

Rainbows in the Dark: **Filipino Girls and LGBTI** **Children in the fight** **to Stop OSAEC**





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Acronyms/ Abbreviations

BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
CNSP	Children in Need of Special Protection
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking
ICT	Information and Communication technology (ICT)
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex +
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
NCC-OSAEC- CSAEM	National Coordination Center Against Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials.
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
OSAEC	Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children.
PACT	Philippines Against Child Trafficking
RIACAT	Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Anti- Trafficking
SOGIE	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression.
SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
TdH NL	Terre des Hommes Netherlands
WCPU	Women and Children Protection Unit

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Executive Summary

Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) is a concerning issue worldwide. According to 34% of 5,302 survey respondents aged 18-20 years old, the most common form of online sexual abuse was being asked to do something sexually explicit online that made them uncomfortable while 29% were sent sexually explicit content online by an adult or someone they did not know (WeProtect, 2021). In the Philippines, a country recognized as the global epicentre of the live-stream sexual abuse trade, 96% of children aged 12 to 17 are online, and at least two million were subjected to OSAEC in 2021 (ECPAT International, 2022). The growing prevalence can be attributed to various social, cultural, and economic factors, including widespread poverty, limited knowledge of OSAEC, and a lack of reporting mechanisms. OSAEC is also linked with gender, with 65% of LGBTQI+ children experiencing online sexual abuse, about 19% points higher vulnerability for those who identify as non LGBTQI+ (46%) (WeProtect, 2021). Unfortunately, the lack of government data and limited research hinder our understanding of the OSAEC cases involving LGBTQI children in the Philippines.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands launched STOP OSAEC: Strengthening of the Child Protection Systems To Fight Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in The Philippines (Project CONEC), a 36-month project in January 2024.

Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC)



34%
5,302
survey respondents
aged 18-20 years old



The Project is engaging children, particularly girls and LGBTQI+ children, as well as communities in Cebu province, Bohol, and Taguig City, where OSAEC cases are prevalent, to prevent and respond to OSAEC through improved access to child protection services, strengthen child protection policies, and enhanced social protection schemes at both local and national levels. The project is building upon the “Stronger Systems to Protect Child Victims of OSAEC” project which is currently being implemented in the Philippines to take on a system strengthening approach to address OSAEC.

This baseline study aimed at collecting and examining the available evidence on the nature and prevalence of OSAEC, particularly its link with Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expressions (SOGIE), and effective interventions responding to or preventing this phenomenon. This study will help shape future strategies and actions, as it informs TdH NL’s STOP OSAEC Project in the Philippines.

This report will show the findings and recommendations from the baseline study participated in by 1,881 people from 23 barangays in seven (7) Local Government Units (LGUs) from the provinces of Bohol and Cebu, and Taguig City; Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Trafficking (RIACAT), and National Government Agencies (DSWD and DILG). Data gathering was conducted from mid-November to mid-December 2024.

While 9 in 10 children

90%

know about child protection services,

only 1 in 3 (33%)

actually access them when they need help. This disconnect highlights a deep trust and stigma issue. Children, especially girls and LGBTQI youth, hesitate to approach formal systems due to fear of being blamed, judged, or outed.





Among all groups, trans and non-binary youth feel the least safe seeking help

(only 45%)

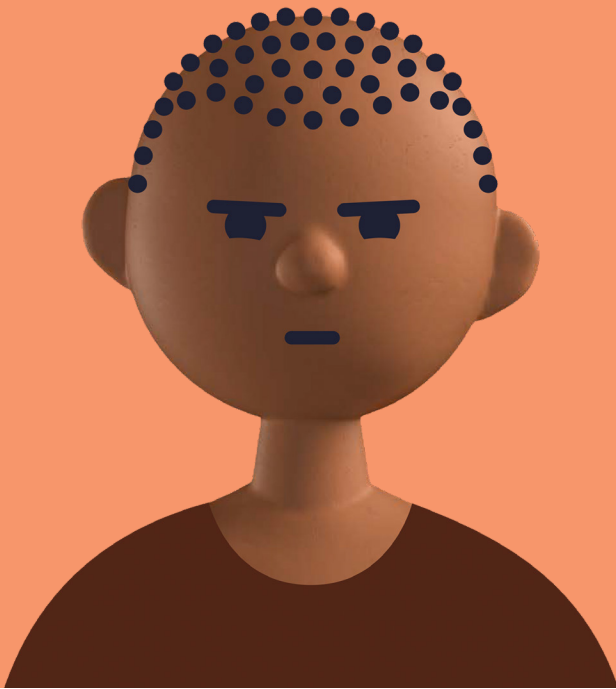
This reflects how protection systems still operate within a binary gender lens, often overlooking children with diverse SOGIESC. It underscores the urgent need for inclusive, affirming support systems—especially in schools and barangays.

The data which are presented in this report are from a survey with children and young people (N=896), survey with community residents (N=853), survey with private corporations and Civic Society Organizations (CSOs, N=9), Focus Group Discussions with children and young people (N=64), Key Informant Interviews with LGU and government agencies representatives (N=62), and in-depth interviews with at risk of and OSAEC survivors (N=6).

Findings of the baseline study confirm that OSAEC remains a critical threat to Filipino children's safety and well-being. Children as young as 10 years old are exposed to online risks, while reporting and seeking help remain low across all groups. The study also underscores the role of poverty, lack of parental supervision, digital access, and cultural taboos in driving OSAEC vulnerability. Particularly the study found:

First, there is a disconnect between knowledge of OSAEC and child protection services, and the child protection practices among children and young people, and parents, caregivers and community members. While there is a high level of knowledge of OSAEC and community services, numerous cases are unreported. Non-reporting can be due to the sense of shame and stigma attached to the issues. FGD participants said that children and young people conceal the incidents because victims are embarrassed to report it for fear of being ridiculed. They feel that they brought it on themselves, a feeling which is common to OSAEC victims. While 90% of children and young people expressed trust in the child protection system, only 33% sought community services when they needed help. There is an aspect of stigma that prevents girls and LGBTQI+ children from reporting and this could be due to the general societal view about gender. Using





Barriers Identified (percentage of children affected):

Fear of shame or blame	78%	Distrust in adults or responders	60%
Fear of being outed	65%	Lack of gender-sensitive services	52%

These are not just emotional hurdles—they are structural. Children often internalize the idea that they will be punished, not protected, for disclosing harm. LGBTQI+ children face compounded fears: judgment at home, exclusion in schools, and invisibility in policies.

gender analysis, this study showed that disparity between girls and LGBTQI+ children's access to resources, participation in decision-making and the lack of gender-sensitive and -responsive plans at the barangay, municipal and national levels.

Second, there is a lack of trauma-informed, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate child protection services. The weak social protection and child protection systems resonate with the experience of OSAEC survivors on the lack of interventions for the victims and the family. Community services cater to all children and young people and there are no specific modifications to make them accessible to girls and LGBTQI children.

There is limited opportunity for children and families to help shape the child protection system including its components: policies, programs, protocols, governance. While the law mandates children participation in Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) and Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPCs), the engagement with them is consultative and ad-hoc rather than collaborative and strategic.

Third, there are very few gender-sensitive local policies on OSAEC. There are no specific OSAEC protocols and inconsistent implementation of child protection mechanisms due to workforce issues including the lack of skills and confidence of frontline workers/first responders in dealing with the sensitivity of the issue. Teachers are the primary reporters of OSAEC cases, yet schools remain under-equipped with gender-sensitive and trauma-informed response protocols. There may be further vulnerabilities for children and young people who are not in school due to lack of access to teachers. This needs further exploration. Most LGUs lack ordinances specific to OSAEC or LGBTQI+ -inclusive protection policies.

Fourth, there is a weak data management system including reporting and monitoring systems, resulting in the lack of reliable and accurate data that may inform service planning and policymaking. Monitoring of cases is also weak, and this could result in several OSAEC cases being unreported or followed up. The lack of reporting can also be due to the sensitivity of OSAEC and being seen as a family issue rather than as a child protection issue that necessitates timely and appropriate response.

The study also found that the nuanced experiences of children and young people, community members, and LGU representatives also provided insights into the vulnerabilities of children and young people owing to a variety of factors including poverty, peer pressure, unsupervised use of social media, lack of knowledge on online safety, and family issues such drug addition of parents. Particularly for girls and LGBTQI+ children, stigma in accessing services contributes to exacerbation of risks, in addition to the lack of preventative services for all children.

A significant insight from the study is the heightened vulnerability of girls and LGBTQI children, who face distinct risks and barriers shaped by their gender identity and social position and norms. While most girls express a sense of safety online, they are also more likely to experience coercion, grooming, and body shaming. Girls may also have the propensity to succumb to peer pressure to be accepted or to belong. LGBTQI+ children, on the other hand, often seek affirmation in online spaces but are disproportionately targeted by perpetrators using deceptive tactics such as fake online identities. Despite these risks, both groups are less likely to report incidents to their families due to fear of stigma, shame, or parental backlash.

In contrast, boys reported greater confidence in navigating online risks but also showed a higher tolerance for risk-taking behavior. Non-binary and transgender children reported significantly lower levels of trust in the protection system, with only 45% stating that they feel safe seeking help. The intersection of gender identity and social exclusion contributes to increased exposure to harm, particularly among LGBTQI youth who experience both online harassment and community-level discrimination.

There is intersection between OSAEC and gender, although this must be taken with caution, considering the lack of gender-disaggregated data nationally and globally, and weak data management at the local and national levels. This study found the propensity for girls and LGBTQI+ children to be at risk or victims of OSAEC. All the OSAEC cases which were reported to LGUS in 2023 were against girls under 18 (n=7). Of the unreported cases (169), 59% are against girls and 9% are against LGBTQI+ children. The unreported cases of LGBTQI+ children account for half of the total LGBTQI+ survey respondents (n=72). However, it



appears that not only is the child protection system weak, it is also not gender-sensitive and age-appropriate. Apart from one local federation in Cebu that caters to the needs of LGBTQI+ children, as mentioned above, services do not cater to the unique sensitivities of OSAEC as it happens to girls and LGBTQI+ children. OSAEC can also be explored in the context of gender-based violence as it shares similar characteristics and dimensions.

OSAEC impacts on the wellbeing of victims, including mental health issues (anxiety, depression, self-harm, and addiction), feeling of isolation, and a sense of fear and shame. Contrary to the belief of no touch no harm (Justice for Care 2023), the findings from this study show that the experiences of the victims of online abuse and those who are at risk impacts their wellbeing, which is comparable to most studies, with some showing higher trauma due to the circulation of online materials and self-blame which is more present in online victims.

Community validation workshops further affirmed that children prefer seeking help from friends or non-family trusted adults, highlighting the need to expand peer-based support and strengthen safe, accessible referral mechanisms. Participants also emphasized that current protection structures are poorly coordinated and that barriers like shame, gender norms, and misinformation deter many children from reporting abuse.

Despite the challenges faced by Local Government Units (LGUs) such as lack of knowledge and lack of funding, there is enthusiasm on the part of all study participants to address the issue. There are also some good practices such as learning schemes using modules to increase the awareness of parents, peer education programs by local partner organizations, schools that proactively engage with children to educate them on children's issues, presence of Purok Leaders (sitio/village leaders) and dedicated Gender and Development (GAD) officers/focal, and existence of technical support from National Government Agencies (NGAs). In Cebu City, there are scholarship and livelihood assistance programs to LGBTQI+ children.

This report will highlight both empirical data and the nuances of the OSAEC phenomenon and its intersecting effect to Filipino children specially girls and LGBTQI+ children with a view of informing Project CONEC's strategies in addressing online sexual abuse and exploitation. Contributing to the wider discussion on strengthening the child protection system in the country and fostering genuine children and youth participation.

1. Background and Context

PROJECT SUMMARY

Country	Philippines
Project title	STOP OSAEC: STrengthening of the Child Protection Systems To Fight Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in The Philippines (Project CONEC)
Project code	PHCE 0478
Total budget	European Union
Sources of funding	January 2024
Project start date	December 2026
Project end date	36 months
Duration of the project	SEC
Thematic Programme	Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. (Bidlisiw) ECPAT Philippines (ECPAT), Philippine Against Child Trafficking (PACT); through ECPAT
Implementing partner(s)	Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Philippines
Lead partner(s)	Provinces of Cebu and Bohol, and Taguig City
Target areas	100 children (10-17) and young people (18-24), including victims and those at-risk of OSAEC.
Target beneficiaries	3,500 (2,100 female and 1,400 male) community members in targeted areas.



1.1 Project Description

STOP OSAEC: Strengthening of the Child Protection Systems To Fight Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in The Philippines (Project CONEC) is an initiative which protects children of all ages and genders by creating a strong and responsive child protection system. CONEC increases awareness and capacity of all stakeholders to prevent and respond to OSAEC, influences local service providers and organizations, and provides a social protection package that responds to the individual needs and experiences of each child and their families.

The project envisages that children, especially girls and LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex) children, are increasingly protected from online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSAEC) by a strong and responsive child protection system.

The Project is being implemented in the provinces of Bohol and Cebu and City of Taguig, covering 23 barangays, namely: Taguig City, Metro Manila (Sta. Ana, Bambang, Calzada Tipas, Ibayo Tipas, and Tuktukan); Cebu City, Cebu Province (Calamba, Duljo-Fatima, Ermita, Inayawan, and Labangon); Mandaue City, Cebu Province (Basak, Cambaro, Jagobiao, Labogon, and Looc); and four (4) municipalities in Bohol: Municipality of Panglao (Tangnan and Doljo); Municipality of Calape (San Isidro and Tultugan); Municipality of Dauis (Mariveles, and Totolan); and Municipality of Tubigon (Centro and Tinangnan).

The Project Objectives are the following:

OUTCOME 1: Increased capacity and participation of children, especially girls and LGBTI families and communities in preventing and responding to OSAEC.

OUTCOME 2: Improved access to and capacity of child protection services to deliver child-friendly and trauma- informed OSAEC services at local and national levels.

OUTCOME 3: Enhanced child protection policies and social protection schemes at the local and national levels that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC

The implementing partners include Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc., ECPAT, and PACT.

Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. is a social development agency and operates in region VI and VII particularly the the cities of Mandaue, Cebu, Lapu-lapu, Danao, Naga, Municipalities of Cordova, Sta. Fe, Bantayan, Daan Bantayan, Iloilo City and Some Provinces in Iloilo. Its vision is to improve the quality of family and community life among Filipino children and their families. Its mission is to help the most disadvantaged children and families among the poor communities. Its goal is to provide access, opportunities and hope for the most marginalized children, families and communities.

Bidlisiw's development work focuses on helping the marginalized children and families, particularly the children and families in need of special protection. This is in coordination with Local Government Units, concerned government agencies, other non- government organizations and target groups/communities for wider impact and support. It has implemented and successfully completed various programs/projects on healing, recovery and reintegration as well as health, education, technical-vocational training, livelihood and provision of job opportunities.

ECPAT is a network of organizations comprising 126 members working as independent organizations or coalitions at national and local levels in 106 countries. Globally, the network works together for the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children in all its manifestations i.e. exploitation of children in prostitution, online child sexual exploitation, sale and trafficking of children for sexual purposes, sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and some forms of child, early and forced marriage.



ECPAT Philippines has been at the forefront of campaigns and national and local level advocacy work against all forms of child sexual exploitation, increasing awareness about this phenomenon, capacitating rights holders and duty bearers to fulfill children's rights; and creating a mass of support and targeted actions for legislation, direct services and other forms of intervention to strengthen and sustain the child protection system in the country.

It has worked with international donors/development partners and local organizations to reduce the phenomenon of sexual exploitation of Filipino children. Notably, its partnership with the Girls Advocacy Alliance (with Plan International), Children are not Commodities ECPAT Sweden), Terre des Hommes Netherlands, ACT Church of Sweden, among others has amplified its child protection systems approach, within an overarching framework of gender equality and social inclusion.

It has worked with UNICEF Philippines on an integrated approach to child protection in a humanitarian setting in Bohol, one of the Visayan provinces devastated by a deadly typhoon in 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. ECPAT was the organization of choice by UNICEF to provide mental health and psychosocial support to 9,584 adults and children, in addition to child protection advocacy in the midst of a humanitarian crisis.

ECPAT's legislative advocacy has been instrumental in the passage of landmark laws such as Republic Act 7610 or the Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act of 1992, Republic Act 9208, the Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, and the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 (RA 9775).

The Philippines Against Child Trafficking (PACT) is a network of child rights advocates committed to building communities that protect children against trafficking. Its members include non-government and people's organizations, as well as individuals from the government, who believe that it is the moral responsibility of the government, NGOs, business sector, academe, faith-based organizations, people's organizations and families to create such a community. Its strategies include network building, community educators' training, campaigns, and capability building of members. The Project's Logical Framework is in the Appendices.

2. Objectives of the Baseline Study

This baseline study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation of LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex) children in the context of the issue of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the Project areas, covering 23 barangays in 4 municipalities in Bohol, cities of Cebu and Mandaue, and Taguig City.

The study explored the intersection of sexuality (LGBTQI) and OSAEC, and the challenges faced by girls and LGBTQI children. It also explored the existing mechanisms for their protection, participation, and access to social protection services. The study also aimed at gauging the availability and accessibility of social protection schemes. The study findings will inform TdH NL strategies for advocacy, lobbying and policy-making initiatives.

The study focused on the following:

- Collected data for the project outcome/output indicators indicated in the Project Logical Framework which do not have available baseline data.
- Conducted a review of the literature to identify and analyse existing literature about Girls and LGBTQI children in Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the Philippines and from other parts of the world.
- Collected data through surveys and interviews, focusing on the views of community members, children and young people, and accounts and experiences of children especially LGBTQI children affected by OSAEC.
- Analysed the incidence and magnitude of OSAEC cases in the selected project areas (from 2022-2023) and specific challenges faced by children especially girls and LGBTQI children in the context of OSAEC.
- Used the research findings to formulate advocacy and policy recommendations to better protect the rights of children especially Girls and LGBTQI children in the context of OSAEC.

3. Scope and Limitation of the Baseline Study

This baseline study used quantitative and qualitative data through an online survey and interviews with research participants. The survey and interview questions were developed in English and translated to Cebuano and Tagalog to ensure the questions are accessible to the participants. The tools were also validated by three researchers and piloted with some children and parents before they were refined and used.

Collection of qualitative data involving children and young people were carried out in a child-friendly, participatory and trauma-informed approach. This included the presence of social workers, barangay officials, or teachers whom the children trust. All interviews with children and young people were conducted in private rooms to ensure safety and confidentiality of the children's identity. Adult key informants were also afforded the same respect and confidentiality. Prior to the interviews, the research had briefings with project officers.

The study determined in greater depth the lived experiences of children and young people – both deemed to be at risk and survivors of OSAEC. Girl children and LGBTQI+ children were well represented in FGDs and in-depth interviews (80%) and in the online survey (69%) with LGBTQ+ children and young people accounting for 8% of the total survey respondents, 29% of the FGD participants, and 33% of the in-depth interview participants.

There were challenges in accessing some participants. Due to the sensitivity of OSAEC, and with survivors' experiences being very recent, in-depth interviews in Bohol did not take place. It was deemed inappropriate to interview OSAEC survivors while their cases are very recent. The lead researcher also exerted efforts to access children with OSAEC experiences but data on cases were not available at the barangay and municipal level. Some children and young people with OSAEC experience are no longer residents in the covered areas.

In the same manner, potential LGU participants in Taguig hesitated in taking part despite several attempts and offers of flexibility to suit their convenience and availability. The city government was also non-responsive despite numerous attempts through phone calls, emails and text messages.

Nonetheless, the study achieved 90% (N=1,881) of the target sample size (2,087) for both qualitative and quantitative enquiries.

4. Baseline Study

Questions

The study gathered data that corresponds with the outputs and outcomes of Project CONEC as stated in the Logical Framework. The Logical Framework is in the Appendices. In addition, the following research questions were explored:

- 1 How can key community actors be engaged to protect all children - especially those with (multiple) marginalised identities - from child exploitation, and how can we support these actors to speak out?
- 2 How do children conceptualise safety and risk in different contexts (including online)? And how can this be used to develop interventions to prevent and respond to child exploitation?
- 3 How can an improved understanding of the relationship between technology, well-being and risk of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) support interventions aimed at preventing and stopping OSEC, whilst also supporting children to engage with technology age-appropriately?
- 4 How can we meaningfully engage with private sector actors to address child exploitation?
- 5 What can we learn from promising practices with regards to low-cost, sustainable, community-level interventions to prevent and respond to child exploitation?
- 6 What examples of promising practices and learning can be drawn from previous and existing TdH NL programmes?

5. Ethics and Safeguarding

This baseline study employed procedural and ethics in practice (Silverman, 2021). Procedural ethics was employed by acquiring the necessary permits and research ethics approval. The study only commenced upon receipt of ethics clearance from the Davao del Norte State College. Ethics in practice was upheld by making sure that the research process did not pose harm to the participants and their private data were kept confidential.

Potential participants were provided with adequate information about the purpose of the research and were encouraged to ask questions. They were informed that their participation is voluntary and that they could also withdraw their participation at any stage of the research process, and this would not affect any benefits they are receiving or will be receiving in the future. Transparency was practised in introducing the research to potential participants, for example, not making any promises of benefits resulting from their participation.

An informed consent was sought before the interviews, including permission to record the interview. Parental consent was sought by the gatekeeper (e.g. teacher, social worker) for children below 18 years old. During the interview, they were given the choice to be accompanied by an adult of their choice. OSAEC is a sensitive topic, and the researcher ensured that sensitivity and care were upheld to prevent further emotional harm. The researcher listened actively and was vigilant, observing any untoward reactions to the questions.

This study engaged with 12 enumerators. They were recruited through a thorough screening process. They were trained and oriented on all the relevant TdH policies. The researcher maintained an open and supportive relationship with the enumerators, providing them with technical guidance and encouragement throughout the research process. The research team used pseudonyms in transcriptions and saved the participants' private data in password-protected files. Private data are only accessible to the research team and TdH-NL staff and will not be shared outside the organisation.

The enumerators respected the decision of some potential participants who did not want to take part in the survey. Likewise, two people who provided the transcription and translation services adhered to confidentiality protocols following TdH-NL's Code of Conduct and Data Protection Policy.

Interviewing children and young people with experiences of OSAEC was challenging. Prior to the interviews, the lead researcher requested a briefing with the local partner's Project Officer to understand the past and current situations of the children. She requested the project officer to join the interviews. The presence of a person they trust is crucial in making them feel secure. The project officers also served as translators as the children could express better in local language. During the interviews, the researcher was careful with words to avoid triggering negative emotions. She also regularly checked if the children were alright and reminded them that the interview could stop if they feel they're affected by the questions. It seemed that the children were at ease and willingly shared their thoughts about their experiences.

This challenge did not influence the findings but provided insights into research methodologies that work for sensitive topics. However, the challenge somehow influenced the recommendations for the provision of better support to OSAEC survivors and to their families.



6. Methodology

6.1 Baseline Study Design

This baseline study employed mixed research methods to gain insights into the trend and in-depth understanding of the link between LGBTQI and OSAEC. The quantitative design provided an overview of the perception/views of community residents, service providers, schools, private companies, and children and youth.

Qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews with at-risk or survivors of OSAEC provided a more in-depth understanding of people's lived experiences and the nuances of sense-making of their subjective experiences.

A mixed research method was deemed appropriate for this baseline study as Project CONEC project will account for both outputs and outcomes. It will need to show what the project activities achieved and at the same time, the contribution to strengthening the child protection system in the country.

6.2 Data Collection Methods

This study used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods including online surveys, Key Informant Interviews, in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussion. All tools have English, Tagalog, and Cebuano translations.

For secondary data, a review of related literature and existing plans/ordinances in different areas was also conducted. The data gathering tools used are in the Appendices.

The researcher sent letters from Terre des Hommes to all LGUs and those were followed up by the lead researcher who then booked in-person interviews. Accessing children and young people for interviews and FGD was through local partners (Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc. and ECPAT), barangay council secretaries, Gender and Development (GAD) Focal, Sangguniang Kabataan officers, and local schools.

6.2.1 Secondary data

The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of related literature and existing ordinances relevant to child protection and OSAEC. The literature review clarified OSAEC and its link with LGBTQI not only in the Philippines but also globally.

Unfortunately, there was no existing up-to-date ordinance or plan. All LGUs referred to the Children Welfare Code but only two LGUs could provide copies.

6.2.2 Primary data

- a. Quantitative approach. An online survey was administered to 3 cohorts of samples:
- b. Qualitative approach. Interviews were conducted with the following:
 - In-depth interviews with six (6) OSAEC survivors and at risk of online exploitation.
 - Key Informant Interviews with 47 LGU representatives from city/municipal and barangay units; and 5 from RIACAT and NGAs (DSWD and DILG).
 - Five (5) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 64 children aged 12 to 24 years old.

