communications, and technology (ICT) advancements that have little to no government regulation facilitate sexual exploitation and abuse with no law enforcement oversight.
- » Unregulated business environments which can lead to commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- » Weak coordination mechanisms across relevant institutions and stakeholders favour duplication, re-victimisation, and inefficiency.

Sexual exploitation can have profound and enduring effects on children, manifesting in physical, emotional, and social consequences. Physically, it can result in genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies, often leading to further challenges such as stigmatisation and unsafe medical interventions. The psychological trauma of exploitation can be severe, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, emotional disorders, and interruptions in cognitive development, exacerbated by insensitive handling of the situation by authorities, unfriendly or victim-blaming attitudes and interviewing, or disbelief of the child, potentially causing secondary trauma. Socially, victims may face ostracism from their families or communities, especially if they are blamed or shamed for the abuse, impacting their healing process, social standing, and prospects, particularly in cultures where marriage prospects are affected.

Moreover, physical, psychological, and sexual violence against children carries significant economic costs, with estimates suggesting global impacts totalling as high as US\$7 trillion, equivalent to 8% of the global GDP³. Studies indicate higher costs for child victims compared to adults, attributed to increased utilisation of health services and compromised quality of life resulting from their injuries, emphasising the economic burden and the need for comprehensive support systems to address the aftermath of sexual exploitation.

What we aim to do

ECPAT International aims to bring about an environment where all children live and thrive safe, supported, empowered, and free from sexual exploitation.

3 Overseas Development Institute and ChildFund Alliance, 2014

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

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ECPAT International (EI) is working towards ending sexual exploitation of children (SEC) through three key strategies: generating compelling evidence, leading evidence-based campaigning and advocacy, and convening civil society organisations (CSOs) to collaborate, learn from each other, and take collective action. The diagram below outlines the strategies that ECPAT International uses, the intermediate and long-term outcomes expected, and the effect on each stakeholder involved in ending the sexual exploitation of children. The diagram shows a simplified, logical chain of strategies and results – in reality, ECPAT International is working to bring about complex, systemic change that is often cyclical and non-linear, and the approaches used are constantly evolving in response to the changing landscape of SEC. This diagram is followed by associated descriptions of each of the three strategies, the outcomes associated with each stakeholder, and the assumptions behind the diagram.

Across all activities, ECPAT International implements three cross-cutting approaches: systematically ensuring that all programming is locally-led and equitable in terms of partnership, evidence generation and advocacy, that children are meaningfully consulted and involved in all activities, including being supported to hold decision-makers to account to address their needs, and gender equity and social inclusion intersections with SEC are considered, and systematically addressed. ECPAT International is committed to monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating learning on the integral role these approaches play in ensuring an effective response to ending SEC.



THEORY OF CHANGE

APPROACH

1

ECPAT International generates compelling evidence through:

- **Meaningfully engaging** with children and young survivors to analyse their realities and develop relevant and effective approaches and interventions
- **Synthesising** local and global evidence from stakeholders across sectors and context
- **Learning** from and with ECPAT members, CSO partners' and children and young survivors' experiences

2

ECPAT International leads evidence-based campaigning and advocacy, by:

- **Transforming** evidence into compelling messages, practical recommendations and strategies
- **Influencing** key decision-makers (incl. government, private sector) to prioritise action and allocate resources, and hold them to account
- **Creating platforms** for meaningful engagement between children, decision-makers and communities.

3

ECPAT International convenes and creates opportunities for learning, collaboration and action, by:

- **Mobilising** collective learning and action with the ECPAT network (member to member, external partners and ECPAT International)
- **Brokering** multi-sectoral collaborations between key stakeholders at local, national and global levels
- **Creating** opportunities for learning and capacity strengthening in key areas to effect change

OUTPUTS

A movement is sustained through a **critical mass** of diverse CSOs, children and young survivors and the broader public that challenge narratives and influence policies and practices.

Evidence generated is translated into **accessible** and **actionable** recommendations, tools, guiding frameworks and standards which can be contextualised.

