CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE ONLINE:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Suggested citation:

ECPAT International and CHS Alternativo. (2021). *Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Online: Survivors' Perspectives in Peru*. WeProtect Global Alliance.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

WeProtect Global Alliance brings together experts from government, the private sector and civil society to develop policies and solutions to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse online.

The Alliance generates political commitment and practical approaches to make the digital world safe and positive for children, preventing sexual abuse and long-term harm.

ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working towards the vision of ending the sexual exploitation of children. With over 30 years of experience in engaging with and managing multi-stakeholder processes and alliances across national, regional and global levels; ECPAT is considered to be at the helm of all issues and manifestations pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children. With a Secretariat based in Bangkok (Thailand), driving strategic direction, producing key research and working on global advocacy; together with the on-the-ground efforts of 122 members in 104 countries, the network approach bridges local communities, governments and the private sector; offering a global approach combined with customised national actions.

In recent years, important achievements have been made in the areas of prevention, legislative protection, child participation, research as well as collaboration with private companies in the travel and tourism sector in the fight against the sexual exploitation of children in such context, both at the national level and in the main tourist destinations of the country.

Capital Humano y Social (CHS) Alternativo is a specialised organisation active for the past 16 years for the protection of human rights, particularly those of women and children in situations of vulnerability due to human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour and forced labour. Its headquarters are in the city of Lima and it has four regional offices in Cusco, Loreto, Madre de Dios and Puno. CHS Alternativo has a national presence through its various projects and allied institutions.

CONTENTS

Photo by Flavius Torcea

INTRODUCTION

Photo by Dev Asangbam

Defining child sexual exploitation and abuse online

Child sexual abuse refers to various sexual activities perpetrated against children (persons under 18), regardless of whether the children are aware that what is happening to them is neither normal nor acceptable. It can be committed by adults or peers and usually involves an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power. It can be committed with or without explicit force, with offenders frequently using authority, power, manipulation, or deception.[1]

Child sexual exploitation involves the same abusive actions. However, an additional element must also be present - exchange of something (e.g., money, shelter, material goods, immaterial things like protection or a relationship), or even the mere promise of such.[2]

> *Child sexual exploitation and abuse online* refers to situations involving digital, Internet and communication technologies at some point during the continuum of abuse or exploitation. It can occur fully online or through a mix of online and in-person interactions between offenders and children.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online includes an evolving range of practices including:

Child sexual abuse material: The production, distribution, dissemination, importing, exporting, offering, selling, possession of, or knowingly obtaining access to child sexual abuse material online (even if the sexual abuse that is depicted in the material was carried out offline).

Grooming children online for sexual purposes: Identifying and/or preparing children via online technology with a view to exploiting them sexually (whether the acts that follow are then carried out online or offline or even not carried out at all).

Live streaming of child sexual abuse: Sexual exploitation which involves the coercion, threat or deception of a child into sexual activities that are transmitted ('streamed') live via the Internet for viewing by others remotely.

Other practices: Related concepts can include online sexual extortion, the non-consensual sharing of self-generated sexual content involving children, unwanted exposure to sexualised content, among others.[3]

---

1. Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children. (2016). Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Bangkok: ECPAT International. 18.
2. *Ibid.*, 24.
3. ECPAT International. (2020). Summary Paper: Online Child Sexual Exploitation. Bangkok: ECPAT International.

Background

Research about child sexual exploitation and abuse online has received increased attention recently – particularly as our lives shifted further online during responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Research from global north countries is over-represented on this topic, with far fewer studies taking place in low- and middle-income countries. A continuum exists for our online and offline lives which also impacts this issue - with blurred boundaries between our physical and digital worlds. Sexual violence is also taking place in different ways: online, as well as in situations involving online and in-person elements of grooming, facilitation and sharing.

Furthermore, children's voices about their experiences of these crimes continue to be rarely centralised in the dialogue - there is surprisingly little research directly conveying their experiences of child sexual exploitation and abuse online nor the responses they receive. Much of the existing research has also focused on identifying potential risks to children rather than directly measuring the evidence of harm that some have faced. This is understandable, as its ethically more complex to conduct research with young people who have experienced harm. Yet fully understanding online harms is important to inform preventions and responses. It must also be remembered that in reality, the vast majority of cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse go unreported, making it difficult to truly determine the scope of this problem in the first place.