6.3 Sampling

This research used two types of sampling techniques to ensure validity and rigour. For the quantitative data gathering (survey), the participants were selected using probability sampling techniques specifically stratified sampling. Stratified sampling technique is often used to get representatives from certain populations with each participant having the likelihood (or probability) of being selected. For this research, the strata will be the geographical division of the barangays using 'Purok' as stratum. At 95% confidence level and 5% error, the sample size was between 299 and 328, for a total sample size of 1,931 (children and young people 10-24 years old and community residents 25 years old and above). The selection of the households was purposeful and considered the following criteria:

- Household with children 10-17 years old and 18-24 years old girls and boy children
- Households with 10-17 years old who identified themselves as LGBTQI will be prioritised.

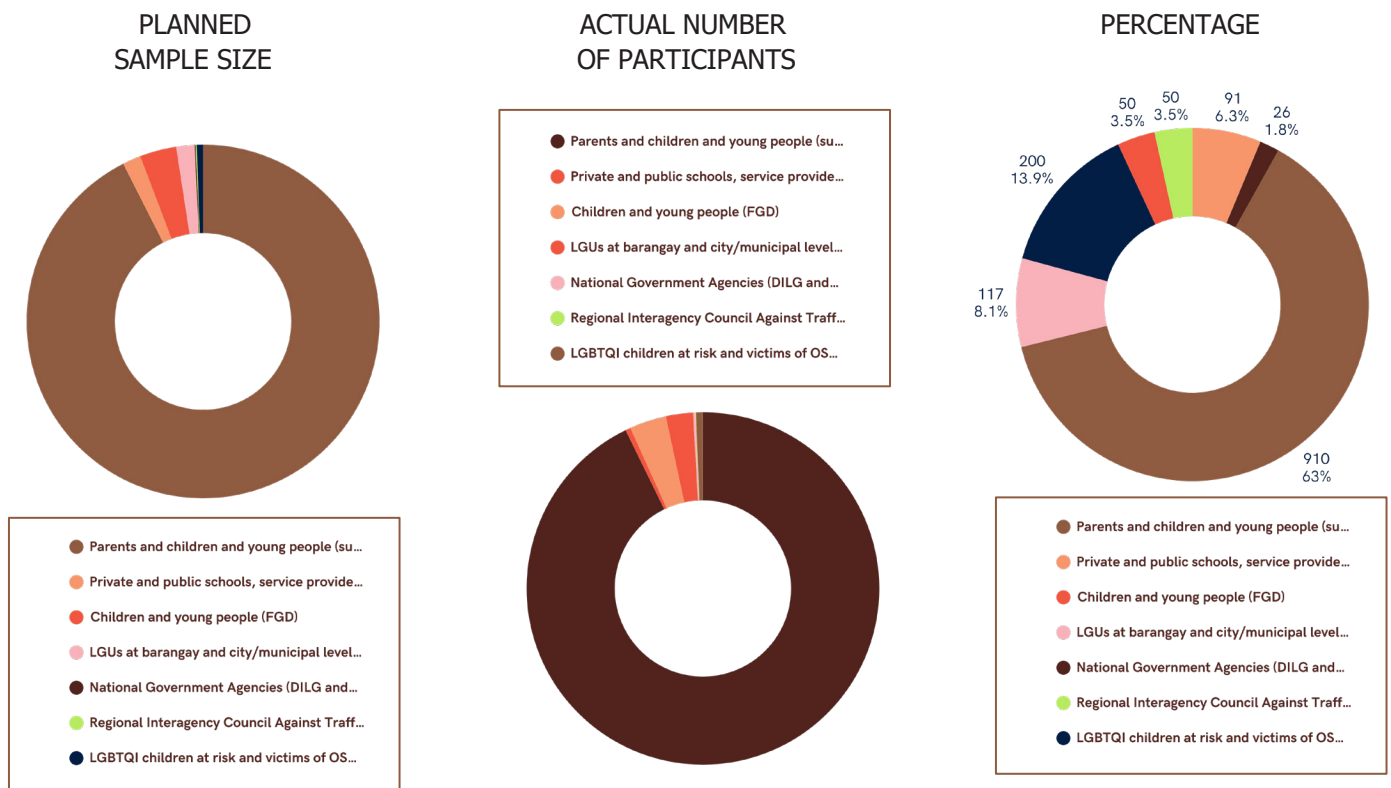
For the qualitative data gathering, purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants who would likely provide rich data about the issue being researched. A set of criteria was used, including:

- Aged 10-17 years old; and 18-24 years old (equal proportion)
- Male, female, and non-binary

- Have received social protection interventions from NGOs/CSOs, LGUs, and private companies.
- LGBTQI child/young person who may be deemed at risk or with experience of OSAEC in 2022 and 2023.
- Children who have received social protection interventions from service providers and LGUs.
- Children and young people who are in child caring institutions or in the community.

This study employed a targeted approach to ensure that the views of children who may be at risk or with experience of OSAEC could be heard. The researcher planned to use snowball sampling but due to difficulty accessing this cohort, assistance was sought from local partners and LGU officials. The target and actual sample sizes are presented in Table 1 below.

FIGURE 1: BASELINE STUDY SAMPLES



- 896 Children and young people aged 10-24 years old participated. Of the 896, 44% or 402 are 10-17 years old and 55% or 494 are 18-24 years old.
- 853 adult community residents from 25 years old.
- Public and private schools, service providers, and private companies – nine (9).

The survey questions used Likert Scale where the participants chose from the scale of 1 to 5, as follows:

Likert Scale Description	Likert Scale	Likert Scale Interval
Extremely Disagree	1	1.00 – 1.80
Disagree	2	1.81 – 2.60
Neutral/No comment	3	2.61 - 3.40
Agree	4	3.41 – 4.20
Extremely Agree	5	4.21 – 5.00

6.4 Design Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools consisted of 3 surveys and three interview guides. The survey questions were for 10-24 years old, 25 years old and older, and service providers, schools, and private companies. The surveys for children and community residents were available in Cebuano and Tagalog, and the survey for organizations was in English. The interview guides were also translated into Tagalog and Cebuano.

The data gathering tools were based on the Project's Logical Framework. They were drafted and underwent a rigorous review process by the TdH-NL team and local partners. They were validated by three professors and researchers from the University of the Philippines – Diliman. The tools were piloted to a few young people and then later refined, incorporating all the comments to achieve clarity and relevance of the questions. The survey was then made available online using Google Form. The orderliness and accuracy of the questions were also tested with a few young people and adults. The questions were further refined based on the online testing.

6.5 Field Data collection

Fourteen (14) enumerators were recruited and trained to administer the household survey in three areas: Bohol (8 enumerators), Cebu (2), Mandaue City (2), and Taguig City (2). Four enumerators assigned in Cebu City and Taguig City dropped out as they felt they could not perform their tasks due to their difficulty in accessing potential respondents and inputting into the online survey. Their replacements were recruited in the beginning of December, resulting in some delays in data-gathering, and therefore data analysis.

For quality assurance of the survey administration, the lead researcher supervised them remotely through phone calls.

Data inputted in Google Forms were also checked for accuracy. Fieldwork for data collection lasted for almost a month due to difficulty in accessing potential survey respondents in Cebu City, Mandaue City, and Dauis, Bohol. KIIs (47), FGDs (5) and in-depth interviews (6) were all done in person except for the two interviews with national agencies (DSWD and DILG, n=4), and one KII in Cebu City.

6.6 Data Management, Data Analysis and Reporting

6.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics, using Excel, was used to analyse the quantitative data from the survey. The scores of 4 (Agree) and 5 (Extremely Agree) were computed to get the average. The validity of measures and scales was verified by a statistician. The quantitative data will be presented using graphs and tables, and descriptive statistical analysis.

6.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data were manually analysed using Thematic Analysis. This entailed looking for themes and patterns within and across different interview transcripts about the participants' experiences and perspectives (Braun and Clarke, 2017). The researcher looked at the entire dataset and identified interesting aspects that formed the basis of themes. The emerging themes were grouped and labelled. Using Thematic analysis allowed for an iterative process of analysing the data, identifying emerging themes, concepts, or ideas, and continuously gathering data as analysis was being conducted.

6.7 Data Quality Assurance

The research team ensured that the process from the designing to data analysis was robust and the baseline study was valid, reliable, and relevant. The baseline study matrix that informed the data gathering tools and participants selection process was based on the Project's Logical Framework. The data gathering tools (survey and interview guides) were validated by experts internally and externally to maintain objectivity and obtain clarity. Results from the interviews were analysed based on an agreed baseline data matrix, to minimize bias. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and the quality of interviews was checked by second and third encoders. The additional encoders looked through the data and scrutinised the data analysis. Raw survey data were cleaned, getting rid of incomplete and inconsistent data.

Validation workshops were also held with young people from Cebu City and Calape, Bohol (n=23) and representatives from different LGUs, CSOs, and partners from local and national agencies (n= 17).

7. Results and Discussion

This study used mixed research methods. The quantitative data from household surveys show an overview of the OSAEC phenomenon as experienced and perceived by children and young people 10-17 and 18-24 years old and community residents who are 25 years old and older. The qualitative data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and Key Informant Interviews provide insights into the nuances of the participants' experiences and perceptions. The presentation of the results is structured using the Outcomes and Outputs presented in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1), followed by an analysis pertaining to each outcome/indicator.

The answers to the five questions on page 12 are also presented at the discussion section.

7.1 Participants Profile

Children and Young People (10-24 years old) Participants Demographic Data

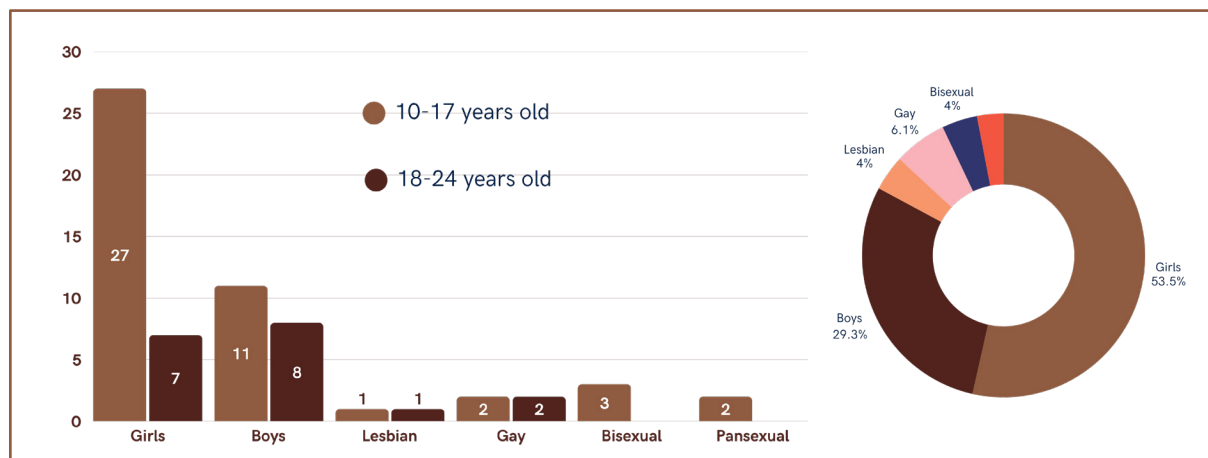
Nine hundred fifty-two (954) children and young people participated in household surveys (n=896) and focus group discussions (n=64). The tables below show their ages and genders.

TABLE 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS, AGE AND GENDER DISAGGREGATED (N=896)

	Taguig (n=161)		Bohol and Cebu (n=735)			
Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage
Girls	24	59	189	274	546	61%
Boys	14	16	75	154	259	29%
Lesbian	0	0	9	11	20	2%
Gay	0	1	7	7	15	2%
Bi-sexual	6	11	0	0	17	2%
Transgender	0	3	2	5	10	1%
Non-binary	0	9	1	1	11	1%
Prefer not to say	4	13	0	0	18	2%
Total	48	112	283	452	896	100%

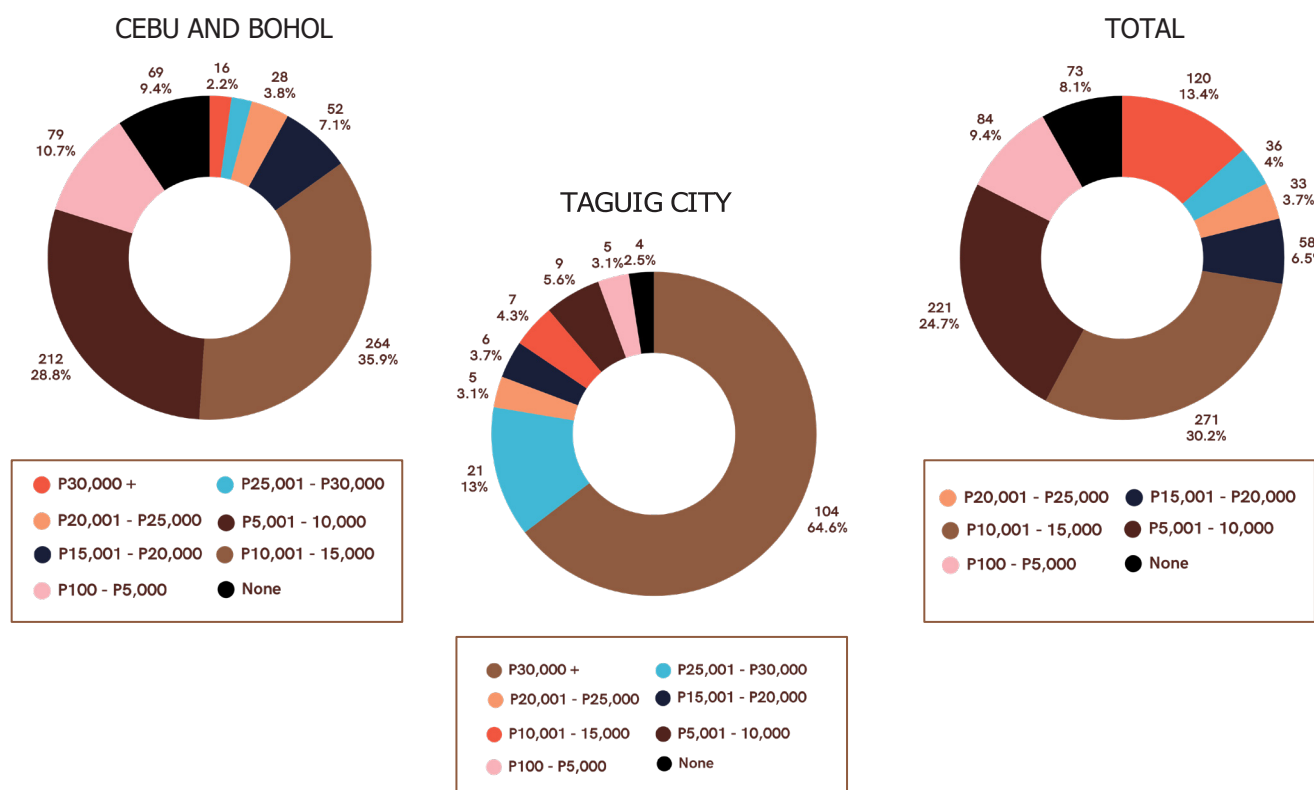
The Table above shows that 61% of the survey participants are girls while 29% are boys. LGBTQI+ children and young people account for 10%. Older CYP (18 to 24) are 60% of the total survey participants.

FIGURE 2: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPANTS IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, AGE AND GENDER DISAGGREGATED



The figure above shows that the different ages and genders are well represented although 10-17 years old account for 71% of the FGD participants. Over half (53%) are girls, and 17% are LGBTQI+ children. It can be said that girls are more open to joining discussions even on sensitive topics such as OSAEC. This is an important insight in planning community activities and young people engagement and mobilisation.

FIGURE 3: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOUSEHOLD INCOME



The figure above shows that 555 or 75% of Cebu and Bohol participants come from households with below P15,000 monthly income, compared to 13% (21) in Taguig City. In total, 576 or 64% live below P15,000-monthly-income. The data implies that potentially, some families live below the poverty threshold of P13,873 per month (PSA, 2023). The minimum poverty threshold is the income required for a family to meet the basic food and non-food requirements.

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS' EDUCATION

Education	Taguig City (N=161)	Bohol and Cebu (N=735)	Total (N=896)	Percentage
College	67	230	297	33%
Senior High School	31	181	212	23.6%
Junior High School	30	226	256	29%
Not attending school	17	10	27	3%
University	11	38	49	5.4%
Elementary	4	49	53	6%
Graduate	1	1	2	0.2%
Total	161	735	896	100%

The Table above shows that most participants are in education apart from 27 or 3%. The large proportion - over half (52.6%) are highschool and 33% are in college. We can infer that older age groups are more readily available and willing to participate in surveys. The large proportion of college and high school students may also mean that families value education in that young people are sent to high school and higher education.

However, the data also show that 27 or 3% are not in education, as shown in Table 6.

FIGURE 4: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION

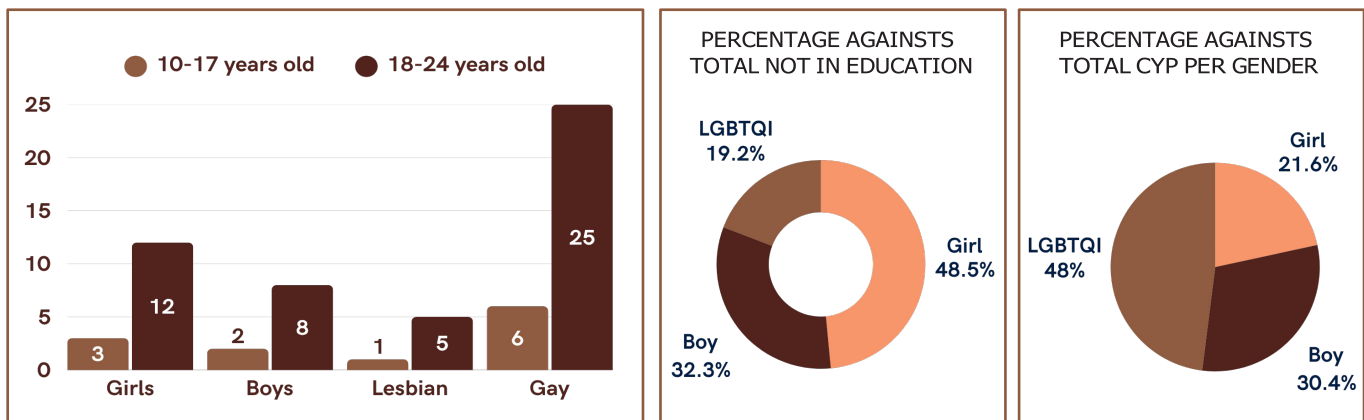


Figure 4 shows that 31 or 3% of 896 of the children and young people are not in education. Girls who are not in education account for 2.7% of 546 girls survey respondents. Boys account for 3.8% of boys survey respondents (259). A large proportion of CYP not in education are LGBTQI at 6% of the total 90 survey participants.

Those in education are 528 girls, 249 boys, and 84 LGBTQI+. Three (3) 24-year-olds have already graduated. Of the 31 not in education, nearly half (48%) are girls, 32% are boys, and 19% are LGBTQI+. It can be noticed that across all genders, 80% (25) are 18- 24 years old. This corresponds to the national data where 68.5 percent of Out of School Youth (OSY) are in the 20-24-year-old age group (PSA, 2024). Unfortunately, national data are not gender-disaggregated so the study's findings on the proportion of LGBTQI+ children who are OSY cannot be compared to national data.

The data indicates the propensity for girls, boys, and LGBTQI+ to drop out from school as they grow older and this could be attributed to lack of family resources to support their education. Moreover, this indicates the disparity in terms of education across all genders - where families may choose to support boys, and where girls and LGBTQI may be more inclined to find employment after highschool.

A. Community Members (people aged 25 and over)

The online survey with adults/community members had 853 respondents: 698 from Bohol and Cebu and 155 from Taguig City.

TABLE 3: COMMUNITY MEMBERS' AGE AND GENDER

Age	Women	Men	Lesbian	Gay	Trans	Queer	Non-binary	Total
25-30	111	40	1	2	1	1	1	157
31-35	117	39	1	0	1	0	1	159
36-40	93	23	0	0	0	0	0	116
41-45	111	32	0	0	0	0	0	143
46-50	81	25	0	0	0	0	0	106
51-55	65	21	0	0	0	0	0	86
56-60	55	5	0	0	0	0	0	60
61-65	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	15
66-70	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
70 above	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Total	657	187	2	2	2	1	0	853

Table 7 shows that 80% (N=681) participants are within the ages of 25 to 50 years old, with 19% aged 31-35 years old. It can be said that the respondents constitute a young population. This information is key in determining the target audience for any capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, given that 89% of the households have children under 17 years old (see Table 10). This also provides an insight on the age appropriate strategies and methodologies to effectively reach and convey the project's learning agenda.

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY MEMBERS SURVEY PARTICIPANTS' GENDER

Gender	Bohol and Cebu	Taguig	Total	Percentage
Women	562 (80.5%)	95 (61.3%)	657	77%
Men	129 (18.5%)	58 (37.4%)	187	22%
Gay	2 (0.2%)		2	0.2%
Lesbian	2 (0.2%)		2	0.2%
Transgender	2 (0.2%)		2	0.2%
Queer	1 (0.1%)		1	0.1%
Non-binary	0	2 (1.3%)	2	0.2%
Total	698	155	853	100%

Table 8 shows that 77% of the participants aged 25 and older are women, 22 % are men, and 1% are LGBTQI. The large proportion of women respondents could be because they are at home most of the time. Many are housewives or are engaged in jobs which can be done at home such as managing a shop/store and online selling.

TABLE 5: COMMUNITY MEMBERS' INCOME

Monthly Income	Bohol/Cebu	Taguig	Total	Percentage
No income	260 (37.2%)	11 (7.1%)	271	3%
P1- 5,000	84 (12%)	0	84	10%
5,001-10,000	131 (18.8%)	3 (1.9%)	134	16%
10,001-15,000	148 (21.2%)	9 (5.8%)	157	18%
15,001-20,000	56 (8%)	18 (11.6%)	74	8%
20,001-25,000	9 (1.2%)	36 (23.2%)	45	5%
25,001-30,000	7 (1%)	34 (21.9%)	41	4%
30,000 above	3 (0.4%)	44 (28.4%)	47	6%
	698	155	853	100%

The Table above shows that 46% or 393 participants have monthly family income of below P15,000/month. Quite a large percentage (33% or 282) reported having no income. There are glaring differences between Taguig and Bohol/Cebu. Only 7.1% in Taguig are without income compared to 37.2% in Bohol/Cebu. As for income, a small proportion of respondents in Taguig (7.7%) earn less than P15,000, compared to 52% in Bohol/ Cebu. It could be that respondents in Taguig have access to more job opportunities, Taguig being a highly commercialised city. Easy access to transport services also enable community members to look for jobs.

TABLE 6: HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY SIZE

Number of Children	Bohol and Cebu	Taguig	Total	Percentage
N/A		2 (1.3%)	2	0.2%
1-3	123 (17.6%)	103 (66.5%)	226	26%
4-6	432 (61.9%)	47 (30.3%)	479	56%
7-9	136 (19.5%)	1 (0.6%)	137	16%
10-11	3 (0.4%)	2 (1.3%)	5	0.6%
12 above	4 (0.5%)	0	4	0.5%
Total	698	155	853	100%

The Table above shows that 72% of the households have between 4 and 6 children. Twenty-two percent (22%) reported having 7 or more children. It shows that the families in Bohol and Cebu have bigger family sizes compared to Taguig City. In total, families tend to be large, and this has implications on the type of interventions – which could be more family-orientated and empowering to parents. It also infers that there are more children and young people for services to cater to. There is also greater demand for education and health services.

TABLE 7: HOUSEHOLDS WITH 0-17 YEARS OLD CHILDREN

Number of Children	Bohol and Cebu	Taguig	Total	Percentage
0	105 (15%)	4 (2.6%)	107	14%
1	283 (40.5%)	81 (52.3%)	364	48%
2	198 (28.4%)	57 (36.8%)	255	34%
3	94 (13.5%)	7 (4.5%)	101	13%
4	18 (2.6%)	4 (2.6%)	22	3%
5 above	16 (2.3%)	2 (1.3%)	18	2%
Total	714	155	853	100%

Table 11 shows that 89% or 760 of the 853 participants have 0-17 years old children in their households, with 48% having at least one child aged 17 years old and younger. This insight is crucial in determining the target audience for any training or seminars on child protection. Strengthening the child protection system may need to focus on parents and services that empower parents to fulfil their parental roles.

Interestingly, households in Cebu/Bohol and Taguig City reported 9% of the families have LGBTQI children - 46 in Cebu and Bohol and 22 in Taguig City.

B. Private Companies, Service Providers, and Schools

Nine (9) organizations took part. One is a school, four are money transfer agencies, two are internet cafes, one is a bank, and one is a community-based not for profit group.