ECPAT International, ECPAT members and CSO partners strengthen the capacity of, and create avenues for, children to **voice** their views and **influence** policies and practices

ECPAT members and CSO partners incorporate **learning** into programming and policy and **adapt** their work to evolving contexts, trends, and manifestations of SEC

ECPAT CSO members and partners strengthen **coordination** and **collaboration** across sectors to prevent and address cross-border and regional SEC manifestations

CSO voices gain **credibility** and **recognition** to shape advocacy, policy and practice at national, regional, and international levels

ECPAT members and CSO partners strengthen **access** to, and **quality** of, prevention and response services

ECPAT members and CSO partners **innovate, pilot** and test effective approaches and strategies

OUTCOMES BY STAKEHOLDER

1 PUBLIC
Public perceptions, norms and beliefs shift, and public hold governments and private sector accountable for effective policy and implementation and public take action to prevent SEC

2 PRACTITIONERS
Design and implement evidence-based, child-centred, context-specific prevention and response services, strategies and systems.

3 PRIVATE SECTOR
Implements regulations, makes financial commitments, conducts due diligence and takes action to identify, prevent and remediate SEC.

4 POLICYMAKERS
Design, implement and scale-up effective child-centred legislation and policies, and make resources available and monitor and report on progress and strategies.

5 CSO MOVEMENTS
Shape the agenda and hold governments and private sector accountable for effective policy and implementation.

6 CHILDREN
Systematically shape prevention and response to SEC and hold governments, private sector and civil society accountable for effective policy and implementation, and access quality, effective and relevant prevention and response services, strategies and systems.

IMPACT

The incidence and effects of SEC are reduced.

All children live and thrive safe, supported, empowered, and free from sexual exploitation.

Cross-cutting

ECPAT International systematises locally-led, equitable approaches to partnership, evidence-generation and advocacy

Child-centered approaches empower children and young survivors to hold decision-makers to account

Gender equity and social inclusion approaches are mainstreamed

STRATEGY 1:

STRATEGY 1:

Generate compelling evidence to bridge the gap between research, practice, and policy.

To generate and disseminate compelling evidence, ECPAT International has centred meaningful participation of children, as a cross-cutting strategy across all activities. ECPAT International meaningfully engages with children and supports CSOs to understand the lived realities and challenges faced by children and young survivors of sexual exploitation of children (SEC). ECPAT International also focuses on valuing the experiences of local practitioners and stakeholders and synthesising local and global evidence to seek solutions collaboratively with children, young people, their families, and communities that centre their needs, views, and participation in decision-making. This approach allows ECPAT International to translate evidence from across sectors and geographies into actionable recommendations that are relevant and accessible to children and young survivors, and contextually appropriate, laying the foundation for advocacy efforts.

Through working with multi-sectoral global and local partners, ECPAT International identifies and bridges the gap in evidence to promote specific child- and survivor-centred solutions that are adaptable, globally relevant, and evidence-based, informed

by an understanding of the risks, constraints, and choices children face in various environments. By engaging with practitioners and policymakers and creating platforms for meaningful engagement between children, decision-makers across public and private sectors, and communities, ECPAT International ensures that SEC prevention and response strategies are informed by children, invested in, and effectively implemented by multi-sectoral stakeholders, and lead to collective learning and action.

As a result, children are expected to benefit from more effective SEC prevention and response strategies, leading to tangible improvements in their situations and environments. By promoting and supporting the empowerment of children and communities to advocate for their rights, ECPAT International aims to create a safer and more supportive environment where all children can thrive free from sexual exploitation. This strategy underscores our commitment to generating compelling, informed evidence and highlights the importance of multi-sectoral investment and collaboration, and participatory, child-centred, gender-equitable approaches in achieving meaningful, lasting impact.

STRATEGY 2:

STRATEGY 2:

Lead evidence-based campaigning and advocacy to drive a movement across sectors, stakeholders, and geographies.

Under this approach, ECPAT International's focus lies in identifying key influencers, decision-makers, and allies across sectors and geographies pertinent to the prevention of sexual exploitation of children (SEC). ECPAT International aims to meticulously evaluate their interests, influence, and potential for engagement, enabling the organisation to strategically target its advocacy interventions where they would be most impactful.