Researchers have used qualitative methods like online surveys to examine childhood experiences of sexual exploitation and abuse online – predominantly focused on survivors of child sexual abuse material production. In one such study, approximately half of those who responded felt that the images were associated with specific problems that were different to those caused by the actual abuse. Nearly half of the respondents worried that people would think that they were willing participants or that people would recognise them. Interestingly, in this study, one-third refused to talk about the images and 22% denied that there were images. Three themes were identified from the data: guilt and shame, their ongoing vulnerability and an empowerment dimension the images sometimes brought. An additional study of adult survivors came from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, who conducted an online survey with 150 female respondents whose child sexual abuse was recorded and/or distributed online.Seventy per cent of that sample also expressed anxieties about being recognised from the images.

A further qualitative study of 20 children who were referred following suspected online sexual abuse found that only 12 were willing to talk about what had happened. The remainder denied that anything had taken place in spite of the fact that there were digital images of their abuse. The interviews with these 12 children indicated that they were very critical of themselves, and often had strong feelings of loyalty towards their offender.

The reluctance to accept, disclose, and attributions of self-blame have been evidenced in other research with children who have experienced online sexual exploitation, both in relation to abuse

> Children's voices about their experiences of sexual crimes continue to be rarely centralised in the dialogue - there is surprisingly little research directly conveying their experiences of child sexual exploitation and abuse online nor the responses they receive.

through sexual image production as well as online grooming. These are important lessons not only for research studies with these hard-to-reach populations, but also in relation to the recovery needs of these individuals. Breaking down these common phenomena - which may be heavily internalised - is clearly required.

These studies notwithstanding, qualitative research with children who have experienced sexual exploitation and abuse online is still relatively rare. Such children are difficult to both identify and recruit, which in part may reflect the ethical challenges of approaching children directly, and also because many professionals act as gatekeepers to children and are reluctant to approach them for research due to justifiable fears of further traumatisation. Crucially, any such research must also be completed using ethically appropriate and safe techniques for engaging survivors.

However, growing numbers of children are being supported by support services around the world for issues related to child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Seeking to understand and build on the strengths of such services and address their weaknesses is a priority. Amplifying the voices of young people who have had these experiences is vital for this work.

The increasing problem of child sexual exploitation and abuse online requires detailed, extensive and sustained attention. This is especially the case in middle- and low-income countries, where the issue often lacks visibility and few studies have been conducted to date.

Specific evidence about the quality and effectiveness of support services will enable targeted responses in which governments, non-governmental organisations and the private sector can cooperate to address this problem.

Ensuring that the voices of children who have had experiences of child sexual exploitation and abuse online are part of the evidence – as was achieved in this project - enables child-centred and informed approaches that better prevent this issue from occurring, and better support those young people subjected to these crimes.
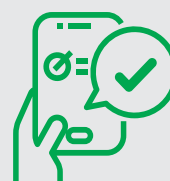
The project in Peru

To explore child sexual exploitation and abuse online in Peru, this project undertook two research activities:

Qualitative one-on-one 'conversations' with young people who had experienced child sexual exploitation and abuse online

An online survey of frontline support workers who were working with child survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse

The conversations with young survivors focused on their recommendations for improving prevention and support services for children (not the abuse, as explained below). The approach ensured that the research was informed directly by survivors who were drawing on their own experiences of harm from child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Including their perspectives in the research bridges the conspicuous gaps noted above that sometimes persist in the evidence in this sensitive area.

Surveying frontline support workers aimed to provide a substantial and nuanced understanding of how child sexual exploitation and abuse online is presenting in social support services. Data from these professionals indicates knowledge and perceptions of the problem amongst workers, caregivers and the general public; identifies key vulnerabilities for children; and assesses accessibility of care to support children subjected to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

Data from Peru was presented – alongside data from five other countries involved in the project[4] to a panel of experts at an online roundtable held on 26th July 2021. Insights from the roundtable helped frame the data in the overall project report and this and other countries' national reports.

