Preventing and responding to online violence and exploitation

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ICTs – AN INTEGRAL PART OF CHILDREN’S LIVES…

• The expansion of affordable, accessible Internet through mobile phones has resulted in more children gaining access to the Internet than before.
  ➢ Globally - 1 in 3 internet users is a child
  ➢ Children spend more time online
  ➢ Children start using ICTs at younger age

• Although children’s access to and use of ICTs still highest in high-income countries, it is rapidly expanding in low- and middle-income countries

• Even in countries where overall Internet penetration is low, usage among young people is sometimes as much as double the average.
INTERNET EXPANDING RAPIDLY WORLDWIDE
ICTs OFFER OPPORTUNITIES AND HAZARDS…

Opportunities

• Narrowing the digital divide between countries and socio-economic groups

• Benefits for children: Access to information, education, culture, entertainment, communication and social networks

• Helping to protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse and trafficking

Hazards

• Reinforces inequities among children and lead to unwanted consequences and new risks for children’s safety, personal development and well-being.

• Children are exposed to different and new forms of risks, abuse and exploitation and of harm – whether it is through the Internet, mobile phones or platforms for games and videos.
Lack of reliable, representative, longitudinal data on online violence and exploitation the risks and harm reported include:

- **Children victims of adult behaviour**: child sexual abuse materials, greater opportunities for online grooming of children, live streaming of abuse, ‘sexual extortion’

- **Children victims of peer behavior**: emergence of more invasive forms of bullying (cyber/online bullying), harassment, sexting

- **Children putting themselves at risk**: establishing relationships online unaware of risks/consequences, sharing private and personal information online leading to non retrievable, historical record (including sexualized images/videos)

- **Children exposed to violent images**: e.g. depicting sexual violence, unwanted exposure to adult pornography
THE PHILIPPINES: Analyn’s Story
SOME FINDINGS

- The exact **number of children victims unknown** but girls are particularly vulnerable, children with disabilities, LGBT children etc.

- The **online and offline world cannot be separated** - contact or grooming online leading to offline abuse

- **Lack of consensus what constitutes harm** - this is culturally dependent and perception of adults and children is different
SOME FINDINGS

• **Resources and capacity** for comprehensive response required, *varies widely* across the globe.

• **A systemic response** within core child protection work at national level, is *impeded* by lack of aggregated data, lack of local technical expertise, inadequate and non-uniform legal frameworks across countries, insufficient investment, and in many instances lack of coordination.

• **Knowledge and understanding of the problem** - including what drives some of the behavior and the risks children face - disparate among different members of the society, including parents, children and teachers.
• Evidence in high-income countries but less known of children’s experiences in relation to ICTs in low- and middle-income countries, as well as documented interventions and policies from the Global South.

• The lack of consensus on what constitutes harm makes evaluation of programme and policies challenging and difficult to draw causal relationships between specific strategies and an overall decrease in violence or victimhood. This is exacerbated by the lack of cohort or longitudinal data.

• Many of the interventions and programmes are targeted, focused interventions, focusing on specific domains (individual, home, family/school/community) - fewer interventions seek to cut across domains or address multiple drivers, or that are designed to be implemented in conjunction with, or complement, other interventions.

• There is also insufficient research and evidence to assess whether and how intervening in one domain or one area is likely to yield positive results in other domains.
Thank You