Following the identification and assessment of stakeholders, ECPAT International empowers its members and partners through capacity-strengthening initiatives and promoting horizontal learning and evidence sharing. By enhancing the advocacy skills and opportunities for these entities and nurturing the capacity of child and youth activists to influence policy, practice, and debates, ECPAT International supports a critical mass of diverse stakeholders to collectively challenge existing narratives and collaborate to advocate for child-centric solutions to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. Simultaneously, ECPAT International creates opportunities for the participation of children in decision-making processes, thereby amplifying their voices and agency in shaping responses to SEC. This dual approach underscores ECPAT

International's commitment to fostering inclusive and collaborative efforts in the fight against SEC. This strategy ensures vertical and horizontal flow of evidence and its adaptation to effective practice and policy, de-clustering discussions and enhancing knowledge transfer and uptake across local, regional, and national boundaries.

Through this strategy, ECPAT International will galvanise a critical mass of diverse CSOs, public and private sector decision-makers, communities, children, and the broader public to speak out against SEC and promote evidence-based, child-centred, gender-sensitive, and contextually appropriate solutions. Through collective action and advocacy efforts, ECPAT International will elevate SEC prevention and response to the forefront of public discourse, generating momentum for change across sectors. This concerted push for awareness and action will mobilise public support and pressure decision-makers to prioritise SEC prevention and response in their agendas.

As public awareness and pressure mount, policymakers and private sector actors will respond by implementing transparent policies, effective legislation, and concrete actions to protect children from SEC. With increased transparency and



accountability, policy frameworks and legislative measures will centre children's views, addressing the complex realities of SEC and safeguarding children from harm. Simultaneously, practitioners will design and implement SEC prevention and response strategies informed by evidence and best practices, ensuring a comprehensive and effective approach to combating SEC at all levels.

Through an evidence-informed, multi-sectoral advocacy movement of diverse stakeholders, increased investment, commitment, and implementation will foster a safer

and more supportive environment where all children can thrive free from exploitation. This strategy underscores the importance of multi-sectoral advocacy and learning, public engagement at global, national, and local levels, and systemic responses by decision-makers at every tier in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by SEC, and underscores ECPAT International's commitment to realising a world in which all key stakeholders are collaborating to ensure a world where every child is safe, supported, empowered, and free from sexual exploitation.

STRATEGY 3:

STRATEGY 3:

Convene and create opportunities for learning, collaboration, and action for CSOs to collectively and effectively tackle SEC.

To support, develop and grow its network of 125 CSOs working in 104 countries, ECPAT International fosters discussion and knowledge exchange about approaches to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation of children (SEC), cultivating an environment where members not only gain access to up-to-date global and local evidence, but also feel inspired, valued, and respected within the network. This collaborative atmosphere stimulates the development of new collaborations, encourages innovation, and facilitates collective action to address SEC challenges, including those with cross-border implications.

Furthermore, ECPAT International's efforts extend beyond internal networking to forging connections with external stakeholders, thereby enhancing the network's recognition and credibility on national and international platforms. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy, ECPAT International endeavours to influence public opinion and government policies, leading to the implementation and scale up of effective SEC prevention and response strategies. By ensuring that diverse perspectives are incorporated into policy frameworks and practices, ECPAT International aims to create an environment where children can access comprehensive support and

protection from sexual exploitation, fostering an ecosystem conducive to their safety and empowerment.

Moreover, ECPAT International recognises evidence-based advocacy and capacity strengthening as crucial elements for sustainable change. By sharing evidence and insights within the network and with external stakeholders, ECPAT International facilitates informed decision-making and fosters accountability among policymakers and service providers. Through convening dialogues on strategic areas, facilitating learning and partnership between CSO members, collaborating to pilot new initiatives, and supporting dissemination, uptake, and adaptation of learnings within and beyond the CSO network, ECPAT International strengthens the capabilities of its members, empowering them to hold policymakers accountable and advocate for child-centred solutions. This strategy encompasses ECPAT International's support and commitment to locally led, evidence-informed advocacy, practice, and policy that leads to gathering and disseminating relevant learning, strengthens the capacity of CSOs to lead effective advocacy movements, and leads to collective action that will create a safe environment for all children to thrive safe, supported, empowered and free from sexual exploitation.

WHO WE WILL WORK WITH

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To identify key stakeholders and outline the roles they can play in effecting meaningful change, we have detailed the actions and outcomes each stakeholder contributes to in achieving a world free from sexual exploitation of children.