---

4. The project was implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Mexico, Moldova and Peru. This report solely includes the findings of the activities conducted in Peru. Similar national reports are available for all project countries along with a project report summarising the findings across the six target countries.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

METHODOLOGY

Conversations with survivors

The conversations with young survivors of child sexual exploitation and abuse online are of foremost importance to this project. They were conducted with the intention to shed light on the conspicuous gaps that persist when survivors' perspectives are excluded from work to shape policy and legislation in this area. The conversations explored the survivors' perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of existing support services, and gathered recommendations for improvements.

Rationale

Engaging survivors of child sexual exploitation in research requires substantial care to accommodate a range of ethical considerations.[5] Such research must place significant value on survivors having the right to safely, actively and meaningfully participate in discourse on issues that impact upon them. Therefore, the design for the survivors' conversations in this project was built on the principle that the participants had, and perceived themselves to have, significant control over the process, including the decisions of what they shared. A range of measures were taken that reinforced that survivors had full control over sharing their perspectives on their terms.

To ensure that the perspectives of young survivors were meaningfully included in this project, ECPAT International developed a comprehensive, participant-centred, ethically sound, and trauma-informed approach to engaging them with the help of an expert who had extensive experience working with survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation. The 'conversations' approach is thus a dialogue with young survivors on issues which matter to them, and which explore their experiences of the support that they received.

Participants were invited to speak freely about their personal experiences of support services through their recovery process and the facilitators used active listening to engage with the young persons and understand their story – exploring particular gaps in understanding and drawing out the detail needed to represent young people's perspectives of these issues. Probing questions eliciting narratives across their experiences were only done responsively and to prompt discussion. This was not a structured interview with set questions – which can feel like an interrogation. Participants were invited to tell only the parts of their story that they wanted to.

The conversations in Peru were facilitated by five psychologists, all with experience in the care of girls, boys and adolescents survivors of sexual exploitation, who worked together with four professionals with experience in ethics and integrity in research.

Sample

In Peru, the facilitators carefully identified possible young people that could be invited to participate. Inclusion criteria included, inter alia, being aged between 18 to 24 years old, having had an experience of online sexual exploitation and abuse before turning 18 years of age as well as a need for participants to have current access to support structures, and for adequate time to have passed since the exploitation occurred.

---

5.   ECPAT International. (2019). Guidelines for Ethical Research on Sexual Exploitation Involving Children. Bangkok: ECPAT International.

Of those identified and reached out to by the facilitators and their networks, six survivors of child sexual exploitation and abuse online, all young women between the age of 18 to 20 years old, agreed to take part in the conversations. The participants were from different regions of Peru, including Lima, Loreto and Madre de Dios. All of them were identified through the work carried out by the Centre for Legal and Psychosocial Care, part of CHS Alternativo. Despite attempts, no young men who had been subjected to child sexual exploitation and abuse online and had received support were able to be identified in order to take part in the conversations. At the time of the research, the organisation had only one registered case involving a boy who was still under 18 years old, and therefore did not meet the criteria to participate.

Conversations approach

The conversations were carefully planned to be conducted in an interactive and unstructured style, rather than a traditional form of research interview. The advantages of this design are that it is attentive to the nature and sensitivities of the topic, and promotes choice and empowerment, placing high value on the fact that participants have, and perceive themselves to have, significant control over what they share with the researchers.

Participants were also asked if they preferred to take part in conversations one-on-one or in small groups (for example in case they already knew some of the other participants because of participation in the same support groups). The six young women decided to conduct one-on-one conversations.

Following initial agreement to take part, conversations were then held in two stages – a 'pre-meeting' was carried out and then the 'main conversation' a few days later. This two-stage process was deliberate, symbolically indicating a trusting relationship controlled by the participant from the outset. In most cases, the pre-meetings were carried out using online communication platforms and involved explaining the process, answering queries about consent, and seeking any preferences that the facilitators could accommodate in setting up the 'main conversation' (e.g. time of day, room and seating preferences, who was present etc.). Arrangements remained flexible and up to the local facilitators and the young people to determine together, also in light of the fast-changing contextual circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Facilitators took every measure to make sure that the survivors felt as comfortable as possible during the course of conversations. The conversational nature, open questions, allowing enough time to respond, regularly giving permission not to respond, all helped shape the outcomes of the conversations. As per the conversations' approach, the young women were able to contribute verbally, but also encouraged to use a range of visual tools to facilitate the conversations ('Past, Now, Future' flip charts, speech/thought bubbles, emoji, drawings, etc.). These tools helped the participants to feel more comfortable and encouraged them to find other forms to express their thoughts, beyond verbally. In addition, these materials helped the facilitators to provide support for the young women in situations where they could potentially remember triggering situations.