TABLE 8: PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONS

Primary Service Users	Responses	Percentage
Communities	6	66.7%
Children and Young People	2	22.2%
Students	1	11.1%
Total	9	100%

The Table above shows that 6 of the 9 organizations cater to communities, 2 work with children and young people, and 1 work with students. All have potential access to children and young people in the community.

TABLE 9: ORGANIZATIONAL WORKFORCE

Total Number of volunteers	Volunteers	Staff
None (0)	2.(22.2%)	2 (22.2%)
1-5	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)
6-10	0	3 (33.3%)
11-15	1 (11.1%)	0
16-20	1 (11.1%)	0
30 above	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)

Two (2) are large organizations with more than 30 staff and more than 30 volunteers; one organization has 16-20 volunteers and without paid staff. The other groups can be considered small-sized organizations with between 1 and 15 volunteers or staff.

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF SERVICE USERS/CUSTOMERS

Number of Service Users	2023	2024
N/A or none	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)
50 -100	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)
5,000 – 9,000		1 (11.1%)
10,000 – 12,000	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)
12,000 – above	1 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)

The table above shows that 5 organizations reached 5,000 to over 12,000 customers (individuals) in 2023 and 2024. This data is crucial to possible targeted interventions. For example, organizations can be tapped to reach a wide range of audiences to raise their awareness about OSAEC.

C. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

1. Children and Young People

Qualitative data came from in-depth interviews with six (6) children and young people with experiences of being at risk or victims of OSAEC and 5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with sixty-four (64) participants.

In-depth Interviews with Children with OSAEC experience TABLE 11:

AGE AND GENDER OF OSAEC SURVIVORS

Gender	Number	Age of Participants
Girls	4	15 (1), 16 (1), and 17 (2)
Boy	0	
Lesbian	1	16 years old
Gay	1	15 years old
Total	6	

The Table above shows that the 6 participants with experience or were at risk of OSAEC were girls and LGBTQI children. All six participants reported coming from financially challenged families. Two of them (girls) are also child laborers (soliciting money from motorists). The data show the link between OSAEC and poverty, especially for the girls. For LGBTQI+, the link to OSAEC is not mainly with poverty but the risk associated with socializing with strangers.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Forty-seven (47) key informants participated in interviews in 6 municipalities and cities covering 12 barangays. The participants consisted of barangay and municipal officials, both elected and appointed (e.g. GAD focal) and those engaged in policy making and service implementation.

TABLE 12: KEY INFORMANTS AT THE MUNICIPAL AND BARANGAY LGUS

Province/Municipality	Number	Roles
Bohol		
Calape	9	Purok leader, Public School Teacher, and BCPC member.
	11	Mayor, Women and Children Protection Unit, GAD focal, MSWDO, and Councillor

Province/Municipality	Number	Roles
Dauis	4	Barangay Chair, Bgy. Councillor, VAWC officer, and MSWDO
Panglao	5	Barangay Chair, BCPC representative, VAWC, BHW, and MSWDO
Tubigon	5	Barangay Chair, GAD focal, VAWC, Bgy. Councillor, MSWDO
Cebu		
Cebu City	9	City GAD focal, Cebu City Commission on Children and Women Protection, Barangay Councillor, GAD Focal, BHW, and BCPC representative.
Mandaue City	4	GAD Focal, VAWC, and Councillor
Taguig City	0	
Total	47	

TABLE 13: KEY INFORMANTS AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Organization	Region	Number	Roles
Regional Inter-agency Committee on Anti-Trafficking (RIACAT)	Region 7 (Central Visayas)	1	Vice Chair and Regional Prosecutor
DSWD	Central Office	1	OSAEC focal person
DILG	National Barangay Operations Office Division	3	Project Officer Asst Division Chief OIC Section chief
Total		5	

Table 17 shows the profile of participants from RIACAT, DSWD, and DILG. The RIACAT interviewee is from the Department of Justice who co-chairs the committee.

72 Goal

This section presents baseline data for each Outcome and Indicator in the Project's Logical Framework.

CONEC Project Outcome: Children, especially girls and LGBTI children, are increasingly protected from online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSAEC) by a strong and responsive child protection system.

Impact indicator 1: Number of OSAEC cases in the target areas that are reported to local (LGUs and CSO partners) and national entities (DSWD and PNP), disaggregated by age and gender.

TABLE 14: NUMBER OF OSAEC CASES DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER AND AGE (FROM INTERVIEW DATA IN NOVEMBER 2024)

Municipalities	Number of Reported OSAEC cases	Age	Gender
Bohol	4	Unknown - below 18	Girls
Cebu	3	Unknown - below 18	Girls
Taguig	No data		

The data of the 7 reported cases were gathered from interviews with LGU officials (MSWDOs, WCPD, RIACAT) in Bohol and Cebu, although the exact details could not be provided. Data was not collected from Taguig LGU representatives because they were not responsive to requests for interviews. Those who responded (barangay secretaries) cancelled the interviews and they were no longer answering calls after the cancellation. There was no response from the office of the mayor despite several emails, calls, and text messages to the office of the mayor and departments which may lead to the mayor (e.g. CSWDO, and a councillor).

In Cebu and Bohol, there were no written records of any of the cases so all data therefore were only gathered through interviews. The whereabouts of the children are not known to MSWDOs. All cases involving CSAEM perpetuated by foreigners and were reported to the Cybercrime unit or the Police are very seldom followed up. The lack of written/ recorded data was challenging and the only possible way to acquire insights was through key informant interviews. Data may not be accurate because no written record could substantiate the interview data.

The main forms of OSAEC as shared by the KIIs were being asked to show explicit pictures and videos online. Pressure and the influence of friends are strong drivers of OSAEC. Only two of the seven filed charges against the perpetrators.

Data from the survey also indicated that there are 10 and 159 unreported cases in Taguig and Bohol/Cebu, respectively. Because the cases were not reported, no intervention were received by the victims

The reasons for non-reporting include feeling a sense of shame but also because OSAEC is not seen as a crime. According to a focal person in DSWD, anecdotal evidence from children and youth indicates that children and youth feel more trauma during the rescue and prosecution stages than the act of OSAEC itself for fear of being identified and known in the community. Non-reporting can be due to a feeling of shame and the stigma attached to being a victim, or a sense of 'victim-blaming'. It might also be due to previous experience of discrimination that prevents girls and LGBTQI+ children from reporting the abuse. In addition, it can also be due to the lack of age appropriate reporting mechanisms and the lack of knowledge about reporting.

Some drivers of OSAEC include not having awareness about the risk on the internet, easy access to the internet at an early age, influence of friends, and lack of parental guidance in using the internet. Interestingly, these drivers were also mentioned by FGD participants. Those factors were mentioned by girls, boys and LGBTQI participants and so, it can be said that these factors are common to all genders. The influence of friends or peers, excessive use of gadgets and social media, and entertaining chats from strangers are the top three reasons LGBTQI children and young people are mentioned. For girls, the lack of parental guidance, talking to strangers in social media, and excessive use of social media were the top three reasons mentioned. Interestingly, the younger age group (10-17) mentioned the lack of parental guidance and excessive use of social media as the primary drivers while influence of friends and peers, and excessive use of social media were prominent among 18 to 24 years old.

While poverty or being financially challenged was not mentioned in the survey with young people, it was prominent in the FGD of which some are OSAEC survivors and interviews with OSAEC survivors. This can be attributed to Filipino values of helping family members and being sensitive to the needs of the family. It may be that there are perceived expectations from parents for children to financially support the family, thereby adding more pressure to the child. Certainly, this was evident in the data from in-depth interviews with OSAEC survivors, that poverty is one reason for OSAEC. It is the most compelling push factor for the proliferation of OCSE/OSAEC². 3 out of 4 children in Cebu and Bohol live in households earning less than ₱15,000/month (Link to study: <https://int.terredeshommes.nl/news/project-conec-baseline-study-transforming-systems-connecting-children>)

² Transforming Systems: Connecting Children, Terre des Hommes Netherlands (2023)

Another factor contributing to the occurrence of OSAEC is parents' drug addiction which was shared by children who attended the FGD in Taguig. Parents' need for money to support their addiction which then results in children becoming victims of online sexual abuse.

OSAEC has negative consequences on children and young people, including isolation (as they don't want to talk about it and choose to be in their own), anxiety and fear that people may know about what they posted online, depression, low confidence, self-harm, and resort to abusing alcohol and drugs to forget the issue. There are gender differences in how OSAEC impacts children with boys reporting alcohol and substance abuse and girls - anxiety, depression, and self-harm. For example, an FGD participant in Taguig said:

"My friend was 15 when her photos were spread on social media. She could not report it because she was thinking that it was her fault for trusting the man she was chatting with. She has been depressed due to shame and moved to a far away city to escape it (16 years old, girl Taguig City)

money from OSAEC, families become dependent on children which adds more pressure on them. LGBTQI+ children and young people experienced the same impact and in addition, become more anxious in socialising and seeking new friends in social media, contributing to further isolation.

It also became apparent that there are differences between age groups in terms of outcomes after being rescued from OSAEC. In the experience of 16-17 years old girls, OSAEC led to dropping out from school and early cohabitation. For younger girls (13-15), this results in child labor to augment the family's income.

It should be noted that 5 children who took part in focus group discussions also indicated unreported OSAEC cases involving their female/girl friends who were 15-17 years old. The impact of OSAEC on them includes mental health problems and isolation.

Impact indicator 2: Percentage of reported OSAEC cases provided with child protection and social protection services by the relevant public authorities and CSOs.

100% (2023)

- The 7 Cases in 2023 reported to MSWDOs are girls under 18. The LGU respondents could not recall the exact age but were confident that they were between 14 and 17.

All received the relevant intervention including counselling, temporary shelter for the child (where the perpetrator was a family member), parenting advice, and livelihood assistance to the family.

- All cases were reported by the teacher to the MSWDO who then involved the Police and Cybercrime Unit as the cases relate to CSAEM.

However, it should be noted that there is no record of counselling given to the child so it cannot be ascertained whether the initiatives are trauma-informed or not.

Impact indicator 3: Percentage of children, youth, and community members reporting an increased trust in the child protection system for OSAEC, disaggregated by age and gender.

The data source of this indicator is through the survey with children, youth, and communities in 2024, not secondary sources from any years. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Children and Young People Trusting the CP System: 30%

(2022); 82% (2023)

TABLE 15: CYP TRUSTING THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against total trusting the system	Percentage of respondents per gender trusting the system	Total Respondents
Girls	193	278	471	64%	86%	546
Boys	75	136	211	28%	81%	259
Lesbian	9	11	20	3%	100%	20
Gay	7	7	14	2%	93%	15
Bisexual	4	11	15	2%	12%	17
Transgender	1	4	5	0.6%	50%	10
Non-binary	1	1	2	0.2%	18%	11
	290	448	738	100%		

Part of the survey is understanding if children and young people trust the child protection system. The enumerators asked the question as it appears on the survey, without having to explain what trust means. The table above shows that 82% of the 896 survey respondents trust the system. Lesbian and Gay children and young people account for 100% and 93% of the total respondents of the same gender, followed by girls (86%) and boys (81%). Interestingly, across different LGBTQI children and young people, Transgender, Bisexual, and Non-binary account for a low percentage of 50% and below. This may indicate that different SOGIE feel differently about the child protection system. This can be attributed to previous experiences of discrimination against certain SOGIE.

Of those who trust the CP system



64%
are girls



28%
are boys

while

8% are LGBTQI



The older age group 18 to 24 years old account for 60%, and 10-17 years old, 40%

Older age groups may have better access to information about child protection which is not the case for younger children.



TABLE 16: CYP WHO ARE CONFIDENT IN ACCESSING CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against total number of CYP with confidence	Percentage of respondents per gender who are confident to access the system	Total Respondents
Girls	191	309	500	66%	91%	546
Boys	74	125	199	26%	77%	259
Lesbian	9	11	20	3%	100%	20
Transgender	1	6	7	1%	70%	10
Gay	7	8	15	2%	100%	15
Non-binary	1	4	5	1%	45%	11
Bisexual	4	7	11	1%	65%	17
	287	470	757	100%		

The respondents were asked how they demonstrate their trust in the system such as if they are confident to seek help when they feel that they may be at risk or being victims of OSAEC.

The table shows that 84% or 757 of 896 survey participants indicate that they have the confidence to access services if they feel they are at risk of OSAEC. Girls account for 91% while boys account for 77%. Interestingly, both lesbian and gay account for 100%, while non-binary and bisexual account for 45% and 65%, respectively. It appears that more girls are confident to seek help compared to boys, and that lesbian and gay are more confident.

Of those who are confident to seek help, girls account for 66% compared to 26% of the boys and 8% for the LGBTQI+. This data correlates with the narratives about high levels of under-reporting among survey participants (see Table 23) highlighting the disconnect between what young people said they know and what actually happens in terms of reporting OSAEC cases. Across all genders, young people 18-25 years old account for 62% of those expressing confidence, with girls at 38% of those who expressed confidence. It is likely that older children have confidence in accessing services because they participate more in community activities and most of them are members of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), and are more exposed to community services.

7.3 Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Increased capacity and participation of children, especially girls and LGBTI, families and communities in preventing and responding to OSAEC.

1.1 Indicator: Percentage of children, youth, caregivers and communities with increased knowledge and capacity on OSAEC, online safety, child protection, reporting and referral mechanisms, disaggregated by age and gender.

This indicator consists of two aspects: the knowledge and the capacity in areas of OSAEC, online safety, child protection, reporting and referral mechanisms of children, youth, caregivers and communities. These variables are presented in the succeeding sections.

1.1.1 Children and Young People's Knowledge of OSAEC

TABLE 17: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE OF OSAEC

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against total number of with knowledge of OSAEC	Percentage against the total number of CYP survey participants per gender
Girls	199	315	514	64%	94%
Boys	81	138	219	27%	84%
Lesbian	9	11	20	2%	100%
Gay	7	8	15	2%	100%
Bisexual	5	10	15	2%	88%
Non-binary	1	8	9	1%	82%
Transgender	2	7	9	1%	90%
Prefer not to say	2	10	12	1%	1%
	306	507	813	100%	

Table 21 shows that 813 or 90% of the 896 CYP survey participants are aware of OSAEC. Girls account for 94% of the total survey participants of the same gender (546) while boys account for 84% of all boys who responded to the survey. LGBTQI account for between 82 and 100% across different SOGIE. Interestingly, this data is comparable with parents' high level of awareness about OSAEC where 92% or 789 out of 853 parents, caregivers, and community members understand that OSAEC is mainly linked with online activities of children including access to social media. Like children and young people, the survey with adults/parents shows a higher proportion of women compared to men. Per gender, women account for 79% compared to men (20%), and LGBTQI+ (1%).

Of those who have knowledge about OSAEC, the large proportion are girls in both 10- 17 (65%) and 18-24 (62%) age groups. There are 26% and 27% boys, and LGBTQI accounted for 7.6% in 10-17 years old and 8.5% in 18-24 years old. In terms of ages, the older age range - 18-25 years old - account for 62%, and 10-17 years old account for 38%. In the survey with parents, women account for 79%, men 20% and LGBTQI+ - 1%. It appears that more LGBTQI+ children and young people (7.6) are more aware compared to LGBTQI+ adults (1%). This can be attributed to young people's better access to information in the present time.

The high proportion of older CYP who are aware could be because they have more access to news through various media (e.g. social media, television, radio), and are more mobile and attuned to news in the community. It could also be due to having experienced it or having friends encountering the issue, thus making them more knowledgeable about it.

TABLE 18: KNOWLEDGE OF ONLINE SAFETY

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against all CYP with Knowledge of online safety	Percentage against all CYP survey respondents per gender
Girls	177	254	431	65%	78%
Boys	66	129	195	29%	75%
Lesbian	9	11	20	3%	100%
Gay	7	1	8	1.2%	53%
Transgender	2	5	7	1%	70%
Non-binary	0	1	1	0.1%	9%
	261	401	662		

The table above indicates that 73% or 662 of 896 CYP know how to protect themselves online. Comparing the proportion of different genders against the number of survey participants, girls account for 78% while boys account for 75% which can be considered high. Interestingly, across LGBTQI, all lesbians have knowledge of online safety. Gays and non-binary account for 53% and 9%, respectively.

Of the 662 with knowledge of online safety, the high proportion are girls at 65%, while boys and LGBTQI account for 29 and 5%, respectively. The data mirror Table 20 where CYP indicate their knowledge of OSAEC, and therefore are inclined to protect themselves online.

It is also about the older age range having more access to online platforms and having a better understanding of the features. This resonates with the study of Plan International (2024) about social media platforms accessed by children and young people. Their study found that 18–24 year- olds frequently used Facebook, TikTok, and online shopping platforms dubbed “Tiktokers” and “Gamers” compared to younger children who use social media platforms for educational purposes. Older children and young people are more aware of social media features compared to younger children. Hence, it might be that they feel better equipped to protect themselves online.

Knowledge of reporting and referral of OSAEC

TABLE 19: CYP KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE TO REPORT IF AT RISK OR BEING VICTIMS OF OSAEC

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against all CYP with knowledge	Percentage against all CYP survey participants per gender
Girls	174	284	458	64%	83%
Boys	68	120	188	26%	72%
Lesbian	11	11	22	3%	100%
Transgender	2	6	8	1%	80%
Gay	7	8	15	2%	100%
Bi-sexual	1	7	8	1%	47%
Non-binary	0	6	6	1%	54%
Prefer not to say	2	7	9	1.5 %	1%
	265	449	714	100%	

The Table above shows that 80% of 896 survey participants indicate knowledge of where to report OSAEC. Looking at all genders, girls account for 83% of the 546 girl survey respondents compared to 72% of 259 boys. Across LGBTQI, gays and lesbians account for 100% while the lowest percentage in proportion of the total number survey respondents are bisexual and non-binary.

Of the 714 who know where to report OSAEC, 64% are girls while boys account for 26%, and LGBTQI+ account for 10%. The proportion of girls who are 18-24 years old is slightly higher (40%) - compared to 24% of 10-17 years old girls. Higher percentages of 18-24 years old boys and LGBTQ are also evident. This may mean that older age groups access more information compared to the younger age group because they have wider circles of acquaintances or are more engaged in different social media platforms.

Correlating this with the 7 reported cases of OSAEC in 2023, all cases were made known to the teachers who reported the incidents to the City/Municipal Social Worker. This resonates with the experience of the six children who attended the FGD in Taguig - that the incidents were reported to their teachers. The reason they cited was mainly to protect their parents (who perpetrated the online sexual abuse) from being prosecuted.

It should be noted that FGD participants reported knowing about OSAEC through social media news, and that information about OSAEC at the barangay or school is limited. It can be gleaned from this that access to online information by children and young people is also high.

Interestingly, while it appears that there is a relatively high level of knowledge of children and young people where to report OSAEC cases, numerous cases were unreported. This also resonates with the experiences of some participants in focus group discussions in Bohol and Cebu who were at risk but did not report the incident (n=3). Similarly, 2 young people in FGD in Taguig revealed that their friends had depression due to being abused online, but those were unreported cases.

Failure to report risks can be due to several reasons including previous experience of discrimination from services, feeling a sense of shame, or fear of being blamed. It can also be because of the financial benefits and reporting will stop the benefits. It is also possible that children and young people are being coerced by family members prompting the CYP to conceal the abuse. The high level of underreporting can also be due to low confidence in the child protection system and accessing services particularly for boys (26%) and LGBTQI+ (8%) as shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20: KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICES TO ACCESS IF AT RISK OF OSAEC

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage against all CYP with knowledge of services	Percentage against all survey respondents per gender
Girls	103	259	362	62%	66%
Boys	47	110	157	27%	60%
Lesbian	9	11	20	3%	100%
Gay	5	8	13	2%	86%
Bisexual	1	6	7	1.5%	41%
Transgender	1	5	6	1%	60%
Non-binary	0	5	5	1%	45%
Prefer not to say	2	6	8	1.5%	1%
	168	410	578	100%	

Sixty-two percent (62%) or 578 or 896 respondents know services to access if at risk or they become victims of OSAEC. Against the proportion of the total number of respondents per gender, girls who know services to access account for 66% of 546 girls while boys account for 60%. Across all LGBTQI genders, lesbians, gays, and transgender account for 100%, 86%, and 60% of similar genders. Non-binary and bisexual account for 45% and 41%, respectively. Of those who know services, a high proportion is girls (62%) while boys account for 27%. LGBTQI children and young people account for 8.5%.

1.1.2 Capacity of CYP

Children and young people's capacity can be gauged from what they do that demonstrates what they know about OSAEC, online safety, child protection, and reporting and referral mechanisms.

Table 20 shows that children and young people are aware of OSAEC. This subsection presents different ways showing the capacity (how they demonstrate, practice) their knowledge of OSAEC. For example, Table 25 below shows how they practice online safety which is mainly by not speaking to strangers online and blocking strangers who attempt to chat with them.

TABLE 21: CYP WHO PRACTICE ONLINE SAFETY

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total of CYP who practice online safety	Percentage against those who practice online safety	Percentage against all CYP survey participants per gender
Girls	191	177	368	62%	67%
Boys	68	98	166	30%	64%
Lesbian	11	15	26	4%	100%
Transgender	5	11	15	2%	100%
Gay	4	12	16	2%	100%
Non-binary	0	2	2	0%	0.2%
	279	315	593		

Table 25 shows that 593 or 66% of the survey respondents do not speak or entertain strangers in social media. Girls account for 67% of girl respondents while boys account for 64%. Interesting, lesbian, transgender and gay all account for 100% of the survey participants of similar gender.

Of those who indicate that they practice online safety, 62% are girls and 30% are boys. LGBTQI account for 8%. Older children and young people (18-24) account 53% and 10-17 years old, 47%. This table illustrates that CYP takes the necessary precautions to avoid risk of being OSAEC victims such as not chatting with strangers and blocking the profile of those who are persistent in messaging them.

The above resonates with almost all FGD participants who mentioned different ways to be safe online including not entertaining friend requests from strangers and blocking those who attempt to chat with them.

TABLE 22: CYP REPORTING OSAEC TO THEIR PARENTS

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage of all who tell their parents	Percentage of those who tell their parents against all survey respondents (per gender)
Girls	182	177	359	67%	65%
Boys	59	78	137	26%	52%
Lesbian	8	3	11	2%	55%
Gay	5	4	9	1.50%	60%
Bisexual	3	9	12	2%	70%
Transgender	2	4	6	1%	60%
Non-binary	0	1	1	0	9%
	259	276	535	100%	

The Table above shows that 59% or 535 or 896 CYP survey participants tell their parents if they are at risk of OSAEC. In proportion to the survey participants per gender, there are 65% of girls and 52% of boys. The proportion of girls is higher than that of boys' and this could be attributed to girls being more trusting of their parents. It might also be a result of stereotyping boys as masculine and brave and therefore tend to hesitate from sharing their issues with their parents. LGBTQI have higher percentages compared to boys apart from non-binary (9%).

Of those who tell their parents, 67% are girls, 26% are boys and 7% are LGBTQI. Girls who are 10-17 years old have a slightly higher proportion compared to 18-24 years old while boys 18 to 24 years old have a higher proportion over 10-17 years old boys (56% VS 44%)

The low percentage of boys telling their parents can be due to familial and societal gender beliefs of masculinity, deterring boys from divulging the risks they face. This further perpetuates the lack of gender awareness among men and boys. If left unchallenged, this will intensify the gender stereotypes of femininity and masculinity within the family and the society.

On a positive note, the value of parents as primary guardians and protectors is acknowledged in most cases. This is an important insight to develop strategies that will strengthen their knowledge and capacity on child protection. Although children and young people indicated they trust the child protection system, it may be that they are more inclined to tell people they trust instead of services. However, there is a disconnect between the trust of parents and reporting of OSAEC. While the proportion of those who said they tell their parents is high, there are 169 unreported OSAEC cases. It may be that children and young people respect and trust their parents as this is a cultural trait but in reality, they prefer to divulge sensitive information to other trusted individuals such as their peers, teachers and other non-parent adults.

An FGD participant said:



I respect my parents and can tell them normal day to day events in my life. However, when I experienced being stalked online, I shared this with a friend (Lesbian, 17, Mandaue City).

This subsection presents data gained from parents, caregivers, and community members.

1.1.3 Knowledge of Community residents, parents, and caregivers OSAEC, online safety, preventing OSAEC, and reporting OSAEC.