Children

Through ECPAT International's three strategies, children in general, and young survivors in particular, play a key role in sharing and analysing their lived realities, challenges, and needs to inform effective solutions. Their participation and experiences are centred on safe and effective practices, policies, and advocacy, and they are supported to lead movements that challenge narratives of adultism and influence key decision-makers to meet their needs. Through this, children and survivors systematically shape prevention and response to SEC, and hold governments, private sector, and civil society accountable for effective policy and implementation. Through ECPAT International's strategies, children and survivors can access quality, effective, gender-sensitive, and relevant prevention and response services, strategies and systems leading them to thrive safe, supported, empowered and free from sexual exploitation.

Practitioners

ECPAT International engages with practitioners across sectors and geographies in the fight to end SEC. These include service providers, such as CSOs and healthcare and social service workforce, law enforcement, legal professionals, as well as advocates and activists. Through ECPAT International's strategies, practitioners working to end SEC across sectors and geographies meaningfully engage with, and value the experiences of, children and young survivors, leverage local and global evidence, disseminate and exchange knowledge, strengthen their capacity, and collaborate to lead advocacy, and shape and implement effective practice and policy. Through collaborating with ECPAT International and its network of CSOs, CSO voices gain credibility and recognition, and create opportunities for children and young survivors to challenge existing narratives of SEC and demand effective, child-centred, equitable, locally informed solutions. Through ECPAT International's strategies across evidence generation, network building, and advocacy, practitioners design and implement evidence-based, context-specific prevention and response services, strategies, and systems.

Public

Multi-sectoral stakeholders collaborate with children to create a sustained movement that challenges existing public perceptions of the urgency to address SEC, its evolving manifestations, and the role children should play in bringing about effective solutions. This movement shifts public perceptions, norms, and beliefs, and, as a result, communities within and across countries join the movement to hold governments and the private sector accountable for effective policy and implementation and, take action to identify, prevent and respond to SEC.

Private sector

ECPAT International increases demand within the private sector to implement effective regulation, conduct due diligence, create platforms and raise awareness of the urgency to address SEC, and support legislation changes. ECPAT International harnesses the influence of the private sector, both formal and informal, over other stakeholders, including the public and governments, and holds them accountable to commit financial resources and take meaningful, impactful action. To do this, ECPAT International ensures that the private sector contributes to evidence generation and dissemination, engages in multi-sectoral advocacy initiatives, plays a leading role in the movement to end SEC, implements evidence-informed regulation and invests in effective, child-centred, equitable solutions.

Civil society movements

Through its multi-sectoral advocacy approach, ECPAT International brings together CSOs across geographies to learn from each other, convenes and creates spaces and opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and capacities to implement effective interventions and influence policy and practice. In collaboration with other key stakeholders, a critical mass of CSOs is brought together to lead a multi-sectoral advocacy movement that effects transformative change, raising awareness of SEC, shaping effective policy and practice, generating public pressure, and holding government and the private sector to account to influence effective solutions. Ensuring that CSOs are monitoring and evaluating their programmes and advocacy, exchanging learning and promising practices, and implementing evidence-informed approaches ensures that CSOs convene and lead an effective movement that implements effective, responsive practice and policy, shapes the agenda, and holds governments and private sector accountable for effective policy and implementation.



Policymakers

ECPAT International engages policymakers and motivates them to urgently take action to end SEC through compelling evidence, fosters dialogue between policymakers and CSO and child-led multi-sectoral movements at the global and local level, and mobilises resources, capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange to implement coordinated, effective policies, services, and practices. Through this approach, policymakers design, implement and scale-up effective child-centred legislation and policies, make resources available, and monitor and report on progress and strategies to identify gaps and challenges and continuously adapt to the evolving landscape of SEC.



ASSUMPTIONS

Within ECPAT International's model, there are three key assumptions essential to bringing about the goal of ending sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT International is evaluating these assumptions across all activities to synthesise existing evidence on its strategies and associated outcomes and generate new evidence that fills the gaps in the existing knowledge base. These three assumptions are outlined below:

Child-centred approaches lead to more effective prevention and response to SEC.