The possibility of carrying out the conversations in three moments – past, present and future – seemed to be appreciated by the participants as it represented an opportunity for them to verbalise different experiences and feelings that they had at different stages of their recovery processes. One young woman commented:

> *"I thought that I was marked for life by what had happened to me, I have grown a lot, not in size (laughs), but in my way of thinking and how I feel in these types of situations [….]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

While the Covid-19 pandemic meant lots of interactions had to be virtual, the researchers were adamant that psychological safety would be hard to maintain in such an approach for these sensitive conversations. All conversations were therefore held face-to-face, although one had to be carried out with a hybrid approach, where one facilitator participated via Zoom, but a co-facilitator was physically present with the young person. This was because the facilitators who took part in the coordination sessions with the project expert were unable to travel to the region where the survivor was located. This conversation was conducted by the facilitator using an online platform but with the support of a psychologist co-facilitating in loco with the participant to provide support to the young survivor.

Although the research did not seek to determine the specifics of the exploitation and/or abuse that the young women were subjected to, in this way the facilitators – trained and experienced in working with trauma – were physically present to provide psychological support if distress was encountered.

Analysis

Following the conversations, the facilitators reflected on what they had heard, their notes, and recordings of the sessions. They developed a brief preliminary report – in Spanish – that focused on specific themes across the six conversations, such as, the quality, usefulness and accessibility of services, and summarised the young women's recommendations for improvements. This preliminary report was then reviewed and discussed between the facilitators, the project expert, and the ECPAT research team. Once finalised, it was made available to those participants who had indicated they wanted to see the output to offer their feedback and additional inputs. Participants expressed a real sense of gratitude for this process. Being genuinely consulted on the way their words were presented within the process in a preliminary report, rather than just receiving a final document was really respected.

Ethical considerations

Before beginning the research activity, ECPAT International convened a panel of three global experts for an independent third-party review of the proposed methodology. A detailed research protocol that included mitigations for ethical risks was developed, along with draft tools. Detailed feedback from the panel was accommodated in two rounds of review before the project commenced.

As detailed above, the local facilitators participated in extensive preparations together with the project expert prior to conducting the conversations. Moreover, the process for obtaining informed consent was conducted in two steps – so the young people had time to consider their involvement (not signing consent just prior to commencing) and could control some of the circumstances of the conversations.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Frontline support workers' survey

The engagement of frontline support workers through completion of a workforce survey was aimed at adding data to 'flesh out' a comprehensive picture of child sexual exploitation and abuse online by exploring the perceptions, knowledge and practices influencing disclosure and support provision.

Rationale

Workforce surveys have increasingly been used in research to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of social support systems. Most commonly these surveys are used by health[6] and social work professions[7] to measure service delivery effectiveness.

Social support to children who are subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse is generally provided within the broader context of child protection. We therefore developed and delivered a survey for child protection workers. The survey explored perceptions related to the sexual exploitation of children – in general and online; factors related to children's access to support services; perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of such services; as well as details about the nature of their direct work with children.

Sample

CHS Alternativo utilised their national contacts to identify organisations supporting children from which to invite staff working at the frontline of providing support.

While the research focus was child sexual exploitation and abuse online, very few services focus exclusively on support for child sexual exploitation and abuse with an online component, or even exclusively on general child sexual exploitation and abuse. The sample therefore included a range of frontline support workers who had supported at least some children subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse over the last year.

A convenience sample of 80 Peruvian frontline workers was surveyed. The sample should not be considered representative of the diversity of frontline workers in the country, however, attempts to represent different types of services, both in terms of geographic location as well as type of services were made.

In order to be eligible to complete the survey, frontline workers needed to be:

- Over 18 years of age;
- At least last 12 months working in the field of social work, psychology or other social support;
- At least last 12 months managing own case load directly;
- Case load over last 12 months included at least some children;
- Case load over last 12 months included at least some cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

6. Magadzire, P M et al. (2014, November). Frontline health workers as brokers: provider perceptions, experiences and mitigating strategies to improve access to essential medicines in South Africa.
7. Sadeghi, T and Fekjaer, S. (2018). Frontline workers' competency in activation work. International Journal of Social Welfare. 77-88; Netsayi, M (2019). Perceptions of frontline social workers on their contributions agenda for social work and social development.