TABLE 23: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO UNDERSTAND THAT OSAEC IS LINKED WITH UNSUPERVISED ACCESS TO INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total	Percentage
Women	211 or 92%	196 or 97%	140 or 95%	76 or 96%	623	79%
Men	63 or 79%	49 or 89%	41 or 89%	6 or 85%	159	20%
LGBTQI	7 or 77%	0	0	0	7	1%
	281	245	181	82	789	100%

The table above shows that a large proportion - 92% or 789 of 853 parents, caregivers, and community members understand that OSAEC is mainly linked with online activities of children including access to social media. Comparing the proportion of the responses with the total number of respondents per gender, it shows that the largest proportion (97%) are women aged 36-45 years old, followed by 56 years old and above (96%). Men aged 36-45 years old also account for the largest proportion along with 46-56 years old. LGBTQI aged 25-35 years old account for 77%. 92% of adults see internet risks linked to OSAEC 81% aware of prevention strategies 75% supervise internet use 70% would report abuse (higher among women & LGBTQI+ adults)

Of those who understand the link between OSAEC and social media, 79% are women, 20% are men, and 1% is LGBTQI+.

This is an important insight in thinking of capacity-building activities for parents. While they are aware of the link between OSAEC and digitalization, it may be that they need to also learn effective ways to guide their children to online safety. Also, a large proportion of men, women and LGBTQI are between the ages of 25 and 45 years old. It may be that they have access to different modes of communications and are active in social media and therefore are aware of OSAEC. Project CONEC can maximise this cohort to reach out to more children and young people in the community.

TABLE 24: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN TELL IF A CHILD IS AT RISK OR VICTIMS OF OSAEC

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total	Percentage
Women	176 or 77%	157 or 76%	97 or 66%	0	430	79%
Men	44 or 55%	38 or 69%	21 or 45%	3 or 42%	106	20%
LGBTQI	7 or 85%	0	0	0	7	1%
	226	196	118	3	543	100%

The table above shows that 63% or 543 of 853 parents, caregivers, and community members can tell if their children are at risk of OSAEC. Women between the ages of 25 and 45 account for a large proportion of women respondents. Men who are 36-45 years old account for 69% of all men respondents. A high percentage is also accounted for by LGBTQI aged 25-35 years old (85%).

Of those who know how to tell if their children are at risk of OSAEC, a large proportion are women (79%) while men account for 20% and LGBTQI, 1%. The data indicates a relatively high awareness about OSAEC among the community members especially women and LGBTQI+. This may infer that they are more active online and are better attuned to news about OSAEC.

The data can also be about the possible indifference of men/male on sensitive issues like OSAEC. It can also be due to gendered norms, where mothers are delegated to child care and supervise children's education. For example, a survey found that women spent 6.75 hours in their primary care role compared 3.48 hours by adult men (National Household Care Survey, 2021)⁴. This may mean that as they spend more time with their children, women/female parents can observe their children and feel confident about the issues they face including symptoms of online sexual abuse.

Therefore, parenting roles and gender can be incorporated in awareness raising activities for parents and community members.

However, the data above is not supported by the data about unreported cases found in the survey and the experience of OSAEC survivors. The unreported cases were concealed from parents and were left unidentified. OSAEC survivors also reported to their teachers without their parents detecting the abuse. It could be that parents feel confident but in reality are also unable to detect online abuses which could be due to lack of understanding about symptoms of online abuse and limited skills in navigating new technology.

It could also be due to parents not being confident in discussing sensitive issues with their children, and their engagement with them is simply reminding them to be safe online. For example, Table 31 indicates that parents supervise their children's access to the internet although a nuanced discussion shows that the supervision may be limited to reminding children about online safety.

⁴ FINAL National Household Care Survey Report 2021.pdf

TABLE 25: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW HOW TO PREVENT OSAEC

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total respondents	Percentage against all respondents
Women	194 or 85%	174 or 85%	133 or 91%	69 or 87%	570	82%
Men	47 or 59%	40 or 72%	28 or 60%	5 or 71%	120	17%
LGBTQI	8 or 88%	0	0	0	8	1%
	249	214	161	74	698	100%

The table above shows that 81% or 698 community members understand how to prevent online sexual abuse among children. The largest proportion of community members who know how to prevent OSAEC is women aged 46-55 years old, accounting for 91% or 133 or 146 total respondents. Women across all ages account for large percentages and this may mean that women are more concerned about gender-based issues. Interestingly, LGBTQI+ accounts for the second biggest percentage (88%). Men account for a relatively high percentage but they are lower compared to women and men across all ages. It might also be because men are not that active in social media.

The above is an important insight for Project CONEC to target men for its awareness raising activities using a combination of online and in-person seminars and campaigns. Also, it was suggested by children and young people that LGUs can engage with telecommunication networks to regularly remind subscribers about online safety and to offer support on how parents can install online safety applications in their phones so they can track their children's online activities.

82%
are women

17%
are men

1%
are LGBTQI+



TABLE 26: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW HOW TO REPORT OSAEC

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total	Percentage
Women	114 or 50%	114 or 55%	80 or 54%	46 or 58%	354	78%
Men	44 or 55%	29 or 52%	19 or 41%	2 or 28%	94	21%
LGBTQI	6 or 66%	0	0	0	6	1%
	164	143	99	48	454	100%

The table above shows that 53% or 454 of 853 community members know how to report OSAEC cases. This can be considered a low percentage which may mean that although the community is aware of OSAEC (see Table 27), they are not aware of reporting protocols. Comparing the proportion of those who responded across all genders and ages against the total survey respondents, it shows that LGBTQI account for 66%, even higher than women and men's percentages. Interestingly, the table above also shows that as the ages increase, the lower the proportion for men becomes; while for women, the proportion increases as the ages increases.

1.1.4 Capacity of Parents and Community Members

TABLE 27: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUPERVISE THEIR CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO INTERNET

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total	Percentage
Women	199 or 87%	171 or 83%	112 or 76%	38 or 48%	520	81%
Men	52 or 65%	37 or 67%	23 or 50%	2 or 28%	114	18%
LGBTQI	8 or 88%	0	0	0	8	1%
	259	208	135	40	642	100%

Seventy-five percent (75%, or 642 or 853) indicate that they supervise their children's usage and access to the internet. Although the survey did not ask for the ways how this is done, data from FGD and interviews with OSAEC survivors indicated that parents ask children to stop using their phones in the evening, with some parents confiscating the phones. The proportion of LGBTQI+ responses account for 88% of the total survey respondents. The second highest proportion is by women aged 25 to 35 years old (87%), followed by women aged 36 to 45 years old (83%). Across all ages, women show a higher proportion compared to men. This can be due to women having more time at home and therefore can see their children's activities.

rents’ supervision is crucial in protecting children and the above data infer that parents do know their role in the online safety of their children.

The above resonates with the FGD participants who mentioned that their parents remind them to minimize their time online. However, they also said that most parents are not knowledgeable about social media and they also do not visit the sites young people explore. This may mean that supervision is limited to giving reminders and young people can still navigate the internet as they see fit.

TABLE 28: PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS REPORT OSAEC CASES

Gender	25-35 years old	36- 45 years old	46-55 years old	56 years old +	Total	Percentage
Women	168 or 65%	151 or 74%	107 or 73%	56 or 70%	482	80%
Men	45 or 56%	39 or 70%	27 or 58%	2 or 28%	113	19%
LGBTQI	7 or 77%	0	0	0	7	1%
	220	190	134	58	602	100%

The table above shows that 70% or 602 of 853 parents, caregivers, and community members immediately report if they feel that children are at risk or victims of OSAEC. LGBTQI+ community members show the highest proportion (77%) of those who said they will report against the total respondents. Women across all ages show a higher proportion compared to men in each age group. Interestingly, the 36-45 age group shows higher percentages in women and men.

This data doesn't resonate with the large proportion of unreported OSAEC cases. While parents indicate they are confident and do report cases, they appear oblivious to them. There needs to be further investigation on how parents view their role in keeping children safe online and what they actually do.

1.2- Indicator 2 to Outcome 1: Number of children, youth, caregivers and communities reaching out to e-ProtectKids helpline operations and Voice for Change (VfC) app, disaggregated by age and gender.

- No children or caregivers and community residents reported accessing the e-ProtectKids helpline in 2023 and 2024.

1.3 - Indicator 3 to Outcome 1: Percentage of children and youth reporting feeling safe to use the internet and report on OSAEC, disaggregated by age and gender.

TABLE 29: CYP FEELING SAFE ONLINE

Gender	10-17 years old	% of respondent who says they feel safe online	18-24 years old	% of respondent who says they feel safe online	Total	Percentage
Girls	20	83%	6	85%	26	60%
Boys	5	55%	3	42%	8	19%
Lesbian	1	100%	1	100%	2	5%
Gay	1	50%	1	50%	2	5%
Bisexual	3	100%	0	0	3	5%
Pansexual	2	100%	0	0	2	5%
Total	32		11		43	100%

Seventy-four percent (74%) of the 64 children and young people who attended the FGD feel safe using the internet because they understand how to avoid incidents that might put them at risk such as not accepting friend requests from strangers or ignoring and blocking the profile of those who initiate a conversation.

Girls who are 10-17 years old and 18-24 years old have higher percentages compared to boys of the same age brackets. Interestingly, lesbian, bisexual and pansexual account for 100% of the total respondents per gender. The high proportion of girls and LGBTQI compared to boys can be attributed to being more active in social media where they can access information about OSAEC and therefore may be feeling more confident in being safe online. It may also be due to girls being targeted by strangers and inappropriate online interactions thus they learn about being careful online.

The data reveals significant disparities in perceptions of online safety among different gender identities. Girls consistently report feeling the safest online, with 83% of 10-17-year-olds and 85% of 18-24-year-olds expressing confidence in their digital environment. Boys, however, feel markedly less safe, with only 55% of younger boys and 42% of older boys reporting a sense of online security, indicating potential exposure to online risks such as cyberbullying or harmful digital interactions. Among LGBTQI respondents, lesbian and bisexual individuals aged 10-17 report 100% online safety. Gay respondents show the lowest sense of security, with only 50% feeling safe across both age groups, highlighting vulnerabilities that may stem from online discrimination or targeted harassment.

These trends suggest that gender identity significantly influences online safety perceptions, with boys and gay individuals experiencing greater insecurity, warranting further exploration into the specific risks and digital threats they face. Girls' high level of perception of online safety can be due to being resilient as their experiences of being targeted online drive them to develop techniques and understanding of protecting themselves, thus feeling more confident.

TABLE 30: CYP FEELING SAFE TO REPORT OSAEC

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage
Girls	191 or 89%	177 or 53%	368	62%
Boys	68 or 76%	98 or 57%	166	30%
Lesbian	11 or 100%	15 or 100%	26	4%
Transgender	5 or 100%	11 or 100%	15	2%
Gay	4 or 44%	12 or 100%	16	2%
Non-binary	0	2 or 20%	2	0%
	279	315	593	

The table above shows that 66% or 593 or 896 children and young people feel safe in reporting OSAEC. The proportion of girls who are 10-17 years old who indicate that they feel safe to report OSAEC is 89% of the total 10-17 girl respondents, which is a higher proportion compared to 18 to 24 years old. The same trend is also evident with boys where younger CYP account for 75% compared to 57% of 18-24 years old

7.4 Outcome 2

Outcome 2: Improved access to and capacity of child protection services to deliver child-friendly and trauma-informed OSAEC services at local and national levels.

2.1 - Indicator 1 to Outcome 2: Number of private companies and service providers (LGUs, LCPCs, MDTs, QRTs and BCPCs) implementing policies and procedures for keeping children safe from OSAEC.

In 2023, twelve (12) agencies/organizations reported having implementing rules and policies and procedures for keeping children safe from OSAEC:

- 2 LGUs (Calape in Bohol and Cebu City)
- 1 NGA – DILG
- 1 bank

- 2 internet/gaming centers
- 3 pawnshops/money transfer service
- 3 local non-government providers

Although all LGUs are still adopting the Child and Family Welfare Code in 2015, Calape and Cebu City have started updating their policies to incorporate OSAEC. The same is true with DILG. They have produced a model ordinance on child protection to assist LGUs in updating their respective ordinances. The current policy on child protection is generic and does not specifically state procedures for OSAEC cases.

Four agencies indicated that they have reporting protocol for cases of OSAEC, rescuing children who are victims of OSAEC, provision of services to children at risk or victims of OSAEC, and support the reintegration of the child with the family. All four also indicated that they work with other NGOs, LGUs, and private corporations to prevent OSAEC and in providing services to families of children at risk and victims of OSAEC.

It will be crucial to engage with private companies and other service providers who have direct access to children and families. Local businesses such as money transfer agencies, internet cafes/gaming centers, and communication networks such as the Philippine Long Distance Telecommunication (PLDT), Globe Telecommunication, Smart, and others can be good partners through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) endeavors. They can also be trained on Child Protection protocols so that they can actively monitor and report potential risks to children.

2.2 - Indicator 2 to Outcome 2: Number of LGUs with executive and legislative plans including child protection agendas with related budgets

In 2023, 2 LGUS reported having legislative plans on child protection agenda with corresponding budget allocations:

a. Calape, Bohol

- Municipal Ordinance 2010-14. An Ordinance providing for a Gender and Development Code.
- Municipal Ordinance No. 2011-001. An Ordinance creating the comprehensive children and family support system in Calape, Bohol or the Calape Children Welfare Code.
- Municipal Ordinance NO. 2017-12. An ordinance establishing a Violence Against Women and Children Desk (VAWC Desk)

b. Cebu City

- Resolution No. 861. An Ordinance establishing the Cebu City Commission for the Welfare and Protection of Children and requiring all barangays to establish Barangay council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), providing for their composition, duties, functions, and appropriating funds thereof.

However, the above policies, although they mention gender, are quite generic to all child protection cases and don't particularly provide for gender-sensitive/responsive strategies. It is understandable that this is the case. The Children and Family Welfare Code was created in 2015 when OSAEC and other gender-based issues have not been identified. Hence, it is now the time to develop relevant policies that will consider gender-based child protection issues.

2.3 - Indicator 3 to Outcome 2: Number of children victims or at-risk of OSAEC that received child protection services, disaggregated by age and gender.

100% (2023): 5 OSAEC survivors and 2 at risk of OSAEC

- Bohol – 3 cases, 15 years old girls' distribution of explicit materials (photos and videos).
- Cebu City – 2 cases. 1 Girl, 17; and 1 Girl, 16.
- Mandaue City – 2 cases. Girls (15 and 16) at risk.

Five of the seven cases above received child protection services from the City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers. As all cases are distribution of explicit materials, they were also referred to the Cybercrime Unit of Region 7.

The two cases at risk of OSAEC (both girls, 15 and 16 years old) received counselling support from the social worker. Their parents were also assisted by the barangay councils although the exact form of assistance was not mentioned in the interviews. There were also no records at the barangay level.

It should be noted that the above information was acquired through KII as records can no longer be found. This indicates the weak data management in the covered areas and the need to develop a robust system to record, analyze, and share data among different partners to collaboratively respond to the needs of the children and their families. Data can also inform policies and budget allocation.

7.5 Outcome 3

Outcome 3: Enhanced child protection policies and social protection schemes at the local and national levels that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

3.1 - Indicator 1 to Outcome 3: Number of local child protection policies developed or revised with inputs from children, youth and CSOs.

0 (2023)

- In 2023, no policies have been drafted, reviewed or revised with children, youth and CSO input.
- All areas covered by the study indicated they have adapted the Child and Family Code (2015) which does not have provisions on OSAEC, let alone gender.

3.2 - Indicator 2 to Outcome 3: Number of LGUs implementing and funding OSAEC-focused policies and/or programs.

0 (2023)

- In 2023, no LGUs have implemented or funded OSAEC programs and policies. All Barangay LGUs reported adapting their respective Municipal/City Child Welfare Code (drafted in 2015) with no provisions on OSAEC.

3.3 - Indicator 3 to Outcome 3: Number of national and local social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, trauma-informed, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at risk or victims of OSAEC.

4 (2023)

- (2) The programs and services of Bidlisiw in Cebu and ECPAT in Bohol have been mentioned in key informant interviews as social protection schemes specifically tailored to OSAEC victims. Children attend sessions to increase their confidence and cope with the trauma of being at risk or victims of OSAEC. Both Bidlisiw and ECPAT engaged with the children and their families and coordinated with the barangay and city/municipal levels for assistance for the families. ECPAT also worked with the Regional IACAT to advocate for the improvement of services for OSAEC survivors.
- (1) At the national level, the Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPT) is the flagship program of DSWD. They provided aftercare services for victim-survivors of trafficking, including OSAEC.

Interventions also included psychosocial, educational assistance, livelihood assistance, transportation assistance, and medical assistance.

- (1) Technical Assistance and Resource Augmentation (TARA) is a scheme where DSWD offers technical assistance to Local Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDO) to help them effectively conduct case management for OSAEC.

OUTPUTS

1.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Increased awareness and capacities of communities and children, especially girls and LGBTI, on OSAEC prevention and protection mechanisms.

1.1.1 Knowledge of protection and prevention mechanisms

TABLE 31: KNOWLEDGE ON CHILD PROTECTION AND PREVENTION MECHANISMS

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Frequency	Percentage against the total with knowledge	Percentage against total respondents per gender
Girls	10	73	83	58%	15%
Boys	23	14	37	26%	14%
Lesbian	0	0	0	0	0
Gay	0	2	2	1%	13%
Bi-sexual	1	12	13	9%	76%
Transgender	0	4	4	3%	40%
Queer	0	0	0	0	0
Non-binary	0	4	4	3%	36%
	34	109	143	100%	

The Table above shows that only 143 or 16% of 896 children and young people in all areas are aware of prevention and protection mechanisms in their community. Comparing the percentages of those with knowledge and the total respondents per gender, bi-sexual CYP account for a higher proportion of 76% compared to all genders. Transgender and non-binary account for 40 and 36%. Boys only account for 14% and girls, 15%.

It can be said that there is very low awareness about prevention and protection mechanisms and this can be due to the lack of proactive information dissemination to the community. The same sentiment was expressed by LGU officials and children and young people who attended the FGDs.

TABLE 32: KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY PREVENTION AND PROTECTION SERVICES

Gender	10-17 years old and percentage of total survey participants per gender	18-25 years old and percentage of total survey participants per gender	Total	Percentage of all responses
Girls	189 or 88%	272 or 81%	461	64%
Boys	62 or 69%	153 or 88%	215	30%
Lesbian	9 or 100%	11 or 100%	20	3%
Gay	7 or 100%	7 or 87%	14	2%
Transgender	2 or 100%	5 or 62%	7	0.8%
Non-binary	1 or 100%	1 or 10%	2	0.2%
	270	449	719	100%

The table above indicates that 80% or 719 of the 896 survey respondents know community prevention and protection services enumerated in Table 37. The proportion of those who are aware of the total respondents per gender indicates that girls aged 10-17 years old have a higher proportion compared to girls aged 18-25 years old. On the contrary, the older age group among boys registered a higher proportion of 88% compared to younger boys at 69%. Interestingly, higher proportions are recorded for lesbians, gays, transgender and non-binary at the lower age group (10-17 years old). The larger proportions of girls and LGBTQI who are 10-17 years old can be due to access to information from schools.

The data on knowledge of community prevention and protection services reveals notable variations across different gender identities. Girls exhibit the highest overall awareness, with 88% of those aged 10-17 and 81% of those aged 18-25 reporting knowledge of these services, making up the majority (64%) of respondents. Boys show a contrasting trend, with lower awareness (69%) among younger respondents but increasing to 88% in the older group, suggesting that knowledge may improve with age or greater exposure to community initiatives. Among LGBTQI+ respondents, lesbian, gay, and transgender individuals in the younger age group report 100% awareness, but transgender awareness drops to 62% in the older group, potentially reflecting barriers to accessing or engaging with these services over time. Non-binary respondents show the most significant gap, with 100% awareness in the younger group but only 10% in the older group, indicating a possible lack of inclusive and accessible protection mechanisms for non-binary individuals as they transition into adulthood. These trends suggest that while overall awareness is high, gaps persist for certain gender groups, particularly transgender and non-binary individuals, highlighting the need for more inclusive, sustained, and age-appropriate outreach efforts to ensure all children and youth—regardless of gender identity—are informed about available protection services.

The Table below lists the services they mentioned. It seems that although there is low take up of community services, they are known to CYP indicating their knowledge of services. However, this knowledge does not necessarily translate to accessing those services. Table 25 shows that only 33% of CYP have accessed services. Health centers, BCPCs, and youth groups are services mentioned the most in Bohol and Cebu while Law enforcement or the Police was topped in Taguig. Interestingly, FGD participants in all areas also mentioned the Police as the first point of contact for protection issues.

In Bohol/Cebu, health centers, BCPCs and youth groups and organizations are the mechanisms most known to the participants. In Taguig, children and young people mark law enforcement (police), health centers and BCPCs as the top three.

Fifty percent (50%) of the 64 FGD participants also mentioned the Police, social workers and barangay officials as the people they know who could help during reporting. When asked about who they would approach in the first instance, they said that it would be their parents or teachers. OSAEC survivors from Taguig however said that they will report to trusted adults like their teachers, but not to their parents. Also, they said they are not aware of BCPC.

TABLE 33: LIST OF SERVICES KNOWN TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Protection and prevention mechanisms that known to children and young people	Bohol/Cebu		Taguig	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Health Centers	629	90.1%	98	63.2%
Barangay Council for Protection and Children	610	87.4%	96	61.9%
Youth Groups and Organizations	519	74.4%	64	41.3%
Local church	488	69.9%	20	12.9%
City/Municipal Social Welfare Officer	486	69.6%	66	42.6%
School Authorities or Guidance Counselors	482	69%	63	40.6%
Quick Response Teams	420	60.1%	9	5.8%
Law Enforcement like the Police	416	59.6%	114	73.5%
Child Protection Hotlines	401	57.4%	13	8.4%
Non-Government Organizations	399	57.2%	74	47.4%
Private Organizations	97	14%	16	10.3%
N/A	3	0.4%	11	7.1%

1.1.2 Capacity to seek services

TABLE 34: CYP WHO HAVE SOUGHT HELP FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES

	10-17 years old frequency and proportion of total respondents per gender	18-24 years old frequency and proportion of total respondents per gender	Frequency of those who sought help	Percentage of those who sought help
Girls	65 or 30%	123 or 36%	188	63%
Boys	24 or 26%	69 or 40%	93	31%
Lesbian	0	1 or 9%	1	1%
Gay	3 or 42%	3 or 37%	6	2%
Bi-sexual	1 or 16%	2 or 18%	3	1%
Transgender	0	3 or 37%	3	1%
Non-binary	1 or 100%	1 or 10%	2	1%
	94	202	296	100%

The table above shows that 33% or 296 children and young people have sought help from community services. Looking at the proportion of those who sought help from the total respondents per gender, the data ranges from 9% to 40% across all genders and age groups. A high percentage is recorded for non-binary with 1 CYP aged 10-17 or 100%; compared to 10% for the higher age group.

Overall, the proportion of those who sought help is high for girls (63%) compared to boys and LGBTQI+ Stigma and a sense of shame may prevent boys and LGBTQI+ from seeking help and this was also mentioned during the FGD with CYP. An FGD participant shared that aspects related to sexuality are better discussed with friends of similar gender.

I have not approached the health center about my questions about sexuality because it is a taboo topic. I just google it or ask my friends. I do not ask my parents about it (Girl, 16 Taguig City)

Negative experience of community services may also deter children and young people from using them. The low take up from LGBTQI+ children can be attributed to the services not being gender-responsive and age-appropriate. Existing programs are also not inclusive. According to almost all FGD participants, community activities are mostly for boys and about sports, and there is none for young people with other interests or skills. Hence, they just stay at home and access social media.

Girls and LGBTQI+ children may have in the past experienced discrimination from services, or lack of skills of first responders to cater to their needs. This then increases the vulnerability of girls and LGBTQI+ children because they may not access preventive and protective services. Because cases of OSAEC against LGBTQI+ children are not reported, services do not become gender-responsive. Hence, it can be said that services are not informed by what is actually happening to children and young people due to poor reporting systems.

The data here correlates with Table 26 where 60% of CYP says they tell their parents if strangers contact them in social media. It may be possible that most children and young people feel more confident divulging their issues to their family/parents. However, some children including those whose parents orchestrated their online sexual abuse, said will never divulge to their parents. They would rather tell a trusted adult (e.g. teacher) or their peers. Only 45% of trans/non-binary youth feel safe asking for help targeted for grooming and coercion, often by known persons.

1.1.3 Community Members’ Knowledge

TABLE 35: COMMUNITY’S KNOWLEDGE ON PROTECTION AND PREVENTION MECHANISMS

Gender	25-35 years old with knowledge and its proportion to total respondents per gender	36-45 years old with knowledge and its proportion to total respondents per gender	46-55 years old with knowledge and its proportion to total respondents per gender	56+ years old with knowledge and its proportion to total respondents wper gender	Total proportion of all with knowledge
Women	224 or 98%	203 or 99%	143 or 97%	78 or 98%	648
Men	77 or 97%	49 or 89%	45 or 97%	7 or100%	178
LGBTQI	7 or 77%	0	0	0	7
					833

The table above shows that 97% or 833 or 853 parents, caregivers, and community members reported knowing between 2 and 4 prevention and protection services in the community. The proportion of those with knowledge about preventive and protective mechanisms is consistently high for all ages across all genders.