ECPAT International has developed innovative approaches to prioritise and centre the voices of children and young survivors in research, advocacy, policy, and practices to end SEC. This collaborative approach ensures that policies and practices are informed by the perspectives and needs of children, and ECPAT International assumes that this ultimately leads to more effective outcomes in addressing SEC.

Under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) children, under the age of 18, have a right to have their views and opinions heard and considered. Emerging evidence from research illustrates the 'added value' of working with children and young people in general. This includes potential benefits for children and young people themselves, through improving confidence, self-worth, self-esteem, and self-efficacy; developing capacities; promoting a sense of choice, autonomy, control, and agency; and providing opportunities for 'critical consciousness' and reflection.

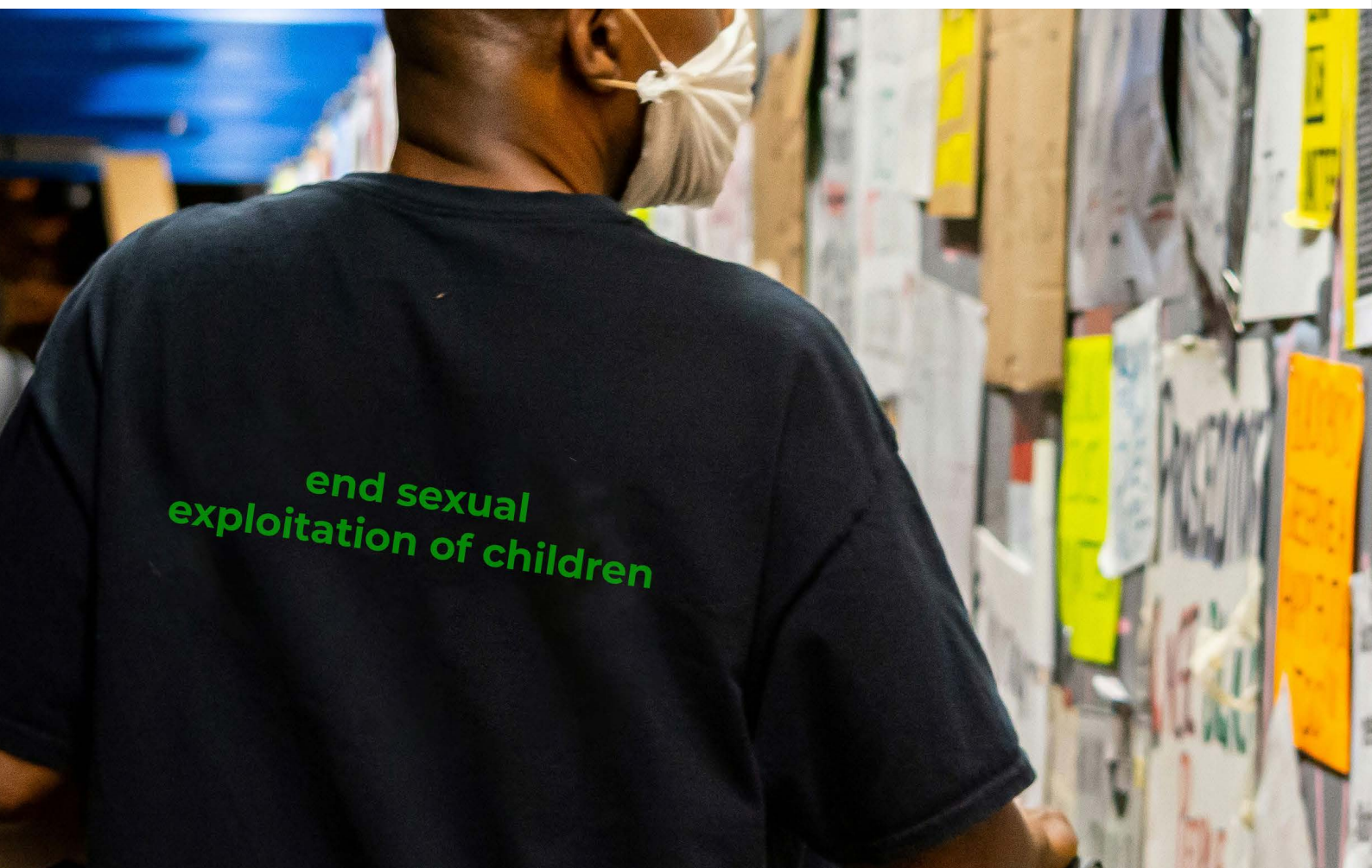
ECPAT International has developed a child participation strategy that outlines both the importance of centring the voices of children and young survivors in the fight to end SEC, and the existing gaps in evidence, advocacy, practice, and policy that act as barriers to children and young survivors' participation. ECPAT International seeks to address these gaps through piloting and learning from new child-centred and gender-sensitive approaches to generate compelling evidence that these are more effective.

