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March 2021

Policy Objective Option 1: Reducing Online CSEA

What problem are we addressing and what do we want to achieve?

1. **Problem statement**: The internet and the design of digital services have expanded the ways in which potential abusers can exploit or abuse children. On the whole, international and national laws to tackle **online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) are poorly enforced and resources to protect children are stretched.** (See also *Summary of Key Policy Issues – Online Safety* and Annex 2 below.)

2. **Policy objective**: To increase the safety of children online, ChildFund Alliance (CFA) will aim to **reduce the threat of online CSEA and ensure that child survivors have the support they need to heal and reach their full potential.**

How will we do this and how prepared are we to do this?

3. **Desired outcomes:** The following **three**, **mutually-reinforcing outcomes** would help to achieve the above-stated policy objective. CFA could select one or more of these outcomes. The actions included under each outcome are an indicative list and were informed by the findings of the Country Survey.

    a. **Outcome 1. National governments enact legislative and procedural reforms that define and criminalize all action related to online CSEA.**
    - CFA works through existing global platforms, such as the WePROTECT Global Alliance and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, to shape national legislative and policy reforms, using advocacy and global and/or national events.
    - CFA provides relevant technical or legal advice to national governments, for example to help identify legal loopholes or support governments to develop new legislation.
    - CFA encourages national governments and other stakeholders to endorse the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online CSEA, sign-up to the WePROTECT Global Alliance and develop national plans in-line with WePROTECT's Model National Response.

    b. **Outcome 2: Children and their families understand the risks of online life and are empowered to reduce these risks.**
    - CFA rolls out a global, digital marketing campaign that amplifies the voices of children/adolescents to help children and families spot risks and threats to children, learn how to stay safe online and how to report abusive content or material online.
    - CFA works with children to establish child-friendly mechanisms to report dangerous or inappropriate content, conduct and contact using a range of pathways, including technological tools, telephone hotlines, or peer-to-peer networks.
    - CFA delivers and/or works with partners to deliver digital citizenship training for children, leveraging established curricula and other platforms, expanding children's digital literacy and empowering them to play an active role in society, both on and offline.

    c. **Outcome 3: Child survivors have access to end-to-end support and effective child protection services.**
    - CFA will partner with law enforcement and judicial actors in-country to strengthen referrals and inter-agency cooperation, ultimately improving support for children.

- CFA will offer targeted training to build the skills of law enforcement and judicial actors in supporting child survivors of online CSEA and ensure children are referred for specialised care provided by a range of actors.

4. **Branding opportunities and capacities**: Branding opportunities center on national level advocacy and events. Curricula and trainings also present branding opportunities. CFA "ready-made" capacity relates to support for child-friendly reporting mechanisms, trainings for children and promoting referral systems. Scale up needs relate to identifying legal loopholes, providing technical support on new legislation/policies, training for law enforcement/judicial actors, and rolling out a digital marketing campaign.

Who are the relevant stakeholders?

5. **Targets and allies**: Positive or improved actions from a range of **targets** will be needed to reduce the threat of CSEA and ensure survivors have the support they need. Equally, a number of agencies and organizations are playing a prominent role in tackling the threat of online CSEA and thus would serve **important allies and partners**.

	Targets	Allies
Outcome 1. Law and policy reform	National-level policymakers and line ministries, tech firms	UN agencies, including UNICEF, the UN ITU, and UNODC; global networks, including WePROTECT and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children; other civil society, including ECPAT International; on-side tech firms; and regional bodies such as the European Commission and African Union.
Outcome 2. Children as digital citizens	Children and their families, schools, educators and school staff	As in Outcome 1 and also national line ministries; schools; and foundations, like the Oak Foundation.
Outcome 3. Strong child protection services	National-level law enforcement and line ministries, law enforcement and judicial actors, and technology companies.	As in Outcome 2 and also in-country child protection actors (medical, judicial, law enforcement, psychosocial); and INTERPOL.

Annex 1. Key Forms of Online CSEA

1. **Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)**, sometimes referred to as 'child pornography' as well as digitally-produced CSAM, CSAM refers to material depicting acts of sexual abuse and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child. Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) encompasses all sexualized material depicting children, including 'child sexual abuse material. The distinction between CSEM and CSAM is generally one of legal status. A decade ago, there were less than one million reports of CSAM. By 2019, that number had climbed to 70 million, a nearly 50 per cent increase over figures reported in 2018. Many more remain undetected.[1]

2. **Livestreaming online child sexual abuse** involves the coercion of a child to participate in sexual activities, alone or with other persons. The sexual activity is, at the same time, transmitted live or 'streamed' over the Internet and watched by others remotely, often those who have requested and/or paid for the sexual abuse of the child, dictating how the act should be carried out.[2] This crime transcends national borders allowing perpetrators to abuse their victims from any location.[3]

3. **Online grooming** is a tactic used by perpetrators to establish and build a trusting relationship with a child using the Internet or other digital technologies in order to manipulate, exploit and abuse them online and/or offline.[4]

4. **Sexting** refers to the self-production of sexual images or the creating, sharing and forwarding of sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images through mobile phones and/or the internet. Young people engage in sexting, often consensually, with their peers but it can make them extremely vulnerable to future acts of sexual extortion or (cyber)bullying and increase the likelihood of their images being used in the production of CSAM. There are also many forms of 'unwanted sexting' or non-consensual aspects of the activity, such as sharing or receiving unwanted sexually-explicit photos or messages. [5]

5. **Sexual extortion, also called 'sextortion',** is the blackmailing of a person with the help of (self-generated) images of that person in order to extort sexual acts, money, or other benefits from her/him under the threat of sharing the material without the consent of the depicted person, for example by posting the images on social media. Children or young people may be coerced into continuing to produce sexual material and/or told to perform distressing acts under threat of exposure to others of the material. In some instances, the abuse spirals so out of control that victims have attempted to self-harm or commit suicide as the only way of escaping it.[6]

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[1] https://www.end-violence.org/safe-online, accessed 28 February 2021.

[2] ECPAT International, Online Child Sexual Exploitation: A Common Understanding, Bangkok, 2017. https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SECO-Booklet_ebook-1.pdf

[3] ECPAT, Briefing Paper: Emerging Global Threats Related to the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children, Bangkok, 2017. https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Briefing-Paper-Emerging-Issues-and-Global-Threats-Children-online-_06.06.17.pdf

[4] ECPAT International, 2017.

[5] ECPAT International, 2017.

[6] ECPAT International, 2017.