The Table below shows the services known to community members/parents. Community residents in Bohol and Cebu mentioned most frequently health centers, BCPCs and youth groups. In Taguig, law enforcers such as the Police garnered the most mentions.

Interestingly, the data mirror the results from children and young people's surveys presented in Table 28.

TABLE 36: PROTECTION AND PREVENTION MECHANISMS KNOWN TO COMMUNITY MEMBER

Protection and prevention mechanisms that known to children and young people	Bohol/Cebu		Taguig	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Health Centers	629	90.1%	98	63.2%
Barangay Council for Protection and Children	610	87.4%	96	61.9%
Youth Groups and Organizations	519	74.4%	64	41.3%
Local church	488	69.9%	20	12.9%
City/Municipal Social Welfare Officer	486	69.9%	66	42.65%
School Authorities or Guidance Counselors	482	69%	63	40.6%
Quick Response Teams	420	60.1%	9	5.6%
Law Enforcement like the Police	416	59.6%	114	73.5%
Child Protection Hotlines	401	57.4%	13	8.4%
Non-Government Organizations	399	57.2%	74	47.4%
Private Organizations	97	14%	16	10.3%
N/A	3	0.4%	11	7.1%

1.1.4 Indicator 2 to Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Number of people that completed learning sessions and child/youth-led sessions on OSAEC and online safety, disaggregated by age and gender.

TABLE 37: ATTENDANCE IN CHILD-LED OSAEC TRAINING

Gender	25-35 years old who attended training and its proportion to the survey respondents	36-45 years old who attended training and its proportion to the survey respondents	46-55 years old who attended training and its proportion to the survey respondents	56+ years old who attended training and its proportion to the survey respondents	Total	Percentage
Women	70 or 30%	58 or 28%	20 or 13%	3 or 3%	151	82%
Men	9 or 11%	17 or 30%	3 or 6%	0	29	15%
LGBTQI	4 or 44%	0	0	0	4	3%
	83	75	23	3	184	100%

The Table above shows that 21% or 184 of 853 community members have attended online learning sessions on OSAEC led by children. The proportion of those who have attended to the total respondents per gender is consistently low across all ages and

genders, ranging from 6 to 44%. The Low proportion infers either the lack of access or the lack of training provision to parents and community members. The data correlate with the data from interviews and FGDs showing very little opportunities to attend online and offline training on OSAEC. Older age groups (46 and older) for both men and women show low percentage and this can be due to gender norms around parenting. For LGBTQI+, only the younger age group (25-35) have attended training and this can be also due to parenting reflecting parents being more aware of SOGIE and therefore are more supportive of gender diversity.

There is no data about the types of online learning sessions. Moving forward, learning sessions can include gender-sensitivity training for community members to increase their knowledge about gender with a view for them to respect and embrace diversity across all genders.

1.1.5 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Number of children, youth, adults including girls and LGBTI children, reached online and offline via the local and national advocacy campaigns for OSAEC's awareness, prevention, and response, disaggregated by age and gender.

TABLE 38: COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED BY ONLINE AND OFFLINE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS ON OSAEC

Gender	25-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Total	Percentage
Women	110 or 48%	92 or 30%	56 or 38%	24 or 30%	282	83%
Men	32 or 40%	13 or 23%	8 or 17%	4 or 57%	57	16%
LGBTQI+	4 or 44%	0	0	0	4	1%
Total	146	105	64	28	343	100%

The Table above shows that 40% or 343 of 853 parents, caregivers, and community members have accessed online and offline advocacy campaigns on OSAEC. The proportion of those who were reached by campaigns to the total survey respondents per gender indicate a low percentage that range from 17% to 57%. Women aged 25-35 years old account for 48% while 56+ men account for 57%.

1.1 Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Increased children, youth and parents' opportunities for participation and mechanisms for decision-making at the local level.

1.2.1. Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of LCPC and BLCPC's meetings where children/youth participate to discuss the implementation of anti- OSAEC laws and policies.

0 (2023)

Qualitative data indicate that children and young people have not been involved in decision-making in BCPC/LCPC. This has been confirmed by a key informant that the presence of children and young people in some LCPC meetings are merely consultative. They are asked about children's issues but are not involved in decisions about programs, services, and budget allocations.

Similarly, none of the CYP who attended the FGDs in all areas indicate low level of participation in general and in particular, at BCPCs. This was also the same sentiment shared by LGU representatives at the barangay level, also owing to the non-functional BCPCs.

1.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of action plans designed by children and adults to improve participation in community-based formal and non- formal mechanisms for advancing children's rights and inclusion of OSAEC.

0 (2023)

- In 2023, there has been no report of action plans designed by adults and children to improve the participation of children in community-based formal and non-formal mechanisms for advancing children's rights and inclusion of OSAEC.

1.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of children/youth/adults participating in advocacy activities for OSAEC prevention at different levels (local, national, regional, international), including, LCPC/BLCPC's meetings, advisory groups, and national advocacy organised by CSOs, disaggregated by age and gender.

0 (2023)

- In 2023, no young people reported being part of anti-OSAEC advocacy activities:

Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Enhanced children and youth's leadership skills on advocacy to combat OSAEC.

1.3.1 Indicator 1 related to Output 3 of Outcome 1: Number of children and youth trained on leadership and organisational development, including advocacy, disaggregated by age and gender.

TABLE 39: CHILDREN AND YOUTH TRAINED ON LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender	10-17 years old	18-24 years old	Total	Percentage
Girls	22 or 10%	39 or 11%	61	62%
Boys	8 or 8%	15 or 8%	23	23%
Lesbian	0	0	0	0
LGBTQI	2 or 6%	15 or 24%	17	17%
Total	32	67	99	100%

The Table above shows that 11% or 99 children and young people have attended leadership training. The proportion of those who have been trained to survey participants per gender shows that LGBTQI+ children and young people aged 18-24 years old account for 24%. This is a small proportion but is the largest compared to 8% of boys in both age groups, and 10 and 11% of girls in 10-17 and 18-25 age groups, respectively.

FGD participants also indicated that activities for young people are focused on sports and there is limited training or activities apart from sports. This is an important insight and can inform Project CONEC's strategies including launching different activities that will engage with all age groups and genders. for younger age groups.

1.3.2 Indicator 2 to Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Number of children and youth that participated in annual national consultation and leadership summits, and consultations on project evaluation, disaggregated by age and gender.

5 (2023)

In 2023, 5 young people reported participating in consultations although not specifically on OSAEC. Two young people from Taguig (2 girls; 18-20 years old and 20-24 years old) reported participating in annual local and national summits related to child protection and OSAEC. The topics discussed in those summits and events included:

- Break the Prevalence, End the Violence: Protecting Children, Creating a Safe Philippines
- To love and to be loved seminar

- National Children's Month
- Seminar Against Online Sexual Abuse Exploitation of Children
- Symposium sa Barangay Laban sa Sekswal at Karahasan (Barangay Symposium against sexual harassment)

Three young people are from Bohol who reported taking part in youth assemblies and advocacy campaigns. All three are girls; one is 13-15 years old and 2 are 19-21 years old.

It appears that the participation of children and young people in assemblies is low. While assemblies are a good way to provide a networking opportunity and to increase children's awareness about relevant issues, only a selected few can attend. It is possible that a more targeted approach at the barangay or even Purok level is more accessible to many children and young people.

1.3.3 Indicator 3 to Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Number of online and offline advocacy initiatives to combat OSAEC that are led by children and young people.

- 0 (2023)

2.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Developed and operationalized referral protocols, including support of child protection professionals and the private sector, for children victims of OSAEC.

2.1.1 Indicator 1 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of NGAs, LGUs/BLGUs/LCPC/LCA T and private company actors (individual) trained on child protection related laws and their roles in OSAEC prevention and response, disaggregated by public, private and gender.

100 approx. (2023)

In 2023, approximately 100 individuals attended seminars, training and orientation about OSAEC-related topics:

- 0 individuals attending training on child protection at the barangay level.
- 6 of the 7 LCPCs (5-10 members) including GAD officers have participated in training about the OSAEC law or RA 11930.
- Region 7 RIACAT members (approx. 10) have been oriented on the OSAEC law.
- 66 individuals from 4 private companies attended training on child protection protocols.

Considering the size of the municipalities and the volume of BCPCs and other structures, the data shows a very low take up of child protection training. The impact of this is evident in the lack of consistency in reporting OSAEC. Because barangay LGUs are not empowered, there is also a tendency to refer all cases (e.g. the experience of the 7 OSAEC survivors) to MSWDOs.

There is also lack of joint training for LGUs and private sector groups which could be excellent opportunities for partnership work, consolidate data, and complement resources. More importantly, child protection should be tackled holistically - with all actors performing their respective roles. Separate training for LGUs will create silo- working, making it more challenging to address OSAEC. Joint training or opportunities to network will also prevent duplication of services.

2.1.2 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of MDTs/QRTs members trained on OSAEC prevention and response, disaggregated by gender.

- No data was made available from interviews or secondary data review.

2.1.3 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of LGUs' referral protocols improved through technical support from NGAs and CSOs that can provide effective guidelines in OSAEC case management.

0 (2023)

- In 2023, no LGUs have received technical support from NGAs and CSOs on effective guidance in OSAEC case management.

2.2 Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Strengthened service providers and private sector's capacity and engagement in preventing and responding to OSAEC cases.

2.2.1 Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of private sector representatives (e.g. tech companies, money transfer agencies, financial institutions, telecommunication companies, and transport and tourism establishments) and service providers (LGUs, community watch groups, LCPCs/LCAT-VAWC) trained on the referral pathway and protocols, to identify and refer victims to QRTs/MDTs for appropriate action, disaggregated by gender.

TABLE 40: SERVICE PROVIDERS, PRIVATE COMPANIES, AND SCHOOLS TRAINED ON CP PROTOCOLS

Number of staff and volunteers trained on Child Protection Protocols	Number of providers training volunteers	Number of providers training paid staff
None (0)	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)
1	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)
2	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)
30	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)
No access data	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)
Faculty from the guidance office		1 (11.1%)

The Table above shows that 5 of the 9 providers/private companies provided training to their staff and volunteers. Four providers trained between 1 and 2 staff and 1-2 volunteers while one provider trained 30 volunteers and 30 staff.

In addition to training on CP protocols, private companies have existing CP mechanisms as indicated in the next Table. It should be noted that private organizations have their respective protocols to start with. This is an important insight in that Project CONEC can tap them as partners to reach out to more children and young people.

TABLE 41: PRIVATE SECTOR CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS

Existing Child Protection Mechanisms	Frequency (double counting)	Percentage
Monitoring of the children and young people using our services for early detection of possible online sexual exploitation.	5	55.6%
A set of referral protocols	4	44.4%
Established policy that prevents OSAEC	3	33.3%
Programs and services to prevent OSAEC	2	22.2%
Partnership with LGUs and other service providers	2	22.2%
Provision of training/seminar/information about child protection to parents	2	22.2%
Production and dissemination of information materials for community members	1	11.1%
Programs and services to respond to OSAEC cases	1	11.1%
N/A	2	22.2%

Data were not available about the training provided to LGUs, LCPCs/LCAT-VAWC on the referral pathway and protocols, although interviews with LGU officials at the barangay level signified that they have not attended any training on the referral pathway specific to OSAEC.

2.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of service providers and private sector's representatives who completed the awareness sessions on technology-enabled hotline and helpline desks for OSAEC reporting and case management available at the national and local level.

In 2023, there was no report about service providers and private sector's representatives completing awareness sessions on technology-enabled hotline and helpline desks. However, DILG reported that they have created a memorandum about the MAKABATA helpline in 2024 and it will be disseminated to all LGUs in 2025. The memorandum indicates provision of technical assistance to LGUs in partnership with DSWD regional offices.

2.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of private sector representatives that participate in advocacy summits on OSAEC issues and prevention, disaggregated by gender.

- In 2023 there was no report about private sector representatives participating in advocacy summits on OSAEC issues and prevention.

2.3 Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Promoted access and provision of child protection services at the national and local levels.

2.3.1 Indicator 1 to Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Number of local chief executive/ LGUs' representatives engaged through the lobby and advocacy activities led by children, youth and community, to influence duty-bearers to include OSAEC related child protection agenda in the LGUs executive and legislative plans, and increase children's access to child protection services, disaggregated by gender.

- 0 (2023)

In 2023, no chief executives or LGU representatives have engaged in lobby and advocacy activities led by children, youth and community to influence legislative plans and increase access to child protection services.

2.3.2 Indicator 2 to Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Number of cases provided/referred for child protection services, disaggregated by age and gender of the beneficiary.

7 (2023)

- 7 girls were victims of OSAEC and referred to child protection services.
- 15 to 18 years old (no available written data; data gathered from interviews with LGU officials)

3.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Developed local policies and ordinances aligned with Anti-OSAEC law at the city/municipal level.

3.1.1 Indicator 1 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of recommendations developed from the updated baseline data on LGBTI children at-risk or victims of OSAEC in the target areas, to be used for the development of local policies.

0 (2023)

- No recommendations were developed from the updated baseline data on LGBTQI who were at risk of OSAEC. It should be noted that data were not available in LGUs, and the data indicated in this report were gathered from interviews.
- Data management has been identified as a challenge that results in difficulty in following up reported cases. This study found that LGUs do not have monitoring systems which makes it difficult to share data for policymaking and service development purposes.

3.1.2 Indicator 2 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of children who participated in bi-annual consultative meetings with LCPCs to influence decision on policy implementation, disaggregated by age and gender.

0 (2023)

- No child participated in bi-annual consultative meetings with LCPCs to influence decision on policy implementation.

3.1.3 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of meetings between CSOs and LGUs to provide CSOs' technical inputs to make local policies/ordinances on OSAEC at the city and municipal level

- In 2023 – no meeting was held between CSOs and LGUs to provide technical inputs on OSAEC-related ordinances.

3.2 Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Enhanced social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

3.2.1 Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of consultations conducted between children and agencies implementing social protection, to make social protection schemes gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

- In 2023 - No consultations have been conducted between children and agencies.

3.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of lobbying meetings by CSOs and children with LGUs to promote social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

- In 2023, no lobbying meetings by CSOs and children were held.

3.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of meetings between CSOs and LGUs to provide CSOs' technical inputs to make social protection schemes gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

- In 2023, no meetings between CSOs and LGUs to provide technical inputs were held.

Emerging Themes

The data gathered through quantitative surveys (N= 1767) and qualitative interviews (N=120) provided insights into the trend and incidence of OSAEC and an appreciation of the issue from the nuanced experiences and perspectives of children, young people, and service providers.

This section will present the key themes that emerged from the data. While the study confirms what is known about OSAEC in some parts of the country and in the world, this study has delved into the intersection between gender and OSAEC.

The findings may or may not resonate with how OSAEC is experienced in other provinces and therefore cannot be generalized. Nonetheless, the study has achieved its aim of setting the benchmark that will inform CONEC Project's strategies.

The context of OSAEC in the target areas

The discussion below will provide insights into the factors associated with OSAEC and the forms of OSAEC in the target areas. There is also a discussion on OSAEC as it is linked with social media usage as well as the experiences of children and young people and their families in terms of services or interventions available in the community.

Factors associated with OSAEC

There are several social and economic factors including financial difficulties. Children from families who are financially challenged may resort to OSAEC to earn money. Some parents may knowingly overlook the issue as OSAEC becomes a livelihood for the family. For some, the drug dependency of their parents was the main factor for OSAEC, with the income generated by the child supporting the parents' vices. It appears that poverty - may it be the lack of resources for the family, or poverty caused by social issues including drug addiction among parents - is the main driver of OSAEC

Children and youth who attended the focus group discussions all agreed that the reason why OSAEC occurs among children is often linked to financial incentives. A child from a low-income family who engages in OSAEC may earn money that benefits their families. Some children receive encouragement from their parents while some may earn money against their will.

“

For me, it was money. My mother died and I was being looked after by my auntie, and her family is poor. I am not the priority in terms of food, so I support myself (OSAEC survivor, girl, 16 years old).



Children with experienced of online sexual abuse also said that sometimes, children are tempted to acquire material things such as a new phone, which they can easily order from online shops. One reason may also be negative peer influence, which was the case for two of the 6 child interviewees. Peer pressure and friends' influence were also indicated as one driver of OSAEC in the survey. According to one survivor, she was encouraged by her friends who are themselves into online relationships with foreigners.

“



The foreigner went to the Philippines and my friend introduced me to him. He sent me a friend request on FB.

Additionally, ignorance plays a role. For example, a 12-year-old child may be innocent and unaware of the potential consequences that could affect them.

“

This can be due to a lack of parental guidance. Young children are exposed to social media at such an early age, it may lead to addiction, where they might encounter censored and malicious content or even pornography” (FGD participant).



Accessing the internet outside home is not that much of an issue. LGU officials said that while numerous internet cafes are regulated, most children have access to a Wi-Fi at home and 'pisonet' making access affordable. Pisonet is a mini-type internet cafe

which charges as low as one peso (peso means one peso) to access the internet and is popular among community residents. Networks like Smart and Globe also offer low- cost internet data for phones. Indeed, access to mobile phones has increased over time. According to Our World in Data (2023), close to seventy-three percent (72.90 %) of the world's population have access to internet technologies for different activities, including school, work, entertainment, news, community, and government services. Interestingly, ownership or access to mobile phones in the Philippines is even higher than the world's average with a staggering 76.86% in 2019 (Our world in Data, 2023).

Key informants and FGD participants believe that the lack of parental guidance can result in unregulated use of social media. They also said that some parents do not know how to use smartphones and so they cannot guide their children on online safety. While it is normal to get curious, some children need guidance from their parents. Without proper supervision, they may be tempted to chat with strangers which may lead to online abuse. LGU officials were silent on their roles in raising parents' awareness and their role in providing guidance or policies about the participation of technological companies in preventing OSAEC. There seems to be a sense of unfairly blaming the parents.

Also due to the lack of parental guidance, children are easily influenced by their friends. This was the case for all six OSAEC survivors/at risk – they have friends who encouraged them to try connecting to foreigners. Unfortunately, their friends also do perform online activities with strangers, and these cases are not being reported.

There are distinct factors associated with different genders. Girls from the younger age group (10-17 years old) are easily influenced by their friends and often are enticed to explore ways to earn to buy new things their parents cannot provide them. On the other hand, LGBTQI+ children socialize more to connect for friendship. They also said that they can freely express themselves online rather than offline, such as the experiences of two LGBTQI+ children who attended the validation workshop. One was lured to sending explicit photos by pretending to be a girl. Being of diverse genders increases their vulnerabilities as the need for being accepted is greater than boys or girls. LGBTQI+ children feel a sense of isolation and connecting with strangers online give them a sense of belongingness.

What this study found reflects the findings from two recent studies in the Philippines. For example, poverty was found to be the driving factor of OSAEC in Davao City. The financial hardship that was exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic as people shifted to online platforms made it easier for perpetrators to access potential victims. The study also found barangay officials have little knowledge and capability in handling OSAEC

cases. In addition to poverty, the factors identified as drivers of OSAEC include naivety, peer pressure, distorted perspectives on filial obligations, minimal awareness, and the lack of proactive measures by duty-bearers (Dela Rosa, Lopez, & Manapol, 2023).

Poor socio-economic conditions were also a driver of OSAEC in Camarines Sur. In addition, it was also found that there are family factors including unsupervised access to the internet and devices and parents' lack of knowledge on the use of phones and the internet. There is also limited knowledge among community residents about child protection and this contributes to the prevalence of OSAEC cases (Sales et al., 2023).

Forms of OSAEC

This study found that the primary form of OSAEC is the creation and distribution of explicit materials such as photos and videos, as experienced by the interview participants and the unreported cases found in the survey. At the validation workshop with adults (i.e. representatives of CSOs, LGUs, and local partners), it was mentioned that self-facilitated sexual videos also occur. However, this aspect was not explored in this study and therefore we don't have data to support it. It needs further investigation.

Understanding the forms of OSAEC provides an insight into the importance of exploring children and young people's behaviours and the factors associated with their actions. It is also important to empower children especially girls and LGBTQI+ about tailored topics such as online grooming and harassment. The same topics can also be delivered to community members to increase their capacity to protect their children.

The above resonates with the study with Israeli children where the most common forms of abuse were the distribution of sexual content and sexual solicitation (Lusky-Weisrose, et al. 2024). In Bangladesh, twenty-one 13-17 years old reported facing online sexual and exploitation where they are being asked to send naked photos, be naked in video calls, and have virtual sex (Islam et al., 2024).

In the US, a survey with 2639 teenagers 13-18 years old revealed that online child sexual abuse happens to 15.6%. The most prevalent form of online sexual abuse is image-based, reported by 11.0%; while self-produced child sexual abuse images was reported by 7.2%. In addition, non-consensual sexting, and online grooming were experienced by 7.2% and 5.4%, respectively. In all those forms of online sexual abuse, 13-17 years old were the prime age of vulnerability. Interestingly, the perpetrators in most categories were not strangers but predominantly dating partners, friends, and acquaintances (Finkelhor, Turner, and Colburn, 2022).

Social media and OSAEC

All children and young people who took part in the interviews reported using social media including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Viber, and Telegram for various reasons. Most of them use it for educational purposes, to keep up with trending news, and share their stories. Some said that it boosts their confidence when people react positively to their post.



There are many perks to using social media, such as for educational purposes, connecting with our loved ones, watching the news, keeping up with trends, and for entertainment. Because of social media, we can easily communicate and stay updated on timely news, such as typhoon updates” (FGD participant, girl, 15 years old, Cebu City).



Most young people believe that social media is not harmful to teenagers, and its harm depends on individual children. One suggested that teenagers have a sense of ethics and know the difference between right and wrong.



We can discern what to do and what not to do. We also understand what is morally right or wrong, and we learn how to protect ourselves”. (FGD participant, gay, 14 years old, Cebu City).



They all agreed that they are curious about the world and what it has to offer but the advice they receive from their parents is helpful. Unfortunately, the unregulated use of social media has negative effects including addiction, access to pornography, grooming, and misinformation.



On the other hand, the drawback of using social media is that it can cause youth to lose focus on their studies. Some even spend their time chatting with foreigners on social media, which may lead to harm or online abuse” (FGD participant, boy, 14 years old, Cebu City).



Gender and OSAEC

TABLE 42: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF VULNERABILITIES, COPING MECHANISMS, AND BARRIERS TO SERVICE OF GIRLS, BOYS, AND LGBTI CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Gender Group	Key Vulnerabilities	Coping Mechanisms	Barriers to Service
Girls	Grooming, body shaming, societal pressure, fear of pregnancy, victim-blaming	Avoidance of certain platforms, seeking help from friends, silence at home	Shame, fear of judgment, parental backlash, lack of gender-sensitive services
Boys	Risk-taking behavior, peer pressure, desensitization to sexual content	Peer support, denial or dismissal of experiences	Lack of awareness of reporting mechanisms, normalization of abuse among peers
LGBTQI	Online harassment, isolation, seeking validation online, grooming by fake identities	Online connections, peer circles, self-isolation	Stigma, discrimination, lack of SOGIESC-affirming services, fear of being outed

This study found that girls and LGBTQI+ are particularly vulnerable to being victims or at risk of OSAEC. Girls tend to post photos and videos which often expose their bodies due to the need to be validated which boosts their self-esteem. This can be attributed to the standards of beauty set by the society for women, causing pressure on girls to subscribe to such standards to feel accepted. They may also post photos and videos due to pressure from peers as being part of a group or to belong is important to children and youth.

The vulnerability of LGBTQI+ children and young people can be due to people taking advantage of their presence online. They use online platforms to socialise and actively look for friends, as one young person said:.



“I feel less isolated and more accepted online. People don’t judge me for my gender. However, this is taken advantage of by strangers, preying on my need for belongingness. They are friendly at the start until they start to text vulgar words and demand for photos of my private parts.” (Gay, 16 years old, Mandaue City)

The above also resonates with the experience of one young person who took part in an FGD. He said that he chatted with a stranger on Facebook just for fun who initiated sending nude photos. (Gay, 17, years old, Mandaue City).

While children and young people feel that there is no definitive difference in vulnerability to becoming a victim of OSAEC based on gender, the survey results indicated otherwise. The data revealed that there were 169 unreported OSAEC cases and 13 or 8% of those children are Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender. The vulnerability of LGBTQI+ may be an issue about awareness among children and youth participants. This finding will help raise the issue to encourage more discussions on vulnerabilities of different genders.

The vulnerability of LGBTQI+ children can be due to their feeling isolated and not being accepted in the community. This can be due to the societal view of gender, perpetuated by traditional norms and values associated with being men/boys and women-girls. LGBTQI+ children and young people find friendship and feel accepted online, enticing them to continue navigating social media to continue to feel they belong.

In the light of gendered expectations, there are also variations on how vulnerabilities among genders manifest in how they report and seek support. Girls feel a sense of shame and fear of not living up to the expectations of their family and community of being pure and modest. Being at risk of or being victims of OSAEC defies those expectations, deterring girls from reporting. On the other hand, boys do not report being at risk or victims to appear masculine. LGBTQI+ children already experience discrimination and social media helps in giving them a sense of belongingness. Reporting OSAEC may even cause further discrimination.