Movements made up of multi-sectoral stakeholders across geographies are effective in ending sexual exploitation of children.

Extensive evidence shows that sexual exploitation of children (SEC) is a multifaceted and complex issue that requires a comprehensive and coordinated response from diverse stakeholders outlined above. This is because SEC is influenced by a wide range of social, economic, cultural, and systemic factors that vary across different contexts and geographies. Bringing together diverse stakeholders allows for a more holistic understanding of these interconnected factors and effective solutions require collective action and shared responsibility.

An example of an effective response to a complex social issue is the global movement to combat HIV/AIDS which has been characterised by multi-sectoral collaboration, including governments, CSOs, healthcare providers, researchers, donors, and affected communities. This movement has led to considerable progress in prevention, treatment, and support services for those affected by HIV/AIDS. Another example is the efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, which have engaged governments, CSOs, the private sector and grassroots and global feminist movements. These collaborations have led to advancements in laws and policies, increased access to education and economic opportunities and women and girls and led to coordinated action to challenge discriminatory norms and practices.

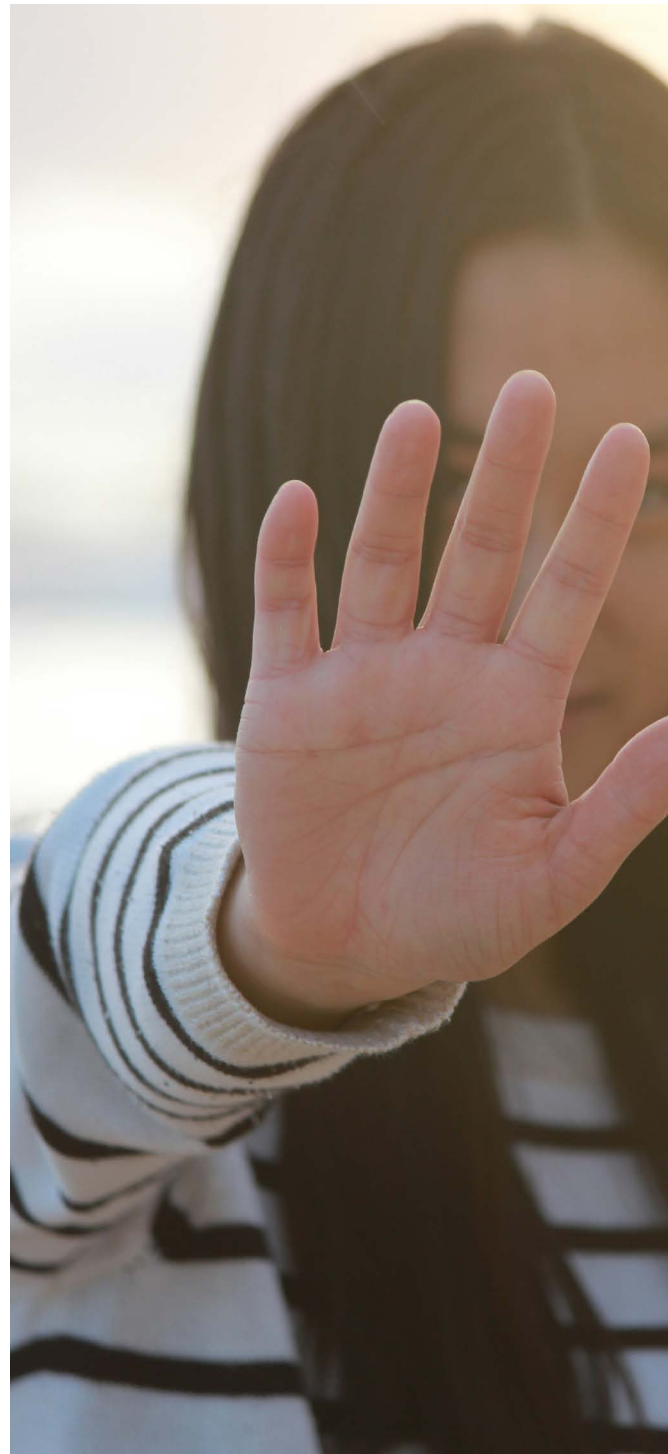
Evidence from existing movements suggests that diverse stakeholders must come together to catalyse action, drive change and achieve meaningful progress in addressing complex social issues like sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT International is committed to monitoring and evaluating its progress, and transparently sharing successes and failures to generate and disseminate learnings about when, how, and why multi-sectoral movements across geographies can bring about meaningful, lasting change to end sexual exploitation of children.