The survey

Self-administered online surveys (emailing a link) have notoriously low participation rates. Thus, the design for this project opted for in-person administration ¬– though using an online tool with limits and designated required items for a clean dataset. While restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic meant the Peruvian administrators had to support participants remotely via an introductory Zoom or phone call and then remained on standby to support, offer guidance and troubleshoot as the participants completed the survey. CHS Alternativo engaged 7 staff across 5 regional areas to help administer the survey. This helped engaging and motivating participants as they frequently knew the administrators professionally already. The personal connection helped motivate participants to complete the survey. Data collection took place between May-June 2021.

The online survey consisted of 109 multiple choices and short open-answer questions. The draft tool in English language was translated to Spanish and ECPAT International and CHS Alternativo collaborated to check and contextualise the survey, which was then pilot-tested with a small number of frontline workers in the country before being fielded.

The full survey in English and Spanish can be provided on request.

Analysis

Following data collection, data was cleaned, and open-ended responses were translated to English. Survey output was integrated into a custom analytical framework where analysis was then conducted based upon exigent themes and patterns that arose from the data. Qualitative analytical components were then added.

Quantitative and qualitative themes and patterns were explored, with direct (translated) quotes from the open text responses used to illustrate dominant narratives emerging from the quantitative data, along with occasional dissenting views. Care was taken during analysis not to present any qualitative responses that may have identified participants.

It should be noted that the data are not statistically representative of the experiences of all frontline support workers in Peru. However, the estimates, perceptions and experiences reported here offer valuable insight into the access and quality of social support for Moldovan children who have experienced sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ethical considerations

Informed consent was obtained as an integrated part of the online survey tool. To protect confidentiality, names were not requested at any stage of completing the survey. Care is also taken when presenting qualitative data in this report so that participants are not identifiable by the content of the quotes.

Challenges and limitations

The Covid-19 pandemic meant movement restrictions varied at different times during the data collection period which had an impact both on the survivors' conversations as well as the frontline workers' survey.

As mentioned above, due to travel restrictions related to Covid-19, one of the conversations had to be carried out with a hybrid approach, where one facilitator participated via Zoom, but a co-facilitator was physically present with the young person.

Regarding the frontline workers' survey, a limitation occurred as a result of our inclusion criteria. Our intent was to include support workers who worked directly at the frontline (not higher up managers). Thus, a hurdle question sought experience of working directly with children "within the last 12 months." As data collection occurred in the first half of 2021, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic had restricted some frontline workers from doing direct client work for some time, so it is likely that some of the 69 participants who began the survey but were disqualified by hurdle questions may have been false positives.

Moreover, the length of the survey was noted as a challenge by the participants, due to the number of variables and the time required for completion. In addition, there were difficulties in finding participants who met the inclusion criteria, especially outside of the capital city.

FINDINGS

The perspectives of the young people who had direct experiences of harm from child sexual exploitation and abuse online are the primary data used to structure this report. Quantitative and qualitative data from the surveyed frontline support workers is then integrated amongst their perspectives to enhance a comprehensive picture of the on-the-ground situation for preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation and abuse online in Peru. Public perceptions and beliefs, the knowledge and practices of workers, availability and quality of reporting mechanisms and the resource levels of support services are all presented. The report concludes with recommendations for action – these stem primarily from what the young people told us but are expanded in places with other data and analysis from the project partners.

Trends in child sexual exploitation and abuse online in Peru

Gender

Both the conversations with young people and the survey data suggest that there is a higher proportion of girls than boys utilising formal reporting mechanisms and accessing support services in Peru. Despite attempts, no young men who had been subjected to child sexual exploitation and abuse online and had received support were able to be identified in order to take part in the conversations, as mentioned in the method section. In an open question, participants were asked if they thought there were trends related to gender and sexual exploitation (generally and online). Figure 1 shows that none of the respondents mentioned boys being more affected by sexual exploitation than girls as a trend, while one third (n=27) indicated that they perceived more girls than boys were affected:

> *"We are usually presented with cases of girls."[8]*

This is a smaller proportion than most of the other countries of the project, suggesting that Peru's workers more commonly see this issue as affecting boys and girls similarly.