A further comparison of help-seeking behavior showed that while 91% of girls said they feel confident seeking help, only 45% of non-binary youth expressed the same. Boys, meanwhile, reported higher confidence but lower awareness of formal reporting channels, often resorting to informal networks or not disclosing at all. These gender-based differences underscore the need for tailored messaging, targeted education campaigns, and inclusive service design.

Vulnerability may also increase if a child knows how to speak and communicate in English. Many Filipino children are fluent in English and this makes them vulnerable to online sexual abuse as perpetrators can converse with them in English. Perpetrators use conversations to groom their victims, and it makes it easier for them to convince the children that what they are doing is normal.

The link between gender and OSAEC was also found in one study in Australia with 3500 survey respondents. It was found that girls were significantly more likely than boys to experience both nonconsensual images sharing victimization (10.9 % v 3.8 %) and online sexual solicitation by an adult (26.3 % v 7.6 %) before age 18. In addition, gender diverse individuals experienced higher online sexual solicitation (47.9 %).

This study found that there is very little, even lack of, targeted preventative interventions for different cohorts of children including LGBTQI+ and girls. The data presented above (i.e.. LGBTQI children account for 8% of unreported OSAEC cases) alludes to the vulnerability of LGBTQI children but there are no gender-responsive preventive and protective interventions. There is also very little or no preventative intervention for vulnerable families such as those whose parents work long hours and households which are financially-challenged. Lastly, there is very little intervention to raise the awareness of people on gender, especially targeting parents on how they can make their children more gender-aware. Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) in schools can be utilised to raise parents' awareness. Moreover, inclusion of gender sensitivity topics and age appropriate gender discussions needs to be included in school curricula to facilitate awareness.

Structurally, LGUs created GAD focals to deal with gender-based issues of women and girls. However, GAD programs are reactive rather than proactive. For example, they deal with gender-based violence when it happens instead of preventing it from happening by educating community members about gender and women rights, empowering women and girls, and advocating for more gender-responsive services.

Using gender analysis, the following should also be considered by Project CONEC.

First, access to resources and protective services for girls and LGBTQI children is weak. The study found that LGBTQI+ children face heightened risks of online grooming and exploitation, yet there are no specific programs tailored to their needs. Preventive interventions should ensure that LGBTQI+ children can access safe spaces online and offline, with tailored digital literacy and mental health support.girls and LGBTQI+ children's access to resources and control over resources is weak. This includes the lack of gender-sensitive preventative and protective provision.

Second, the roles of girls and LGBTQI+ children are merely as recipients of services rather than as decision-makers. This is linked with the weak child participation mechanisms in LGU structures where there are limited opportunities for children for girls and LGBTQI+ children not only to act as resource persons. The project should push for their meaningful engagement in LGU decision-making spaces, ensuring that they have voting power and representation in child protection committees.but also to have voting power and help shape policies and services.

Third, there are cultural norms and beliefs that perpetuate OSAEC. While there is value in children and young people helping the family in terms of generating income for family

consumption, there should not be expectations for them to earn. The study highlighted that families often justify child labor as a means of survival, with some parents prioritizing short-term financial gains over education. Project CONEC should work on community-based education campaigns that challenge these norms and promote the long-term benefits of keeping children in school. The value of education is a priority and parents should be supported to enable them to send their children to school.

Last, there is great need for gender-sensitive planning at the LGU level where strategies and budget allocation will support empowerment of girls and LGBTQI+ children, and raise the awareness of the community about the rights of all children including girls and LGBTQI+. The study found that while GAD mechanisms exist, they primarily focus on women's issues and lack inclusivity for LGBTQI+ children. LGUs should be supported in developing intersectional policies that recognize and address the vulnerabilities of children across gender identities and socio-economic backgrounds.

Discussion

Project CONEC aims to strengthen the Child Protection Systems by advocating for policy changes, trauma informed services, and meaningful participation of children and young people. The section below presents the baseline data from the narratives of the study participants. The presentation is structured according to the Project outcomes.

Outcome 1: Capacity: There is existing knowledge of OSAEC among children and families but weak capacity in addressing OSAEC. There is also weak participation of children and community members in tackling OSAEC.

Disconnect between knowledge and capacity

Data from the qualitative interviews with LGU officials and children and young people reveal that knowledge about OSAEC is relatively low particularly at the barangay level. Children and young people have only recently heard about OSAEC from Bidlisiw and ECPAT representatives who visited their barangays to establish Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) relevant to the implementation of the CONEC Project.

It was also reported that very little is done to raise the awareness of the community and children and young people about OSAEC, apart from some young people in Cebu City who have been trained by Bidlisiw Foundation. KIIs indicate that the general knowledge among LGU officials is low.



“It was very recent that we heard about OSAEC from ECPAT in Oct 2024. We did not know about it before that. It was only when ECPAT visited the different barangays in 2024 that barangay councils learned about the issue” (Barangay LGU, Bohol).

On the contrary, data from the survey revealed that there is a relatively high level of knowledge about OSAEC among children and young people and community members. It may be possible that this awareness is facilitated by their access to social media and news from television and word of mouth. However, it also appears that there is indifference towards the issue. One LGU official commented that community residents typically respond that it is not their concern and to "mind your own business." While the issue comes up in conversations, it is often left unaddressed and sometimes tolerated.

There seems to be a disconnect between knowledge of OSAEC and capacity to report it. While 86% of the children survey participants know where to report OSAEC, there are also numerous unreported cases - 18% or 169 cases of children and young people who were at risk or victims of OSAEC.

In addition, the survey also indicates a low level of awareness among children and young people about preventative and protective interventions (16%). Unfortunately, while there is a high level of confidence in services expressed by the respondents (84%), there is no data about how many of those needing help actually sought help.

The above supports the findings of an ethnographic qualitative study in two communities in Metro Manila which indicated that online sex activities had become a source for easy money for the child and the family. While it is considered 'disgusting', it is also considered 'normal' and not harmful, owing to its nature of anonymity and the absence of any actual physical contact. The study highlighted that community members tolerate such activities and tend not to report them (Ramiro et al., 2019).

The experience of children at risk and victims of OSAEC revealed that their poor economic situation was the main factor associated with OSAEC. However, none of the families of the six CYP have received any social protection interventions to tackle poverty. Two girls (13 and 15) earn money from begging from motorists so they can buy food for themselves, and one girl (16) has already dropped out from school and is now cohabiting with her boyfriend. This alludes to the lack of protective services for children and their families.

CYP Participation in decision-making is weak

The participation of children and young people in decision making is more consultative rather than collaborative. For example, child representatives are invited to meetings and are asked about the issues faced by children and young people to be considered in planning services (Calape, Bohol).

In Cebu, a 17-year-old girl child was elected from 80 barangays youth organizations. While she provides her views on young people's issues and the programs which may respond to those issues, she has no voting power. Similarly, in Duljo-Fatima, some children members of the BCPC were asked to observe in meetings but do not engage in decision-making. It should also be noted that all BCPCs are non-functional, and therefore this structure may not be the avenue where children and young people can participate. On the contrary, it appears that children's participation is stronger outside the LGU system. Local partners such as ECPAT and Bidlisiw Foundation support youth leaders who then advocate for anti-OSAEC measures.

For example, one member of a peer support group said she advocates for the inclusion of OSAEC in the curriculum and she is being listened to. She reported that children should know about what OSAEC, how prevalent it is, and the importance of addressing it. Educating children in schools about what OSAEC is, how prevalent it is, and the importance of addressing it in society is crucial.



I believe that by including OSAEC and other laws, such as the Right of a Child to an education, we can help reduce the increasing number of cases" (FGD participant, girl 16 years old, Cebu).



Student leaders and ambassadors also pledge to maximize every opportunity to spread awareness and information about the problem of OSAEC in the society.

If the BCPCs are the primary structure for children and young people's participation, BCPCs should be strengthened. However, there are issues as BCPCs are highly politicized in that they have become co-terminus with the elected officials. In the experience of almost all barangay LGUs, it takes time to organise their BCPCs as they are newly elected and have not been trained about their mandate to create BCPCs. It may be that BCPCs should not be the primary structure for children and young people's participation but community-based groups such as church groups, youth/peer groups, and school organizations. In the experience of CYP in Cebu City, members of a peer group organized by Bidlisiw Foundation champion not only children participation but also campaign against OSAEC.

Outcome 2: Services: The capacity of child protection services to deliver child-friendly and trauma-informed OSAEC services at local and national levels is weak.

City and barangay officials in Cebu said that there are constraints in implementing the current Cebu City Children's Code. These challenges include the perceived lack of cooperation from some families who may prioritize their jobs over attending seminars. Barangay officials are also faced with other child protection issues such as drug addiction and teenage pregnancy. Funding issue was also cited as a reason for the lack of robust implementation of the Code.

Parents' lack of guidance was also seen as a challenge specifically in enforcing curfews and protocols. Issues arise from a lack of parental guidance since most parents do not have time to supervise their children; they spend more time at work and often neglect supervising the internet use of their children (Duljo-Fatima).

The main challenge at the regional level was lack of residential facilities for OSAEC victims. While their institutions such as Arms of Love and City Social Development Office exist, they cater to Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) and cases of rape or prostitution. A representative of RIACAT said:



We [the rescue team, RO7] sometimes resort to borrowing vehicles to rescue. Another challenge is when we rescue victims. There is no facility for boys and for girls, it is getting crowded. Barangay officials call DSWD to ask where they can refer the child but there is not enough space for them.

There is also the challenge brought about by budget constraints. For example, an LGU in Bohol cannot enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with ECPAT because of existing administrative procedures that render their budget inoperative. Budget constraints also affect the ability of barangay officials to conduct home visits who often resort to spending their personal money.

Budget constraints also affect the efficient implementation of child protection protocols as barangay officials tend to refer child protection cases to the municipal social worker, because "The MSWDO can provide better support to the child and the family." In addition, barangay councils cannot provide training and seminars and have limited resources to provide support to the family of the abused child, such as livelihood assistance. Lastly, the lack of training on trauma-informed counselling for first responders such as VAWC officers result in lack of confidence to provide timely support to the child or young person.

The experience of the six OSAEC survivors showed their lack of access to social protection services especially addressing the financial hardship that contributed to their being victims of OSAEC. While they receive interventions from CONEC's local partners, they are not aware of any services provided by the LGU.

Reporting and Referral Pathway

This study found that the reporting pathway of OSAEC cases is influenced by possible legal processes where perpetrators will be eventually prosecuted. This results in very distinct tasks for the barangay and municipal/city LGUs. While cases are initially reported at the community level (e.g. teacher, barangay VAWC), these are immediately referred to the Police and cybercrime unit that will lead to legal proceedings.

Cases are also made known to CSWDO and CSOs (e.g. in Taguig City) when the International Criminal Police (INTERPOL) reaches out to the relevant government agencies. Cases in Taguig were identified when INTERPOL tracked the communication and financial transactions between the foreign nationals and Filipino children.

While there is an expectation for barangay LGU to take an active role in managing OSAEC cases during reporting and rescue operations, this is hindered by legal mandates. Barangay LGUs are mandated not to intervene once cases are elevated to the city/ municipal level due the nature of OSAEC being a criminal case, and therefore, this will be managed by RIACAT. As children are put in shelters, the role of Barangay LGUs stops. This results in uncoordinated efforts towards supporting the child and preparing the family for the eventual reintegration.

The above dynamics, the possibility of parent perpetrators to be prosecuted, and very distinct often siloed roles of actors at different levels result in hesitation to report the abuse on the part of girls and LGBTQI+ children. In Taguig, a 16-year-old boy OSAEC survivor quotes that children are afraid to report online abuses because they fear that their parents will be liable and be separated from them.

The roles of different actors are critical in the reporting process, but this study found that not all actors report OSAEC cases. While teachers appear to be the primary referrers, parents can be hesitant which can be due to being unaware of what to look for or hesitant because they are the perpetrators. Private companies such as remittance centers and telecommunication centers are possible reporters and this was suggested in FGDs. However, it was also mentioned that money cannot be traced back to a perpetrator.



“Anyone can cash out using GCash and shops that provide GCash (online money transfer app) services only need the reference number. They also do not investigate who the sender or what is the purpose of the remittance (adult female, FGD participant, Calape).”

It also became apparent that the role of the Police is to receive reports rather than to proactively locate potential victims. In the case of Taguig, for example, the Police were brought in only after the Interpol identified foreigners involved with Filipino children.

Prosecution

In one specific case, the WCPD coordinated with the Philippine National Police for the prosecution of the perpetrators. They also developed a strategy to connect with the child’s customer if they are from another country. However, building a case to seek justice for the child was not easy.



At the regional level, one challenge in building up a case against the perpetrator is that sometimes they are the parents. The children don’t want to testify against their parents. We are also seen as the villains because that is their source of income. They would say ‘it is better that way, they cannot touch it, they will only look at it’. They’re not concerned about the psychological impact on the child” (RIACAT RO7)



It appears that there is very little appreciation of the psychological impact on the child or young person. For example, unreported cases left a tremendous impact on the victims including mental health issues, resorting to drugs and alcohol, and self-harm. Several FGD participants (N=5) also shared that their friends who are victims of online sexual abuse became depressed, and some had to go far from home to escape humiliation. One of two LGBTQI children who attended the validation workshop also fell victim to OSAEC, and this resulted in depression.

In addition, the process of rescuing children is also traumatic. According to a barangay official who was part of the rescue team, rescued children were more worried or 'traumatised' of being put in a shelter than online sexual abuse. This comment was also shared by the someone from the National Coordination Center Against Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (NCC- OSAEC- CSAEM).

It might be that the trauma and fear to be put in shelters is substantiated by the state of the shelters - e.g. being heteronormative rather than gender-responsive. If that is the case, there is a need to develop or modify our existing shelters to suit the needs of girls and LGBTQI+ children.

Preventative measures

There are quite a few strategies to enhance safety and prevent crime including patrol guards conducting community round roving and surveillance as part of the ordinance on curfew after 10:00 PM. It is seen as a deterrent for children to stay out late at night. Barangay LGUs also coordinated with internet café owners and posted notices regarding the hours that youth are permitted to use the internet. Any violations of this law will result in penalties and the removal of permits. LGU officials also conduct home visitations twice a month to get updates about the child's educational status, and to promote training on effective parenting seminars and counselling.

Children and young people who attended the FGDs and in-depth interviews recognize the value of curfews. However, it was also said that children can be at home and still be vulnerable to OSAEC because of unsupervised access to the internet. Hence, regulating internet access through internet cafes may even deter identification and reporting of potential victims.

The Cebu City LGU has allocated a budget for advocacy against all forms of child abuse, including Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). They have

coordinated with the Department of Education (DepEd) regarding training dates of Parents' Effective Seminar and incorporating online safety in curriculum. They also plan to tap into the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Family Development Service (FDS) training and sessions.

Cebu City has a specific program for LGBTQI children and young people through the LGBTQI+ Federation across Cebu City's 80 barangays. The federation has 2,041 minor members in the North and South Districts. The GAD focal person said that while there may be unreported cases, there are suspicions that OSAEC activities are occurring among LGBTQI children and young people. Unfortunately, the federation has not explored the intersection between OSAEC and LGBTQI. The Federation coordinates with barangay LGUs in providing scholarships to minors who want to go to school through the Cebu City Scholar Program to ensure they receive a proper education. For those aged 24 years and above, they help them acquire skills to start a livelihood project.

However, the provision is generally in response to incidents rather than preventing OSAEC from happening.

Outcome 3: Policies: There are limited child protection policies and social protection schemes at the local and national levels that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

The Child Protection system is defined as the set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks (UNICEF, 2021). This study has shown that the CP protection in the areas covered by the CONEC Project is weak.

While there are child protection protocols, there are no specific ordinances and procedures on responding to OSAEC cases. Barangay LGU (BLGU) representatives reported that they follow certain protocols including reporting and making referrals of children who are being abused. For example, VAW and GAD focal who receive reports of possible child abuse cases are tasked to rescue the child with the assistance of the designated police officer. The child and his/her parents then receive counselling support. Barangay LGUs with enough budget also provide livelihood assistance to parents. The case is then referred to the City Department of Social Welfare Services (DSWS), with the social worker coordinating interventions for the child and the family.

However, the above protocol does not resonate with how the reported OSAEC cases in Bohol and Cebu (n=7) were handled. Social Workers revealed that cases were directly

reported by the children's schoolteacher to the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office. Since the cases involved distribution of explicit materials, they were also referred to the Cybercrime Unit of the Region. Unfortunately, no follow ups were made on the status of the cases. Social Workers commented that child protection cases are directly reported to them, resulting in large caseloads.

Interventions

Survey data indicate that numerous community services are known to community members and CYP including health centers, youth organizations, the Police, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), among others. From the interviews with LGU representatives, some services were identified, as enumerated below. There is an opportunity for LGUs to partner with them on preventative services.

Bohol

- Feed the Children - an international NGO that provides food, education support, and livelihood assistance to families. Their work in the Philippines focuses on food and nutrition access, with supplemental programs in health and clean water, education, and financial planning to provide sustainable solutions to hunger.
- Tzu-chi Foundation - is also an international NGO which provides support to children and families in education, disaster relief, and health, among other things.

Cebu City and Mandaue City

- Asilo dela Milagrosa is a DSWD-accredited child-caring institution in Cebu City. They provide temporary shelter to children aged under 18 who are orphaned, abandoned, voluntarily surrendered, neglected, abused and those in difficult situations.
- Self-employment assistance program by Cebu City LGU for LGBTQI+ children and young people. This program provides financial support and technical assistance to LGBTQI+ young people on starting their own business.
- Cebu City Scholarship Program for LGBTQI+ under 18 is education support provided to under LGBTQI under 18 who wish to continue their studies.
- DSWD's Cebu Center for Women and Children accommodates women and children in need of special protection including OSAEC cases.

Taguig City

- Silungan Center is a residential service that provides temporary shelter to children who are at risk or victims of OSAEC. They offer educational assistance to children, livelihood assistance to families, and awareness raising activities to the community,

among other things. They work with different agencies to provide holistic support to children (and their families), and prepare children for reintegration with the family and community.

Most agencies provide generic services which do not necessarily cater to OSAEC victims. Except for the six children in Taguig who received interventions from AMG Silungan Centre, children and young people who were at risk and survivors of OSAEC revealed that they have not received any services from the agencies. Service provision is also more reactive rather than preventative - that is, there are clamors for shelters for boys and girls but not provisions that will prevent abuse against children.

There is fundamentally a lack of provision that will strengthen families as social institutions that will nurture and protect children. It can be said that the reason why children are influenced by peers and friends is because there is a weakness in family relationships brought about by lack of communication between parents and children, and lack of parental guidance as parents need to work longer hours. There is also very little provision that will uplift the economic situations of poor families. While the Pantawid sa Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps) targets the underprivileged families, there is not enough rigor in combating structural issues that perpetuate poverty including capitalism, privatization, and the lack of employment opportunities for community members.

Project CONEC has an advocacy role not only in making local and national policies and protocols gender sensitive but influencing flagship programs and long-term programs such as 4Ps, TUPAD, and ACAP to be more sustainable and targeted.

Cross-cutting: There is a weak data management system including reporting and monitoring of OSAEC cases.

Barangay LGUs officials reported not being confident with the accuracy of the data they hold. Indeed, it became apparent that reported cases have not been monitored as the reporting was made directly to City/Municipal level. At the city and municipal level, some social workers also felt that data may not be accurate due to the lack of robust monitoring of cases. There are no follow ups when cases are referred to the Cybercrime Unit or to a shelter. The issue of lack of data monitoring is shared by all key informants across all project areas.

The lack of accurate data is also a challenge at the national level. Data held by the NCC-OSAEC-CSAEM come from various national government agencies, and there is no harmonized or unified information. This results in their inability to generate accurate

information. The reason behind this is primarily due to the different reporting systems of agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

NCC-OSAEC-CSAEM utilizes the Committee on the Special Protection of Children (CSPC) case management protocol, which was approved in 2014 and is used for handling cases of abuse, exploitation, and neglect of children, including OSAEC cases. However, this protocol is now subject for a review.

Overall, data management in Cebu and Bohol, and at the regional and national levels can be considered weak. The lack of reliable data is said to be due to the nature of OSAEC and how cases are reported and tracked. Additionally, it is also due to lack of resources (human, time, and skills) in establishing a monitoring system at the barangay level.

Given the numerous issues presented above, some actions were recommended by the research participants, as discussed below.

Addressing OSAEC

Children agreed that there are ways to protect themselves by verifying relevant information before engaging with posts. They also said that self-discipline is crucial, as is shifting our focus to peers and family. Effective time management also allows us to maintain interactions with family and friends.



Information about safe internet usage is taught in our school through subjects like Media and Information Knowledge in high school, which helps us learn how to protect ourselves from potential perpetrators. We have also attended several webinars and church activities focused on this topic” (FGD participant, 15 years old, girl, Cebu City).



Another way to help stop the increasing number of OSAEC cases is to empower and strengthen families. All interviewees feel that parents should intervene by regulating and monitoring their children's social media usage and to instill discipline and provide proper guidance. Hence, open communication is essential for families to establish trust and for parents to validate their children's feelings while guiding them appropriately.

Barangay officials said that it is good way to raise awareness about online sexual abuse is to integrate it into the Family Development Sessions (FDS) in 4Ps. This will enhance their knowledge about online sexual abuse and help them better monitor their children.

While there is a value in having curfews, young people said that online activities can occur anytime and anywhere. They suggested that strict guidance from parents, and if possible, confiscate their children's phones at night and encourage them to sleep instead of using their devices. FGD participants also said that children and young people should also learn how to be safe online. For example, they should know to decline friend requests from strangers.

The work of Sangguniang Kabataan was critiqued in that they mainly focus on sports activities. It was suggested to vary the activities for children especially not everyone is into sports. That way, young people can be active in other things and distract from mobile phones and digital devices.

Last, they suggested that telecommunications network providers like Globe and Smart should provide a primer specifically for parents on investing in Wi-Fi networks, educating them on how to supervise their children. For example, they could inform parents by sending text messages about OSAEC and its signs and symptoms and where to report children at risk of OSAEC.

Good practices

In Tubigon, three strategies are in place and there is a plan to integrate OSAEC into them. For example, they will roll out Empowerment and Reaffirmation Paternal Abilities Training (ERPAT), along with Men Opposed to Violence Against Women Everywhere (MOVE) sessions for fathers, focusing on child protection, corporal punishment, and sexual abuse. OSAEC will be included in the module. They have also developed modules for mothers on how to protect children from physical and sexual abuse.

They also target the youth through a peer educators' scheme to address bullying, early pregnancy, and mental health. In Tubigon, ECPAT and the MSWDO are planning to launch training programs to teach youth how to protect themselves, report incidents, and know where to go if they are at risk. The MSWDO said that a comprehensive approach, starting with fathers as protectors of the family, has gained positive feedback from fathers. Last, there is an acknowledgement that real change in the community starts with the parents, so they are also rolling out the Women Against Violence Everywhere (WAVE) program.

There is also an agreement with the 4Ps or Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program to require fathers to attend the Family Development Session (FDS).

One good practice is the active role of the AMG Silungan Center in ensuring the safety and children's reintegration with their relatives and cooperating with different agencies. AMG Silungan Center works with different NGOs including International Justice Mission and with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) in supporting OSAEC victims by way of provision of services to the child and family, and help with the legal proceedings of the cases. They have facilitated the reintegration of two boys (siblings, 19 and 16) with their aunt. This shows the potential role of NGOs in the whole case management process and ensuring that holistic support is given to the child.

At the national level, DILG has developed a model ordinance on child protection of OSAEC cases which can be adapted by Barangay and City/Municipal LGUs. DILG also included indicators on anti-OSAEC mechanisms/activities in the Child Friendly Local Governance audit (CFLGA). There is also a move to improve data management to ensure accurate and up-to-date data for planning and policymaking purposes.

8. Conclusion

This study provided an in-depth insight into the perspectives of children and young people survivors and at risk, key community actors, service providers and local government units. Although the findings cannot be generalized to all Filipino children, it has contributed to a better understanding of the OSAEC phenomenon in the Philippine context. The study also gained insights into the intersection between gender, sexuality, and OSAEC, and how OSAEC is perpetuated by different micro and macro drivers.

The nature of OSAEC makes it both a personal and structural issue. Its sensitive nature that overlaps with a wide range of driving factors makes it challenging to tackle. OSAEC is a violation of the rights of the child as it can inflict both long- and short-term psychological trauma including isolation, feeling a sense of shame, experiencing anxiety, becoming depressed, contemplating on self-harm, and abuse of alcohol and drugs to cope with the impact of the exploitation.

