

# TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

Connecting Children

# MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Creating a safer Online Environment for every Child Project aims to protect children of all ages and genders in the target communities of Taguig City, Bohol, and Cebu in the Philippines from online sexual exploitation.

## OVERALL, RELIABLE DATA ON ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (OCSE) CASES IS LACKING

To begin with, measuring the prevalence of OCSE is difficult due to its complexity, hidden, and online nature. It does not help that OCSE data are not centralized, are typically not electronically managed, and are spread across multiple government agencies, making data even more difficult to consolidate.



An estimated **TWO (2) MILLION CHILDREN** in the country were victims of severe cases of online sexual exploitation and abuse in a year.

These figures highlight the great deal of effort that has to be made to safeguard children from online sexual exploitation.

However, official OCSE statistics from the PNP Women and Children's Protection Desk (PNP WCPD) show relatively low figures, with some areas such as Bohol recording no OCSE cases at all.

*\* ECPAT, INTERPOL, and UNICEF. (2022). Disrupting Harm in the Philippines: Evidence on online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.*

## SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE POPULATION both children and parents/community members, is still unaware of the OCSE issue.

Another barrier to OCSE reporting is a lack of knowledge of reporting processes.

Moreover, a "culture of silence" also exists, which has an impact on the timely reporting of OCSE cases. Based on earlier studies, child victims resist disclosing OCSE incidents for a number of reasons, including shame, the stigma associated with sexual experiences, and the fear of victim-blaming.

## CEBU CITY 85 OCSE CASES

In 2020-2022, Cebu City reported 85 OCSE cases, recording the highest in 2020 among females at 51% and among adolescents aged 13-17. The majority of the cases were recorded in Barangay Lahug at 38%.



## BOHOL NO OFFICIAL RECORDING OR REPORTING OF CASES

Bohol has been identified as a hotspot for OCSE based on the International Justice Mission Report 2020. However, there is no official recording or reporting of cases from 2020 onward.

## TAGUIG CITY NO OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON OCSE CASES



There are no official statistics on OCSE cases in the city, most reports are based on news accounts. According to a 2015 MetroNewsCentral.net report, since 2014, the Taguig City government, in close collaboration with the Philippine law enforcement agencies, IJM, and US Homeland Security Investigations, has rescued 43 children who had been sexually exploited online.

# WHAT WE LEARNED



## Reliable data on OCSE cases is lacking.

Measuring the prevalence of OCSE is difficult due to its complexity, hidden, and online nature.



## Filipino Families are unaware of the OCSE Issue.

Although there has been an increase in awareness of OCSE over the years, both children and parents/community members are still unaware of the OCSE issue.



## Functionality and capacity of Local Child Protection services and LCPCs varies.

Local governments' overall OCSE prevention and response are constrained by a lack of funds as well as skilled and trained personnel capable of carrying out programs and activities that address this issue.



## Community members have a lack of knowledge on OCSE reporting processes.

Many are unfamiliar with service providers in the community who help OCSE victims. Moreover, a "culture of silence" also exists, which has an impact on the timely reporting of OCSE cases.





# OUR CALLS TO ACTION



## Break the norm of No touch, No Harm!

Promoting positive online safety practices and correcting common internet beliefs among parents and children, such as “no touch, no harm” and viewing the internet as a safe place to meet new friends.



## Create economic stability in every child's home.

Poverty is still the greatest factor why children and community members engage in the cycle of trafficking and exploitation. OCSE services should include assisting low-income families in finding gainful employment or establishing small businesses to promote economic security at home and to prevent and respond to OCSE.



## Reach and provide children and youth practical tips to increase online safety among children and encourage reporting of cases.

Maximise the use of technology, including social media platforms to raise OCSE awareness and prevention, as well as to reach out to more children. Engage youth advocates and children in the design, creation, and dissemination of social media content that will attract and engage their peers. Social media posts should be appealing to the target audience and contain only key messages.



## Mainstream OCSE reporting. Make it accessible to all, leaving No One Behind.

Create an organised, centralised, and digitally managed database of OCSE/SE cases that includes age and gender disaggregation data.



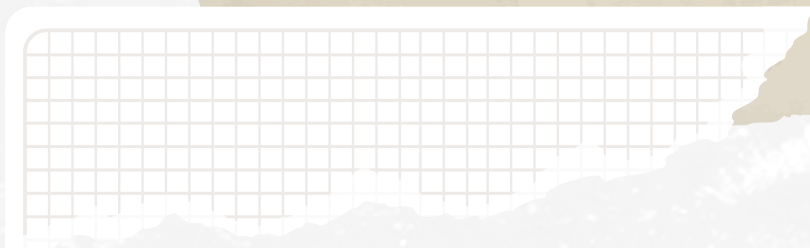
## Increase investment in Child Protection and LCPCs.

Support to local governments and local child protection structures, particularly at the barangay and municipal level, in developing programs, projects, and activities, including the development of local policies to address OCSE, and strengthening OCSE referral and case management systems.



## Educate leaders on child protection and OCSE at the barangay level.

Help activate and strengthen the local council for the protection of children, as well as conduct education campaigns on OCSE-related legislation. As a preventive measure, have barangay officials conduct home visits to discuss OCSE with parents and children.



# PROJECT CONEC



**"CONEC"  
WITH US**