Close to another third of respondents (30%, n=24) raised trends unrelated to gender and 26% (n=21) did not identify any trends. Some qualitative responses on the survey suggested intersections between gender trends and socioeconomic vulnerabilities:

> *"They are adolescent women between 12 and 15 years old, who come from families in poverty, with family conflicts."*

---

9.   Please note that text in green boxes refers to quotes from the young survivors who took part in the conversations. Text in purple boxes refers to the qualitative input shared by frontline workers who completed the survey.

Figure 1: Gender trends identified by frontline workers (generally and online).

- More girls
- More boys
- Other trends
- No trends
- No comment

33%
0%
30%
26%
11%
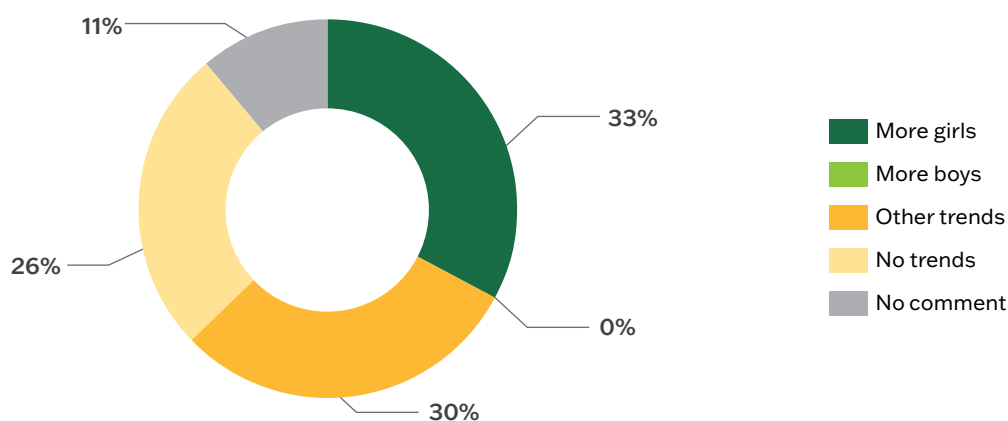
There were some interesting data related to gender coming up from the conversations with young survivors. Five out of the six young women commented that their experiences with accessing support services would have been different if they were boys. They said that:

> *"[…] When women are the victims, they believe it […] If the case is with men, they don't believe him, they think they're misleading[…]"*
>
> *(VoS-PE-03)*

> *"I think society would be tougher and less supportive with a man who has experienced this situation […]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

One participant also mentioned that gender not only impacts the quality of the services received after being subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse, but is also a factor that exposes more girls to this type of violence.

It seems however that while the general perception is that girls are more at risk, boys too are seeking assistance for a range of things, including for child sexual exploitation and abuse online. Eighty-four percent of the workers who completed the survey had provided support to girls (n=67) and most of these (n=49) had supported girls related to sexual exploitation and abuse online. But 61% of the surveyed frontline workers (n=49) had provided support to boys and of these, 31 workers had supported boys for sexual exploitation and abuse online. In line with global research,[9] these numbers confirm that while perspectives might be boys are less impacted, caseloads show more boys than is commonly thought are impacted.

---

9. ECPAT International. (2021). Global Boys Initiative: A global review of existing literature on the sexual exploitation of boys. ECPAT International.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Age

The 31 surveyed frontline workers who supported boys who had experienced online sexual exploitation were asked what ages the boys were when the abuse had occurred. The workers reported that over two-thirds of those boys (68%) were sexually exploited online between the ages of 11-17 years old.

Figure 2: Age of boys who had experienced online sexual exploitation.