There is a need to intensify gender awareness, and improve the understanding of children, young people, and community members about OSAEC as a violation of children's rights and a child protection issue that necessitates a whole system approach. It is about building a culture where girls and LGBTQI+ are supported and protected. The stigma attached to OSAEC is linked with the society's view of women and girls, and LGBTQI and they then self-stigmatize or feel a sense of shame. OSAEC should be discussed in a non-stigmatizing manner and this will be through a rights-based approach.

There is also the issue of numerous unreported cases where children and young people did not receive the appropriate intervention. The existence of 169 unreported cases found in the survey also indicates a belief that the child protection system is weak and low level of awareness about OSAEC and where to seek help.

Reporting of cases is deterred primarily by a sense of fear and shame on the part of the OSAEC victims. This can be attributed to gendered norms. For example, girls are expected to be demure and pure, and OSAEC will tarnish this image. For boys who have been victims of OSAEC, the hesitancy to report is also gender-related - where boys are expected to show masculinity. Reporting goes against that image of being masculine, thereby deterring boys from reporting the abuse. For LGBTQI+, reporting online sexual abuse may also stir further discrimination against them, and this stops them from reporting the abuse.

This study also found that OSAEC is driven by a few factors such as poverty, unsupervised use of social media, peer influence, and lack of awareness on online safety. These drivers are often interconnected. For example, parents from poor families may need to work long hours and therefore children are left unsupervised. Children may spend more time with peers and friends who may negatively influence them. Combined with easy, unsupervised access to social media, children become prey to perpetrators of OSAEC.

Poverty is found to be prevalent among the survey participants. Almost half (44%) of the 853 community residents earn P15,000/month and below while 32% (N=271) reported having no income. Data from children and young people survey also showed that 64% belong to households earning below P15,000 a month. This shows the socio- economic situation of families in the target areas and should inform the project strategies, considering that poverty is a driving factor of OSAEC.

In addition, 89% of the households who took part in the survey have children below the age of 17 years old. Having a young population necessitates strengthening of the child protection system in the country, to benefit the children population.

Lastly, this study also found the absence of reliable and accurate data on OSAEC may be contributing to the lack of responsive social protection mechanisms.

The study was able to respond to the following questions which can inform the strategies of Project CONEC.



How can key community actors be engaged to protect all children - especially those with (multiple) marginalised identities - from child exploitation, and how can we support these actors to speak out?

Protecting children is the responsibility of everyone and starts with building a culture of vigilance and respect for all children. It entails the whole system composed of

policymakers and program and services providers at the national and local level, community residents, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), churches and other local groups, educational institutions, local businesses, and children and youth.

At the national level, legislation on OSAEC should have the appropriate implementing rules and regulations that can be adapted at the local level. No ordinance specifically about OSAEC exists at the local level. The plan of the National Coordinating Council to roll-out the model ordinance is a good starting point, as barangay LGUs verbalised their need for technical assistance. Technical assistance from DSWD regional offices should be planned and tailored to the needs of the LGUs, as opposed to being on an ad-hoc basis. The plan of DILG to incorporate indicators tackling OSAEC in the Child-Friendly Local Governance Audit (CFLGA) is also welcomed as it will ensure that LGUs become aware of mechanisms to prevent and address OSAEC.

At the local level, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will play a vital role in building the capacity of LGU officials and residents to understand what OSAEC is and how it can be prevented. Alongside this is a robust preventative mechanism that starts with empowering parents through training and seminars, making information materials accessible, and strengthening child's rights advocacy – making OSAEC not a 'family thing' but a child rights' violation.

However, the approach should not be punitive but supportive. Several cases of OSAEC are unreported and this could be because of a sense of shame, fear, stigma, and the sensitive nature of online sexual abuse. Parents and caregivers must be empowered to be primary protectors of their children by strengthening family relationships where open discussions about digital safety and risks can take place.

Marginalized children—those living in poverty, LGBTQI children, children in rural areas, children with disabilities, and those with limited education—face additional barriers in seeking help due to stigma, lack of access to child-friendly reporting mechanisms, and the absence of tailored protection services. Community actors must be equipped with skills to address these vulnerabilities and ensure that protection systems are inclusive and responsive to the specific needs of at-risk children.

Schools, colleges, and universities interact directly with children. In fact, all OSAEC reported cases were reported by teachers. The curriculum should not only be about academic knowledge but also be able to empower children to be vigilant, assertive, and knowledgeable about how to protect themselves. Educational institutions should implement gender-sensitive child protection policies that recognize the intersectionality

of risks faced by girls and LGBTQI children and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Schools can also engage with parents and offer training and seminars and involve them more actively in their children's education.

Schools should provide training for teachers and students on recognizing and reporting OSAEC, including anonymous and trauma-informed reporting mechanisms. For children in rural areas, alternative learning systems should integrate digital safety education, ensuring that all children—regardless of their socio-economic background—have access to information that protects them online. Additionally, school-based interventions should include disability-inclusive safety measures, ensuring that children with disabilities are not left behind in digital safety education.

Equally important is enabling children and young people to protect themselves by making them aware of their rights, having the ability to discern right from wrong, and knowing where to seek help in times of need. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that children from marginalized backgrounds, particularly those living in poverty, may not always have the means or confidence to access formal protection services. Expanding community-based support, such as safe spaces in schools, gender-sensitive peer support networks, and local helplines, can address these gaps. Community leaders, particularly at the barangay level, must be trained to proactively reach out to children in vulnerable situations, ensuring that localized protection services are accessible and child-friendly.

The different actors above can be tapped to protect children through well-coordinated actions, responsive policies, and genuine collaboration and participation including engagement with children and young people. To make child protection truly inclusive, LGUs must ensure that child protection policies recognize and address the unique risks faced by children with intersecting identities. Gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive approaches should be embedded in all child protection programs to build a system that safeguards every child, especially those most at risk. Additionally, national-level policy frameworks should mandate that all OSAEC response mechanisms integrate a gender and intersectional lens, ensuring that no child—regardless of their identity or socio-economic status—is left behind.



How do children conceptualise safety and risk in different contexts (including online)? And how can this be used to develop interventions to prevent and respond to child exploitation?

Some of the safety measures reported in the survey include not talking to strangers, blocking suspicious people on social media, avoiding involvement with online activities

that makes them vulnerable to online sexual abuse, knowing where to report any suspicion of online exploitation, and having the confidence to seek help if needed. It seems that children's understanding of safety is two-pronged. First, it is about knowing what to do when accessing the internet and second, the ability and confidence to communicate with their parents.

Children's perception of safety and risk is influenced by their age and gender, which impacts how they navigate online spaces. Younger children (10-13 years old) tend to associate safety with avoiding unknown people and explicit threats, often relying on parental guidance. In contrast, older children and adolescents (14-17 years old) develop a more nuanced understanding of online risks, such as privacy breaches, cyberbullying, and digital consent. Boys and girls may also conceptualize safety differently; girls are more likely to express concerns about online harassment and unwanted attention, while boys may focus more on hacking threats or financial scams. LGBTQI children, who often seek community and validation online, face additional risks, including targeted discrimination, and grooming by individuals exploiting their need for safe spaces. These variations underscore the need for tailored interventions that recognize age-specific and gender-sensitive risks.

Survey findings indicate that 74% of children and young people feel safe online because they understand risk-avoidance strategies, such as not accepting friend requests from strangers or blocking suspicious profiles. However, notable disparities exist across gender identities. Girls (83-85%) report feeling safer online compared to boys (42-55%), while LGBTQI respondents show mixed results, with some expressing full confidence (e.g., lesbians and bisexuals at 100%) and others at significantly lower rates (e.g., gay respondents at 50%)

Interventions to prevent and respond to online sexual exploitation may include training on online safety and strengthening family relationships. The latter can be through seminars for parents so they can be empowered to have conversations with their children. Strengthening parent-child relationship can also increase the confidence of parents and children to speak with each other even on sensitive matters. For adolescent girls, interventions should address their heightened vulnerability to online sexual harassment and exploitation, equipping them with digital literacy skills to identify and report predatory behavior. Boys, on the other hand, may benefit from discussions on ethical online behavior, recognizing harmful content, and encouraging responsible digital engagement. LGBTQI children require safe reporting mechanisms and online safety guidance that considers the unique risks they face, such as being outed without consent.

Interventions can also be around raising awareness of the community about the available programs and services which can be tapped to support the family in preventing OSAEC and in reporting possible online exploitation. Children should have the confidence to seek help and know how to access help. Information materials about services and helpline desks can be disseminated in the community. However, barriers to reporting, particularly for marginalized children, must be addressed. Girls may fear stigma, boys may be reluctant to report due to masculinity norms, and LGBTQI children may lack trust in service providers. Ensuring that helplines and reporting mechanisms are confidential, inclusive, and free from judgment is essential to fostering trust.

OSAEC should be considered as a child protection issue and violation of children's rights and so seminars on the rights of the child and online and offline anti-OSAEC campaigns can also be held on a rolling basis. The concept of safety is also about having trust and confidence in the child protection system. Hence, the system should be strengthened through age- and gender-responsive policies, availability of inclusive social protection activities/mechanisms, allocation of sufficient budget, robust child-friendly protection protocols, and skilled workforce.



How can an improved understanding of the relationship between technology, well-being and risk of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) support interventions aimed at preventing and stopping OSEC, whilst also supporting children to engage with technology age-appropriately?

Children and young people expressed that modern technology makes it easier to participate in online educational activities, communicate with loved ones who live far away, and get abreast of new trends and world events. However, unsupervised use of online technology is also risky and addictive. There is a need to balance the benefits of technology with children's wellbeing. Wellbeing can include a well-rounded family life, school, life, friendship, and confidence – which can be attributed to a whole lot of factors including parental guidance and the young person's ability to discern appropriate use of technology. However, there is also the issue of accessibility of children to potential perpetrators. With many families living below the poverty threshold, OSAEC then becomes a strategy to earn money.

The above being said, the approach to OSAEC should be holistic and targeted. Structural changes are necessary to ensure that families improve their socio-economic condition, parents understand their responsibility to guide their children, and children are aware of online safety and have improved confidence and self-awareness. For example, there should not be a need for girls and LGBTQI to socialise in social media and get affirmation of

their worth, Instead, they should feel valued and respected in the family and community. This takes making our society gender-aware and embracing all genders. That way, children can still navigate the internet safely.



How can we meaningfully engage with private sector actors to address child exploitation?

The private sector is valued for its contribution to the economy and providing employment to local people. Private sector actors should be encouraged to take part in planning interventions and the relationship with them should be sustained. Data from the survey indicates that 5 of the 9 private sector groups have protocols to keep children safe from harm. This indicates that child protection is equally valued.

Some suggestions from young people include maximising the access of networks such as PLDT, Globe, and Smart to their subscribers. They can send information about OSAEC and reminders on how to be safe online. There is also value in using their platform to monitor children's activities. Money transfer agencies and banks can be more vigilant in tracking transactions and alert the LGUs of suspicious actions.

Private companies also have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals which can be tapped by CONEC on projects related to children and young people. Partnership with the private sector can also be around their technical support on internet-based mechanisms to prevent online social exploitation; including digital means to develop child protection mechanisms such as reporting/referring children at risk, consolidating data, and a system that can share data across and among different partners to inform policies and services.



What can we learn from promising practices with regards to low-cost, sustainable, community-level interventions to prevent and respond to child exploitation?

Promising practices exist locally. For example, the ERMAT, ERPAT, and WAVE schemes, 4Ps Family Development Service, the existence of GAD focals, and mandate to establish BCPCs, and peer education schemes are only some of low-cost and sustainable interventions which can be continued and replicated. Those initiatives prioritize family development, parents' capacity building, youth empowerment, and in the case of BCPC and GAD focal, dedicated structures and mechanisms on child protection.

Promising practices such as the above are people-empowering. This is what we need in addressing OSAEC. Technology is a powerful tool, but the appropriate values, education, skills and attitudes of people can help address any issue.

4Ps as a poverty-alleviation program offers the opportunity to stop the cycle of poverty. Investing in education of children and young people, as well as improving the parenting skills of parents can contribute to long-term changes in the family's socio-economic conditions. The FDS that is required for every 4Ps beneficiary can be maximised to educate parents and children about children's rights and how to protect children.

Peer education schemes are potentially sustainable and provide easy access to young people. Peer education benefits both the peer educators and the community. Peer educators acquire skills that make them employable while also educating and supporting young people. This scheme can easily be sustained by Barangay LGUs. In the long run, it will also divert the attention of young people to more productive activities instead of spending time on their phones.



What examples of promising practices and learning can be drawn from previous and existing TdH NL programmes?

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) centers its initiatives on children, and this is done by co-creating solutions with children and communities while facilitating the empowering of children as agents of change. TdH NL also engages with key stakeholders such as families and communities, law enforcement agencies, the government, the private sector and the media at multiple levels through lobby and advocacy, accountable partnerships, awareness raising and systems strengthening.

Three initiatives can potentially address the OSAEC issue in the Philippines, as follows: SCROL or Safety for Children and their Rights Online is an initiative which empowers children to be agents of change in the fight against Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE). The project collaborates with other stakeholders from the government, law enforcement agencies and the private sector to bring about systemic change for better online safety.

Another initiative is the Down to Zero Alliance (DtZ), an initiative of a group of international NGOs to address sexual exploitation of children. TdH NL contributes to this alliance by addressing OCSE in Bangladesh, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand in the Asia region. The programme focuses on ensuring online safety through consultations with children, youth, parents, the government, law enforcement agencies and the private sector to design and implement activities. Major components of the programme include child and youth-led advocacy and awareness, positive parenting, sensitisation of schoolteachers and capacity building of all stakeholders.

Systematic and structural change can only be achieved in partnership. Hence, TdH- NL's initiative along with other INGOs can be replicated. The Joining Forces Alliance was established in 2017 by the six largest child-focused international NGOs, namely: ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, the Terre des Hommes International Federation and World Vision International. The Joining Forces Alliance aims to use its collective power to accelerate change to secure children's rights and end violence against them.

Joining Forces upholds the power of strategic partnerships, having a strong voice, and bringing together the expertise and lobby capabilities of different organisations in a more harmonious manner to address child protection issues.

In conclusion, the focus of Project CONEC is to strengthen the CP system for all children but to also focus on age-specific and gender-responsive strategies. For LGBTQI and girls, this will be around building their resilience and increasing their self-confidence. The data showed that girls and LGBTQI socialize more, and their confidence is boosted by positive comments. Improving their self-awareness and self-confidence will prevent the need for them to seek affirmation in social media.

Since very little is provided to capacitate children and their parents, Project CONEC can focus on working with local organizations and schools to reach out to parents and children. Those local groups can also engage more with at-risk-children and offer them opportunities to participate in discussions.

The weak participation of children in BCPC is down to the structure being non-functional and highly political. Genuine participation of children may be better achieved through community groups rather than BCPCs. Community groups and schools can sustain engagement with children because they are not dependent on the political processes such as elections.



9. Recommendations

OSAEC occurs due to several factors at the level of the child/young person, the family, the community, and national structures. Given the complexity of the issue, it can only be tackled holistically from legislation (protocols, ordinances), service delivery (social protection mechanisms, capacity of LGUs, budget), enhancing the resilience of children and young people and their families (participation, awareness raising), and addressing gender norms which are perpetuated in the family through parenting, and in the community and society through processes that are not inclusive and encourages harmful social norms

The recommendations below are geared towards strengthening the Child Protection System in the target areas and creating a culture that upholds the rights and wellbeing of the child. They specifically correspond to the identified weaknesses in the prevention of OSAEC and protection of those who are at risk or victims.

The indicators in the LogFrame need to clarify the different variables under each objective. They also need to include soft and hard outcomes resulting from improved CP systems. For example, the existence of ordinances and protocols do not guarantee their implementation. Therefore, there should be indicators on how well the ordinances are embedded in the LGU systems at the barangay and city/municipal level.

The indicators related to the capacity of private companies and service providers should include specific OSAEC provision and not generic services to cater to the different nature of OSAEC. The study found that several factors drive OSAEC but mainly poverty, lack of parental supervision, and peer influence. Therefore, project indicators should include not only the number of service providers trained but also the extent to which services are gender-responsive, inclusive, and trauma-informed. There is also value in strengthening the project's advocacy at the national level so that decisions and initiatives planned at the national level will be informed by the gaps in service provision and issues faced at the local level.

Given that 64% of children surveyed belong to households earning below PHP 15,000 per month, economic hardship remains a primary vulnerability factor, CONEC Project should include indicators about addressing the poverty problem of the target beneficiaries, and at the macro level, integrate poverty-sensitive interventions such as livelihood support for families at risk, financial literacy programs, and ensuring linkage to social protection schemes.

Children participation at the local level is weak. Participation of children in LCPC/BCPC is non-existent because BCPCs are not functional. If the target for participation is only through the LGUs, participation will always be weak unless we strengthen BCPCs, and this may take a while. Strengthening of BCPCs is also problematic because they change often immediately after local elections. The Project needs to explore other ways where children can participate and have an impact such as peer-led advocacy groups, school-based councils, and digital platforms for children's voices. There should be indicators about the different forms such as those initiated by schools, checkers, and community-based organizations; and not only participation in LGU structures.



TABLE 43: RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives	Activities/strategies	Target Participants	Responsible Agencies
Short term (6-12 months)			
Increased knowledge and awareness on OSAEC among service providers, policymakers, and children and young people	Conduct workshops on a regular basis for service providers on trauma informed care with a specific focus on gender-sensitive case management for girls and LGBTQI children.	Service providers at local and municipal/ city levels including local community groups, church groups, schools, Civic Society Organizations (CSOs), and private organizations	Local implementers (ECPAT and Bidlisiw) with technical assistance from Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Regional Offices.
	Hold workshops and seminars on OSAEC, child protection procedures and protocols, using age and gender appropriate modules	Service providers at local and municipal/ city levels including local community groups, church groups, schools, Civic Society Organizations (CSOs), and private organizations.	Municipal/City Social Welfare and Development Offices (MSWDOs) and Child Protection (CP) specialists from DSWD and Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC).
	Develop and launch school-based gender-responsive awareness campaigns	Learners, parents of students through Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs), and community residents.	Public and Private schools in partnership with GAD/VAW officers in LGUs
Medium term (2-3 years)			
Improved data protection policies and protocols specific to OSAEC	Collaborate with LGUs to create and implement gender sensitive ordinances on OSAEC	Barangay and M/C LGU officials and officers	Bidlisiw, ECPAT, and DILG/DSWD regional offices
Improved data management systems that inform policymaking and service development & provision.	Build capacity for gender and age disaggregated data collection, recording, monitoring, and data sharing through digital tools	LGUs at the municipal/city and barangay levels	City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers, in partnership with Bidlisiw and ECPAT.

TABLE 47: RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives	Activities/strategies	Target Participants	Responsible Agencies
Long-term (3 years +)			
Children and Young People participation is mainstreamed in mandated local structures	Advocate for institutionalizing child participation, especially girls and LGBTI children in LCPC and BCPC	LCPCs and BCPCs	DILG to incorporate children participation in Child Friendly LGU Audit indicators.
Other forms of children and young people participation are identified and strengthened	Identify and strengthen/support alternative forms and spectrum of CYP participation spaces through community-based structures (peer-led advocacy groups, school based organisations, digital space campaign) that engage children and young people especially girls and LGBTI in addition to BCPC.	Community-based, CSOs-initiated and school-run structures where children can participate.	Project CONEC
Improved leadership skills of children and young people so that they can represent the views of CYP at the barangay and municipal levels	Launch training program for CYP on topics including gender equality, leadership, participation, facilitation skills, and UN-CRC	Children and young people	Private and public service providers in partnership with schools and LGU officials and SK
Improved processes and mechanisms (e.g. policies/ mandates, strategies, structures, and plans) to ensure that CYP with diverse SOGIESC are protected from OSAEC.	Develop a national level framework addressing the intersection of SOGIE and child protection	Barangay and Municipal/City LGUs	National Coordinating Center Against OSAEC and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Materials (NCC-OSAEC- CSAEM)
	Provide technical assistance and training on gender sensitive and age appropriate case management of OSAEC cases	Municipal and Barangay LGUs	DSWD Regional Offices CP specialists in partnership with the M/CSWDO
	Advocate for OSAEC-related strategic and operational plans with appropriate budget allocation at the municipal/city and barangay levels.	Office of the Mayor Barangay Council	LCPCs and BCPCs and City/ Municipal Council

Objectives	Activities/strategies	Target Participants	Responsible Agencies
Improved preventive mechanisms where children are safe from harm	Intensify/strengthen the poverty alleviation programs to ensure that families improve the standard of living and socio-economic conditions	Community members	DSWD Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
	Provision of sufficient, planned, and sustainable livelihood opportunities to parents and all working age adults.	Community residents	DSWD and DOLE through their national programs
	Launch skills training programs for youth and community residents including Establish partnership with private companies, local businesses, etc. that may provide employment to young people	Young people and unemployed community residents	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Public Employment Service Office (PESO)
Improved gender awareness among parents, community members, and children and young people.	Launch awareness raising activities for children, young people, parents and community members on gender equality, challenging both familial and community gendered roles. Advocate for incorporating gender awareness and gender equality in school curricula, challenging stereotypes assigned to different genders.	children and young people male and female parents LGBTQI parents community members	LGUs Schools DSWD through 4Ps and other flagship programs for families DepEd

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ANNEX 1: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK WITH BASELINE DATA

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
Impact (Overall objective)	Children, especially girls and LGBTI children, are increasingly protected from online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSAEC) by a strong and responsive child protection system.	Impact indicator 1: Number of OSAEC cases in the target areas that are reported to local (LGUs and CSO partners) and national entities (DSWD and PNP), disaggregated by age and gender.	7 cases (2023). 100% cases were reported to LGUs: Bohol - 3 cases (girls, under 18) Cebu - 4 cases (girls, under 18) Taguig - no data	Year 1 - 60 Year 2 - 90 Year 3 - 120	Annual C/MSWDO and PNP-WCPD reports.
		Impact indicator 2: Percentage of reported OSAEC cases provided with child protection and social protection services by the relevant public authorities and CSOs.	7% (2022) (2023) 100% were provided with child protection services by LGUs and partner CSOs. Two (2) cases filed charges against the perpetrators and were assisted by RIACAT	Year 3: 40%	2022 data of DSWD and partner CSOs (for referral of cases and provision of services).