Advocacy efforts and public pressure will lead decision-makers and private sector actors to operationalise effective SEC prevention and response strategies.

The impact of advocacy efforts and public pressure on decision-makers and private sector actors can vary depending on the operating context. There are many contextual factors that influence decision-makers and private sector actors' interests in, willingness and ability to act. These include the level of public awareness and understanding about the prevalence, impact, and root causes of SEC, which affects public support for action and reform, which is also affected by media coverage and public discourse around the ability to bring about successful prevention and response solutions. Stigmatisation of survivors, lack of strong justice institutions, legal and policy frameworks, political will, and response and prevention services can all affect public and private sector support and confidence in the ability to end SEC.

To tackle this issue, ECPAT International is operating at many levels and sectors supporting CSOs and partners to address the root causes that would prevent successful advocacy approaches or outcomes, while simultaneously building a sustained movement of influential stakeholders that can hold decision-makers and private sectors to account. ECPAT International is generating compelling evidence to show that strategically tackling this complex issue from many perspectives generates momentum for change and promotes effective strategies to engage governments and the private sector in committing and acting to end sexual exploitation of children.



HOW ECPAT INTERNATIONAL STAFF SHOULD USE THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Planning and resource allocation

This Theory of Change provides a structured framework for strategic planning and decision-making that outlines the organisation's long-term goals and pathways to achieve them. This clarity supports the allocation of resources, prioritisation of projects and investment in initiatives that are aligned with the organisational mission and approach.

Project design

When proposing new projects, staff should draw on this Theory of Change to articulate how the project might meet the approaches and outcomes outlined in it. Project teams can tailor the project theories of change to contribute directly to ECPAT International's mission, ensuring that projects are strategically designed to address specific components, assumptions, and hypotheses in the organisational Theory of Change, maximising their relevance and impact.

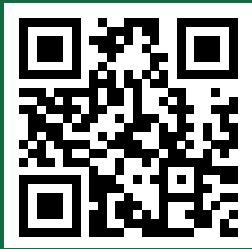
Continuous learning and adaptation

ECPAT International must remain agile and responsive to the opportunities and challenges within the changing landscape of SEC. By systematically reviewing and evaluating our assumptions and progress towards the outlined pathways and outcomes, teams can identify what is working well and where adaptations are needed. This iterative process of reflection and adaptation allows ECPAT International to prioritise learning, refine its strategy, improve its effectiveness and monitor, evaluate, and highlight its impact over time.

Accountability and transparency

By articulating the expected outcomes and underlying assumptions of our approach, ECPAT International can clearly communicate our objectives to key stakeholders, including donors, partners, members, and communities we work with. Use of the Theory of Change when communicating the organisation's model builds confidence and trust in our organisation's consistency and dedication to its mission, and our ability to deliver, fostering stronger relationships with key stakeholders. Critically, it allows ECPAT International to organise our monitoring, evaluation and learning resources around the main assumptions in the Theory of Change to ensure we are gathering relevant evidence, effectively tracking our progress, demonstrating our results, and ensuring accountability for our actions and outcomes.





328/1 Phaya Thai Road,
Ratchathewi, Bangkok,
10400, Thailand

Telephone: +662 215 3388
Email: info@ecpat.org
Website: www.ecpat.org

For more information :