0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-17 years	n = 31

9%	23%	38%	30%
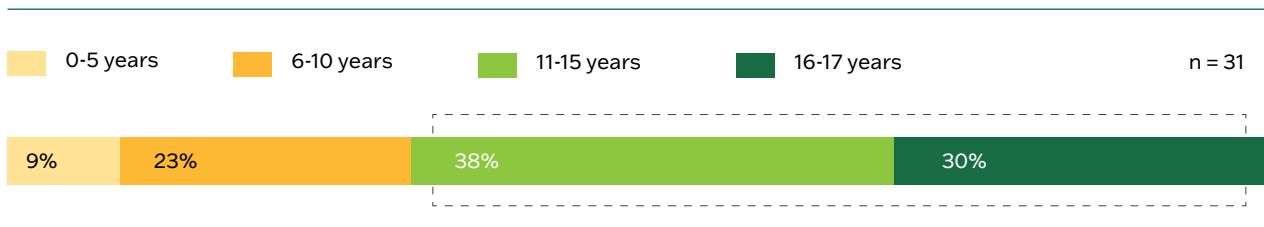
Similarly, the 49 frontline workers who had supported girls reported that they tended to be targeted at a similar age, with 80% subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse online between 11 and 17. Similarly, five of the six young women who took part in the conversations were between 16-17 years of age when they were abused and one of them was 13 years old.

The survey data, however, showed that a greater proportion of the impacted boys were younger. Twenty percent of the reported cases involving girls involved children under the age of eleven years old, compared with 32% of the cases involving boys.

Figure 3: Age of girls who had experienced online sexual exploitation.

0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-17 years	n = 60

5%	15%	48%	32%
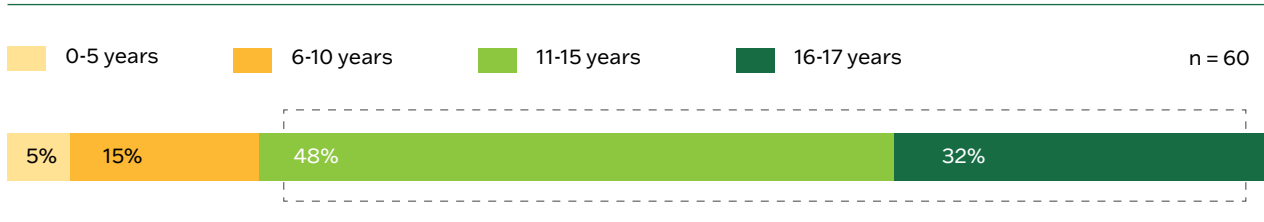
Frequency of sexual exploitation in caseloads

Sexual exploitation of children in general seems to be a commonly present issue supported by the surveyed frontline workers. Of course, as a convenience sample, this could indicate some sampling bias – the data in this section should not be taken as representative of the whole social support sector workforce. More than half of respondents (57%, n=45) noted that the majority of their child clients had experienced sexual exploitation. Eleven workers reported that almost all their cases involved sexual exploitation and abuse and four said that all of their cases related to this. These individuals are of course likely to be staff from specialist services focused on child sexual exploitation.[10] These numbers do indicate a risk in terms of worker care and support.

Cases of sexual exploitation of children are difficult and stressful, and caseloads of this high proportion need monitoring and support for the workers to avoid burnout and vicarious trauma.

---

10. Please note that our sampling approach targeted organisations working in child protection so this does not represent sexual exploitation within the general child population. But it does indicate that sexual exploitation of children is frequently seen in cases being supported by child protection agencies.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Figure 4: Percentage of children supported by the surveyed frontline workers that had experienced sexual exploitation.
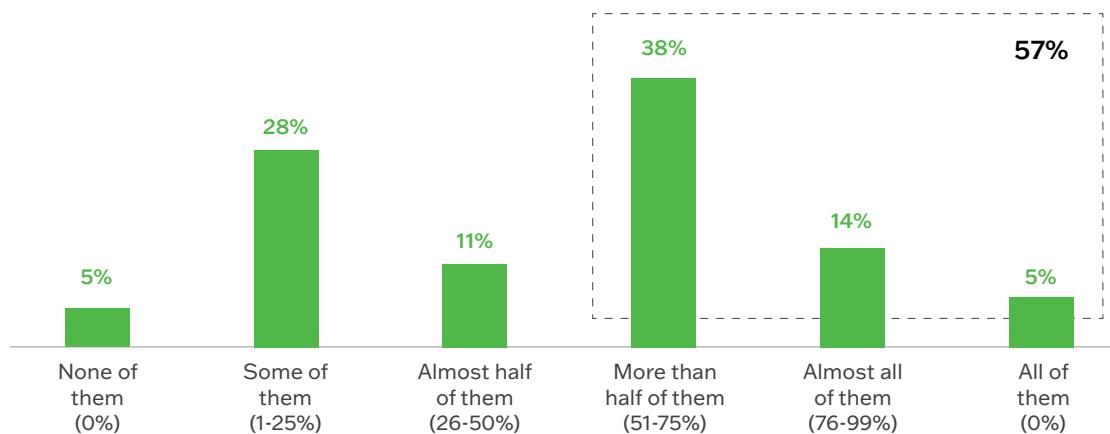
The average response from workers about how much of their caseload involved sexual exploitation of children was 49%. Of that, they then told us that around half of the cases of sexual exploitation of children also involved digital, Internet and communication technology in some way. This represents roughly one in four of all their cases involving child sexual exploitation and abuse online amongst the surveyed workers.