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
		Impact indicator 3: Percentage of children, youth, and community members reporting an increased trust in the child protection system for OSAEC, disaggregated by age and gender.	30% (2022) 83% (2023) CYP Trusting the system (2023): proportion against survey respondents per gender 10-17 years old <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: 314 • Girls - 193 or 90% of 213 • Boys - 825 or 75 of 89 • LGBTQI -91% or 22 of 24 18-24 years old <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: 448 • Girls -83% or 278 of 333 • Boys -74% or 136 of 170 • LGBTQI - 70% or 34 of 48 Community members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: 681 • Female - 69% or 469 • Male- 17% or 115 • LGBTQ- 14% or 95 	Year 3: 70%	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey with the respondents during baseline and final evaluations.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
Outcome (s) (Specific objectives)	Outcome 1: Increased capacity and participation of children, especially girls and LGBTI, families and communities in preventing and responding to OSAEC.	1.1 - Indicator 1 to Outcome 1: Percentage of children, youth, caregivers and communities with increased knowledge and capacity on OSAEC, online safety, child protection, reporting and referral mechanisms, disaggregated by age and gender.	<p>A. Children and Young People</p> <p>Knowledge of OSAEC</p> <p>10-17 years old - n= 304</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 65% or 199 Boys -26% or 81 LGBTQI – 9% or 24 <p>18-24 years old - n= 497</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls – 62% or 315 Boys – 27% or 138 LGBTQI – 11% or 44 <p>Knowledge of online safety</p> <p>10-17 years old: n=261</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 68% or 177 Boys - 24% or 66 LGBTQI+ - 8% or 18 <p>18-24 years old: n= 401</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 56% or 254 Boys - 31% or 129 LGBTQI - 13% or 18 <p>Knowledge of reporting OSAEC cases </p> <p>10-17 years old: n= 263</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 65% or 174 Boys - 25% or 68 LGBTQI - 10% or 21 	Year 1/ 2/ 3: 75%	Pre and post-assessments' results, supplemented by qualitative information gathered from consultations with participants.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
			<p>18-24 years old: n= 442</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 63% or 284 Boys - 27% or 120 LGBTQI - 10% or 38 <p>Knowledge of CP mechanisms in the community</p> <p>10-17 years old: n= 166</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 61% or 103 Boys - 28% or 47 LGBTQI - 9% or 16 <p>18-24 years old: n= 404</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 63% or 259 Boys - 27% or 110 LGBTQI - 10% or 35 <p>B. Community members</p> <p>Knowledge of child protection mechanisms in the community 25-35 years old: 308</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women- 98% or 224-Men –97% or 77 LGBTQ+ - 77% or 7 36-50 years old - n= 252 Women- 99% or 203 Men – 89% or 49 LGBTQ+ -0% <p>51-60 years old - n= 273</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women- 98% or 221 Men – 98% or 52 LGBTQ+ - 0% <p>TOTAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women - 648 Men - 178 IGBTQI+ - 7 		

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
			<p>CAPACITY:</p> <p>A. Children and Young People Capacity to protect selves from online abuse 10-17 years old: n=279</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 89% or 191 of 213 Boys - 76% or 68 of 89 LGBTQI -83% or 20 of 24 <p>18-24 years old: n=315</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls -53% or 177 of 333 Boys - 57% or 98 of 170 LGBTQI+ -83% or 40 of 48 <p>Capacity to seek help 10-17 years old:n= 94</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 69% or 65 Boys - 25% or 24 LGBTQI - 6% or 5 <p>18-24 years old: n=202</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls - 60% or 123 Boys - 34% or 69 LGBTQI - 6% or 10 		
		1.2 - Indicator 2 to Outcome 1: Number of children, youth, caregivers and communities reaching out to e-ProtectKids helpline operations and Voice for Change (VfC) app, disaggregated by age and gender.	<p>7 people accessed the e-ProtectKids helpline (2022).</p> <p>0 people accessed e-ProtectKids helpline (2023)</p>	<p>Year 1: 20</p> <p>Year 2: 30</p> <p>Year 3: 40</p>	e-ProtectKids and VfC app reports, collected annually

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
		1.3 - Indicator 3 to Outcome 1: Percentage of children and youth reporting feeling safe to use the internet and report on OSAEC, disaggregated by age and gender.	<p>Feeling safe to use the internet 60% (2023)</p> <p>10-17 years old: n= 261</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls -83% or 177 of 213 Boys – 74% or 66 of 89 LGBTQI+ - 75% or 18 of 24 <p>18-25 years old: n= 401</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls -76% or 254 of 333· Boys 76% or 129 of 170 LGBTQI+ - 38% or 18 of 48 <p>Feeling safe to report OSAEC: 66% (2023)</p> <p>10-17 years old: n= 279</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls -90% or 191 of 213 Boys -74% or 68 of 89· LGBTQI -83% or 20 of 24 18-24 years old: n= 315 Girls - 53% or 177 of 333 Boys -57% or 98 of 170 LGBTQ - 83% or 40 of 48 <p>Baseline data to be collected in 2024 and evaluation in 2026.</p>	Year 3: 75%	KAP survey with children and youth in baseline and final evaluations.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
	Outcome 2: Improved access to and capacity of child protection services to deliver child-friendly and trauma-informed OSAEC services at local and national levels.	2.1 - Indicator 1 to Outcome 2: Number of private companies and service providers (LGUs, LCPCs, MDTs, QRTs and BCPCs) implementing policies and procedures for keeping children safe from OSAEC.	10 (2022) 12 (2023) a) 2 - local government units b) 1 - National Government Agency c) 9 - Organizations as follows: • 3 local service providers • 3 pawnshops/money transfer • 2 gaming/internet centers • 1 school	Year 1: 8 Year 2: 10 Year 3: 15	Results' records of assessment checklist on private company and service providers' implementation of OSAEC policies and procedures.
		2.2 - Indicator 2 to Outcome 2: Number of LGUs with executive and legislative plans including child protection agendas with related budgets.	1 (2022) 4 (2023): • 2 LGUs • 2 NGAs	Year 2: 2 Year 3: 4	LGUs' annual investment plans.
		2.3 - Indicator 3 to Outcome 2: Number of children victims or at-risk of OSAEC that received child protection services, disaggregated by age and gender.	51 (2022) 7 (2023) 7 CYP who were victims of OSAEC received child protection services. 7 Girls, between 15 and 17 years old (no data available on the exact age of the children)	Year 1: 45 Year 2: 60 Year 3: 80	Annual Reports from Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), DSWD, PNP Cybercrime, LCPC, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), and SPP Tracker.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
	Outcome 3: Enhanced child protection policies and social protection schemes at the local and national levels that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	3.1 - Indicator 1 to Outcome 3: Number of local child protection policies developed or revised with inputs from children, youth and CSOs.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 1 Year 3: 1	Philippine Official Gazette website, reported in year 2 and year 3.
		3.2 - Indicator 2 to Outcome 3: Number of LGUs implementing and funding OSAEC-focused policies and/or programs.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 2 Year 3: 5	Philippine Official Gazette website, reported in year 2 and year 3.
		3.3 -Indicator 3 to Outcome 3: Number of national and local social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, trauma-informed, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 1 Year 3: 1	Philippine Official Gazette website, reported in year 2 and year 3.
Outputs	1.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Increased awareness and capacities of communities and children, especially girls and LGBTI, on OSAEC prevention and protection mechanisms.	1.1.1 Indicator 1 to Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Number of people that completed the ToT on OSAEC learning sessions modules, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 60	ToT activity report with attendance list, reported in year 1.
		1.1.2 Indicator 2 to Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Number of people that completed learning sessions and child/youth-led sessions on OSAEC and online safety, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 830 Year 2: 230 Year 3: 230	Sessions report with attendance list, reported annually. them to complete the learning sessions.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		1.1.3 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 1: Number of children/youth/adults, including girls and LGBTI children, reached online and offline via the local and national advocacy campaigns for OSAEC's awareness, prevention and response, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022)	Year 1: 40,000 Year 2: 60,000 Year 3: 80,000	Social media analytics for online campaigns and advocacy activities Reports with attendance lists for offline campaigns, reported annually.	Children, youth and adults have access to safe and stable internet connections to access the online content of the campaigns. Children, youth and adults feel safe to participate in offline/in-person campaigns.
	1.2 Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Increased children, youth and parents' opportunities for participation and Mechanisms for decision-making at the local level.	1.2.1. Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of LCPC and BLCPC's meetings where children/youth participate to discuss the implementation of anti-OSAEC laws and policies.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 5 Year 2: 7 Year 3: 5	Meetings records, reported annually.	A number of children and youth-led organisations engaging in OSAEC prevention support the engagement in meetings with LCPC and BLCPC. LCPC and BLCPC are supportive of children/youth participation in their quarterly meetings to yield discussion on the implementation of anti-OSAEC law and policies.
		1.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of action plans designed by children and adults' to improve participation in community-based formal and non-formal mechanisms for advancing children's rights and inclusion of OSAEC.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 5 Year 3: 2	Action plan documents reported in year 2 and 3, one per LGU targeted.	A number of adult organisations to engage in OSAEC prevention support the engagement in meetings with LCPC and BLCPC. Children and adults are committed to design the action plans concerning children's rights and inclusion of OSAEC.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		1.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 1: Number of children/youth/adults participating in advocacy activities for OSAEC prevention at different levels (local, national, regional, international), including, LCPC/ BLCPC's meetings, advisory groups, and national advocacy organised by CSOs, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022)	Year 2-3: 94 children and youth Year 2-3: 120 adults	ECPAT, Bidlisiw and other CSOs' activity reports with attendance lists, reported in year 2 and 3.	Formal and non-formal platforms and structures that facilitate child representation and participation are strongly established in the target communities.
	1.3 Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Enhanced children and youth's leadership skills on advocacy to combat OSAEC.	1.3.1 Indicator 1 to Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Number of children and youth trained on leadership and organisational development, including advocacy, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022)	Year 1: 50 Year 2: 40	Training report with attendance list, reported in year 1 and 2.	The socio-economic conditions of the trainees are stable and conducive for them to complete the training.
		1.3.2 Indicator 2 to Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Number of children and youth that participated in annual national consultation and leadership summits, and consultations on project evaluation, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022) 5 (2023) Taguig - 2 young people (2 girls; 18-20 years old and 20-24 years old). Bohol - 3 young people. All three are girls; one is 13-15 years old and 2 are 19-21 years old.	Year 1: 150 Year 2: 190 Year 3: 190	Annual event reports with attendance lists.	The political, economic and socio-cultural environment are favourable for children and youth participation in the various summits and consultation meetings.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		1.3.3 Indicator 3 to Output 3 related to Outcome 1: Number of online and offline advocacy initiatives to combat OSAEC that are led by children and young people.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 2 Year 2: 2 Year 3: 2	Advocacy plan reports, reported annually.	Children and young people feel safe in leading advocacy campaigns on OSAEC, and they rely on the relationship of trust they have with the implementing partners.
	2.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Developed and Operationalized referral protocols, including support of child protection professionals and the private sector, for children victims of OSAEC.	2.1.1 Indicator 1 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of NGAs, LGUs/BLGUs/LCPC/LCAT and private company actors (individual) trained on child protection and related laws, and their roles in OSAEC prevention and response, disaggregated by public, private and gender.	0 (2022) 100 (2023) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 individuals attending training on child protection at the barangay level. 6 of the 7 LCPCs (5-10 members) including GAD officers have participated in training about the OSAEC law or RA 11930. Region 7 RIACAT members (approx. 10) have been oriented on the OSAEC law. 66 individuals from 4 private companies attended training on child protection protocols. 	Year 1: 80 Year 2: 150 Year 3: 110	Training reports with attendance lists, reported annually.	Local service providers and private company actors are open to learn about OSAEC prevention and response, and to play an active role in it.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		2.1.2 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of MDTs/ QRTs members trained on OSAEC prevention and response, disaggregated by gender.	0 (2022) No data (2023)	Year 2: 120	Training reports with attendance lists, reported in year 2.	MDTs/QRTs members are cooperative and remain committed to complete the training on OSAEC prevention and response.
		2.1.3 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 2: Number of LGUs' referral protocols improved through technical support from NGAs and CSOs that can provide effective guidelines in OSAEC case management.	1 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 3 Year 3: 3	Policies released by C/MSWDOs (including memorandum circulars), reported in year 2 and 3.	LGUs are willing to collaborate with NGAs and CSOs and recognise the need to improve their referral protocols.
	2.2 Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Strengthened service providers and private sector's capacity and engagement in preventing and responding to OSAEC cases.	2.2.1 Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of private sector representatives (e.g. tech companies, money transfer agencies, financial institutions, telecommunication companies, and transport and tourism establishments) and service providers (LGUs, community watch groups, LCPCs/LCAT-VAWC) trained on the referral pathway and protocols, to identify and refer victims to QRTs/MDTs for appropriate action, disaggregated by gender.	0 (2022) 5 (2023) 2 local CSOs 1 school 2 private companies	Year 1: 252 Year 2: 252 Year 3: 86	Training report with attendance lists, reported annually.	Private companies and service providers are cooperative and remain committed to playing their roles in OSAEC referral pathway and protocols.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
		2.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of service providers and private sector's representatives who completed the awareness sessions on technology-enabled hotline and helpline desks for OSAEC reporting and case management available at the national and local level.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 360 Year 2: 360 Year 3: 360	Awareness sessions' reports with attendance list, reported yearly.
		2.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 2: Number of private sector representatives that participate in advocacy summits on OSAEC issues and prevention, disaggregated by gender.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 3: 100	Event report with attendance list, reported in year 3.
	2.3 Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Promoted access and provision of child protection services at the national and local levels	2.3.1 Indicator 1 to Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Number of local chief executive/LGUs' representatives engaged through the lobby and advocacy activities led by children, youth and community, to influence duty-bearers to include OSAEC related child protection agenda in the LGUs executive and legislative plans, and increase children's access to child protection services, disaggregated by gender.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1/2/3: 20 (including 17 village leaders and 3 city mayors).	Documentation of advocacy activities, reported annually.
		2.3.2 Indicator 2 to Output 3 related to Outcome 2: Number of cases provided/referred for child protection services, disaggregated by age and gender of the beneficiary.	13 (2022) 7 (2023) All girls aged 14-17 years old.	Year 1: 30 Year 2: 40 Year 3: 61	Social Protection package database.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data
	3.1 Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Developed local policies and ordinances aligned with Anti-OSAEC law at the city/municipal level.	3.1.1 Indicator 1 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of recommendations developed from the updated baseline data on LGBTI children at-risk or victims of OSAEC in the target areas, to be used for the development of local policies.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 10	Updated baseline report in year 1.
		3.1.2 Indicator 2 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of children who participated in bi-annual consultative meetings with LCPCs to influence decision on policy implementation, disaggregated by age and gender.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 46 Year 2: 46 Year 3: 46	Bi-annual meeting attendance lists, reported annually.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		3.1.3 Indicator 3 to Output 1 related to Outcome 3: Number of meetings between CSOs and LGUs to provide CSOs' technical inputs to make local policies/ordinances on OSAEC at the city/municipal level.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 4 Year 2: 4	Meeting reports collected quarterly, reported in year 1 and 2.	LGUs are willing to collaborate with CSOs and recognise the importance of their technical inputs in improving the local policies/ordinances on OSAEC.
	3.2 Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Enhanced social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	3.2.1 Indicator 1 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of consultations conducted between children and agencies implementing social protection, to make social protection schemes gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 1: 2 Year 2: 2	Consultations reports, reported in years 1 and 2.	The political, economic and socio-cultural environment are favourable for consultations between children and agencies implementing social protection to take place and yield constructive recommendations to enhance social protection schemes.

Results	Results chain	Indicator	Baseline (value G reference year)	Target (value G reference year)	Sources of data	Assumptions
		3.2.2 Indicator 2 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of lobbying meetings by CSOs and children with LGUs to promote social protection schemes that are gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 4 Year 3: 4	Lobbying meeting reports from CSOs, reported in year 2 and year 3.	LGUs' are willing to gather CSOs and children's inputs and ideas for social protection schemes that are more gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.
		3.2.3 Indicator 3 to Output 2 related to Outcome 3: Number of meetings between CSOs and LGUs to provide CSOs' technical inputs to make social protection schemes gender-responsive, child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.	0 (2022) 0 (2023)	Year 2: 4 Year 3: 4	Meeting reports from CSOs, reported in year 2 and 3.	LGUs are open to integrate CSOs technical inputs in the social protection schemes, and have the resources to widen the schemes' coverage to be more gender-responsive, trauma-informed child-sensitive and inclusive of children at-risk or victims of OSAEC.

ANNEX 2: ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Acronyms/ Abbreviations	Definition
Child	Refers to a person below 18 years of age, or over, if unable to fully take care of or protect himself/herself from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition, and whether the person is acting in the online environment or offline.
Children in Need of Special Protection	Refers to all persons below 18 years of age, or those 18 years old and over but are unable to take care of themselves because of physical or mental disability condition, who are vulnerable to or are victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation, cruelty, discrimination, and violence (armed conflict, domestic violence, and other analogous conditions prejudicial to their development).
Child Pornography	Refers to any representation, whether visual, audio, or written, or a combination thereof, by electronic, mechanical, digital, optical, magnetic or any other means, of a child or children engaged or involved in real or simulated explicit sexual activities.
Child Protection	preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage (UNICEF, 2006).
Child Protection Mechanism	are strategies and means to ensure children and young people are protected which includes legislations (international and national), national and local policies and plans, and programs and services reporting, and data management.
Child Protection System	Set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks (UNICEF, 2021).
Capacity	Children and community members can apply knowledge of child protection including but not limited to reporting child protection issues, seeking support or services, and protecting themselves from OSAEC.
ICT-facilitated child sexual abuse	Encompasses sexual abuse regardless of where the abuse occurred, if the initial contact was conducted through information and communication technology (ICT), e.g., online, through text messaging, or chats
Knowledge	Children and community members have the awareness or understanding of protective behaviours, can identify risks, know what/where/ when and who to report OSAEC and where to seek help.
NCC-OSAEC-CSAEM	National Coordination Center Against Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials.

Annex II: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yqJajMihhlIBOLMqgYWM7GFFAuYFEcyK/dit?usp=sharing&oid=112223475088866221291&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Acronyms/ Abbreviations	Definition
NGOs	Refer to any private non-profit organization, regional or national in scope, providing social welfare and development services particularly to children which is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and licensed and accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 29 Series of 2005).
Online safety	Online safety is the ability to understand and recognize threats that exist on the internet, as well as having the skills and knowledge to avoid these threats. This includes knowing how to keep personal information private and secure online, protecting devices from malware, avoiding harmful or illegal content, and managing online relationships safely.
OSAEC	Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. It includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that at some stage have a connection to the online environment. These include the following (but are not limited to): a. Sexual exploitation that is carried out while the victim is online (such as enticing/manipulating/ threatening a child into performing sexual acts in front of a webcam); b. Identifying and/or grooming potential child victims online or through other forms of ICT with a view to exploiting them sexually (whether the acts that follow are then carried out online or offline); c. distribution, dissemination, importing, exporting, offering, selling, or possession of child sexual exploitation; and d. knowingly obtaining access to child sexual exploitation material online (even if the sexual abuse that is depicted in the material was carried out offline), UNICEF, 2020).
Referral Mechanisms	Identified steps or processes that enable a referral to go from start to completion. A referral mechanism is a process of referring clients (this could be a vulnerable child, caregiver or household) to another organization or service provider for the purpose of receiving a service or services that the referring organization does not provide, but that the client requires.
Reporting	Refers to the swift and accurate transfer of information among stakeholders (children, parents, service providers, etc.) in safeguarding children in need of special protection.
RIACAT	Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Trafficking
SOGIE	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression. It refers to who a person is sexually attracted to. There are five subcategories including; Asexual (is not attracted to anyone; Straight - an individual who has a sexual attraction to a person of the opposite gender; Bisexual - a person exhibits sexual attraction to persons of the same gender and those of the opposite gender; . Gay - a man attracted to a fellow man; and Lesbian -a woman attracted to a fellow woman (Senate Bill 689).
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development authority
Trust	The level of confidence a person holds that influences his/her help-seeking behaviour, including reporting risks and potential harm and seeking support.

ANNEX II:

INSIGHTS AND GAPS

The baseline study under Project CONEC laid bare the painful truths that Filipino children, especially girls and LGBTQI+ youth, carry in silence. While many of them are aware of online risks and the services that claim to protect them, there is a vast and troubling gap between knowledge and action. Children know. But they do not report. They retreat.

Across 23 barangays in Cebu, Bohol, and Taguig, 1,881 individuals participated in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. What emerged was more than data. Children and community members shared stories of exclusion, fear, and unspoken violence. These insights do not only inform the project—they challenge us to listen differently and act more boldly.

A. Awareness Doesn't Mean Access

90% of children and youth knew about available protection services. Yet only 33% had ever accessed them. The primary barrier is not the lack of knowledge but fear: fear of being blamed, shamed, or outed. Girls reported anxiety around being judged or accused of provoking abuse, while LGBTQI+ youth expressed deep mistrust in adults and fear of being discriminated against. Despite the high awareness, the decision to report remains fraught with risk and uncertainty.

B. Gender and Identity Shape Vulnerability

Girls are most often targeted by people they know, typically through grooming tactics. LGBTQI+ youth, especially those disconnected from their families, fall prey to online predators using false identities promising friendship or romance. Less than half (45%) of trans and non-binary children surveyed said they felt safe asking for help. This lack of perceived safety is a warning sign that services must become inclusive and affirming.

C. Emotional Harm Runs Deep

The trauma from online abuse manifests in profound ways: anxiety, shame, fear, and depression. Girls reported early pregnancies and school dropout. Boys disclosed engagement in risky behaviors like substance use. LGBTQI+ youth described retreating into silence and isolation. Yet the existing mental health systems lack the tools, language, and sensitivity to respond to these intersecting vulnerabilities.

D. Stigma Silences

Of 169 unreported OSAEC cases documented in the study, 59% involved girls, and 9% were LGBTQI+ children—equivalent to half of all LGBTQI+ survey participants. Many chose not to

disclose their abuse out of fear of being blamed, dismissed, or "outed." Children internalize the silence they see modeled around them, creating a cycle of unaddressed harm.

E. Poverty is a Driver of Exploitation

Among surveyed children in Cebu and Bohol, 75% came from households earning less than ₱15,000 per month. Some admitted participating in online exploitative activities to support their families. In areas where survival trumps safety, OSAEC is viewed not just as a crime, but as a desperate coping mechanism. These harmful beliefs, if unchallenged, perpetuate cycles of exploitation. Any prevention strategy must address underlying economic vulnerabilities.

F. Child Protection Structures Are Weafi or Non-Functional

While Barangay and Local Councils for the Protection of Children exist, their effectiveness varies. Some are entirely inactive, while others lack specific protocols on OSAEC. Teachers, often the first responders, shared that they had no formal training in trauma-informed response. For out- of-school youth, protection options are even more limited.

G. GAD Mechanisms Exclude LGBTQI+ Youth

Though Gender and Development (GAD) programs exist, their scope often ends at women and girls. LGBTQI+ youth are overlooked in policy, programming, and service provision. Only one known initiative in Cebu provides tailored support for LGBTQI+ youth, suggesting that inclusion is the exception, not the norm.

Programs that claim to be inclusive often fail to provide concrete changes—such as using affirming language, hiring LGBTQI+ staff, or ensuring safe spaces. Children recognize when inclusion is performative.

H. Mental Health Needs Are Overlooked

Despite recurring themes of trauma, very few community-based services offer psychosocial support. The invisibility of mental health needs was most apparent among LGBTQI+ and girl survivors. Children described self-blame, isolation, and fear, yet services rarely integrate mental health as a core part of recovery.

I. Children Lean on Peers, Not Systems

When asked who they would turn to after experiencing harm, most children named friends, not adults. Peer support is a strength—but also a red flag. Children described feeling pressure to join group chats or participate in online "dares." For LGBTQI+ children seeking belonging, peer communities can become both a source of support and a site of risk. It signals that children do not trust existing systems, or worse, have been hurt by them in the past.

J. Schools Are Often Ill-Equipped

Though teachers were cited as the most trusted adults, many expressed feeling unprepared to manage disclosures. Most have received no training in OSAEC response or inclusive care. In some schools, harmful gender stereotypes persist, further discouraging disclosure.

K. Local Policies Lack Implementation

Most barangays lack OSAEC-specific ordinances. Where policies do exist, enforcement is weak due to lack of funding, training, or prioritization. Without gender-sensitive policies at the local level, efforts to prevent or respond to OSAEC remain reactive.

L. Online Harassment is Normalized for LGBTQI+ Youth

Focus group discussions revealed that LGBTQI+ children often experience daily harassment online. For many, this became "just part of being online." This normalization dulls their sense of danger and suppresses their impulse to seek help.

M. Digital Safety Education Lacks SOGIESC Lens

Although online safety modules are taught in some schools, they do not include content tailored to LGBTQI+ or girl-specific risks. The failure to name and address these experiences leaves some of the most vulnerable children unprepared.

N. Post-Rescue Services Are Inadequate

Survivors interviewed described being retraumatized by shelter staff who lacked training in gender sensitivity. No shelters in the project areas have designated inclusive spaces or trained personnel to support LGBTQI+ survivors.

O. LGUs Need More Support

Local governments want to act on OSAEC but often lack technical expertise, implementation guidance, and dedicated funding. While many LGUs reported willingness, few had structured plans or capacity-building programs.

P. Risk Does Not Match Protection

Despite clear data showing that girls and LGBTQI+ children are at heightened risk, most protection programs are not designed with them in mind. This mismatch suggests systemic oversight in both design and delivery.

Q. Silence is Learned

Community members often described OSAEC as a "family matter." In many cases, children who witness others being ignored or shamed learn early to suppress their own experiences.

R. Reporting Channels Are Not Youth-Friendly

Most formal reporting mechanisms require navigating adult-centric bureaucracies. Children reported feeling intimidated by police or social workers, particularly when language or demeanor lacked empathy.

S. Data Gaps Undermine Interventions

Very few LGUs disaggregate data by gender or SOGIESC. Without this, decision-makers cannot see the full picture, leaving many children statistically invisible.

T. Child Participation Is Still Symbolic

While children are consulted in some initiatives, few are given decision-making roles. Youth voices are often filtered or sanitized, leaving behind the raw urgency of their demands.

U. Services Are Not Mobile or Flexible

Protection services are mostly office-based, excluding children in remote, transient, or disaster-affected areas. No mechanisms exist for mobile outreach or online case management. Some children who received services still reported feeling unsafe or unsupported. Recovery is often reduced to a checklist, rather than a sustained process of healing.

V. Boys Are Left Behind in Conversations on Vulnerability

Boys, too, experience OSAEC. Yet they are often excluded from dialogues on vulnerability. Some normalize abuse as "part of growing up" due to masculine norms that discourage emotional expression.

W. LGBTQI+ Youth Self-Isolate Online

Many LGBTQI+ children use the internet as their only safe space. But this isolation also heightens their exposure to predators who exploit their desire for connection.

X. Some Children Have No Trusted Adults

In households where violence or neglect is normalized, children grow up without adult figures they can confide in. This makes institutional trust-building even more critical.

Y. Public Awareness Campaigns Need Localization

Children and parents alike noted that campaigns often feel generic or urban-centered. Localized, language-sensitive, and culturally resonant messages are more likely to drive change.

Z. Children Are Still Hopeful

Despite everything, children had ideas, visions, and dreams. They spoke of safe schools, kind teachers, informed parents, and inclusive services. What they need is to be heard—and for their solutions to shape the system.

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