No significant differences were observed between the caseloads handled by the surveyed workers coming from government versus non-government organisations. Fifty-two percent of the cases from workers at non-governmental organisations involved child sexual exploitation and abuse online, while at the government organisations this type of violence represented 48% of the cases. Quite interestingly, and somewhat differently from other countries in this study, most of the services offered for the young women who engaged in the conversations were from government organisations, including services dedicated specifically for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Complementary services were provided by non-government organisations and the church. The young women did not clearly differentiate the institutions from which they received support. When asked about the name of the organisation that helped her, one young woman said:

> *"I don't remember, I only get papers from my lawyer, and I didn't even know that I had a lawyer."*
>
> (VoS-PE-10)

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Preventive measures

Awareness

Conversations with the young survivors generally illustrated little awareness of any preventive measures deployed against child sexual exploitation and abuse online or the formal mechanisms that are available for reporting these crimes. In the conversations, the young women consistently discussed the need to promote information about child sexual exploitation and abuse online. These campaigns, according to them, should reach not only children and young people but also parents and the broader community:

"Day by day, or on a weekly basis, or on weekends, they should give a talk, they should bring all the children together, so that they know about the dangers they may face, this should include adolescents, children, also elderly people, adults […] also parents or mothers so they are aware."

(VoS-PE-03)

Limited general public awareness was reiterated by the frontline workers who participated in the survey. Providing qualitative input to the survey, one worker said:

"I believe that an information campaigns on the matter are necessary because many adolescents are vulnerable to being caught because they are unaware of the risk to which they may be exposed."

When asked about the level of public awareness regarding online forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse in Peru, the majority (83%, n=66) considered it "poor". Only a small fraction of the respondents answered that it was either "fair" 10% (n=8) or "good" 8% (n=6). None considered it "excellent". The proportion of those who considered the level of public awareness "poor" was higher than any other country participating in this research project.

Figure 5: Level of public awareness of child sexual exploitation and abuse online, according to the surveyed frontline workers.

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

8%	10%	83%

0%

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru
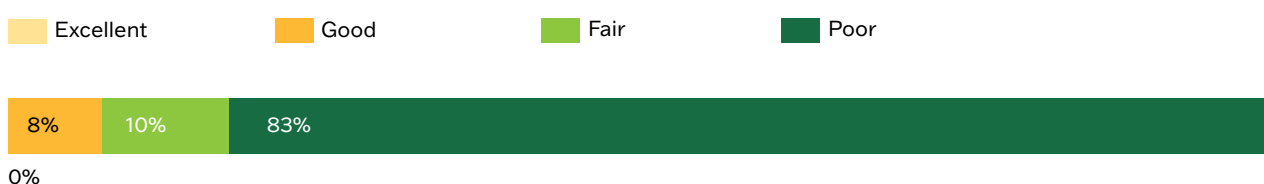
An interesting finding was that all respondents with 11 or more years of work experience unanimously considered public awareness regarding online forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse in Peru as "poor", as shown in Figure 6 below. This could be an indication that their perceptions about how informed is the society changes over time, as they gain more experience in the field. The high proportion of experienced workers expressing a negative view of public awareness regarding online forms of child sexual exploitation and abuse may indicate that those with strong knowledge on this topic are clearer on what is missing from the general public consciousness. Perhaps a sense that 'the more you know, the more you realise what yourself (and others) don't know'.

Figure 6: Level of public awareness of child sexual exploitation and abuse online, according to the surveyed frontline workers by age categories.
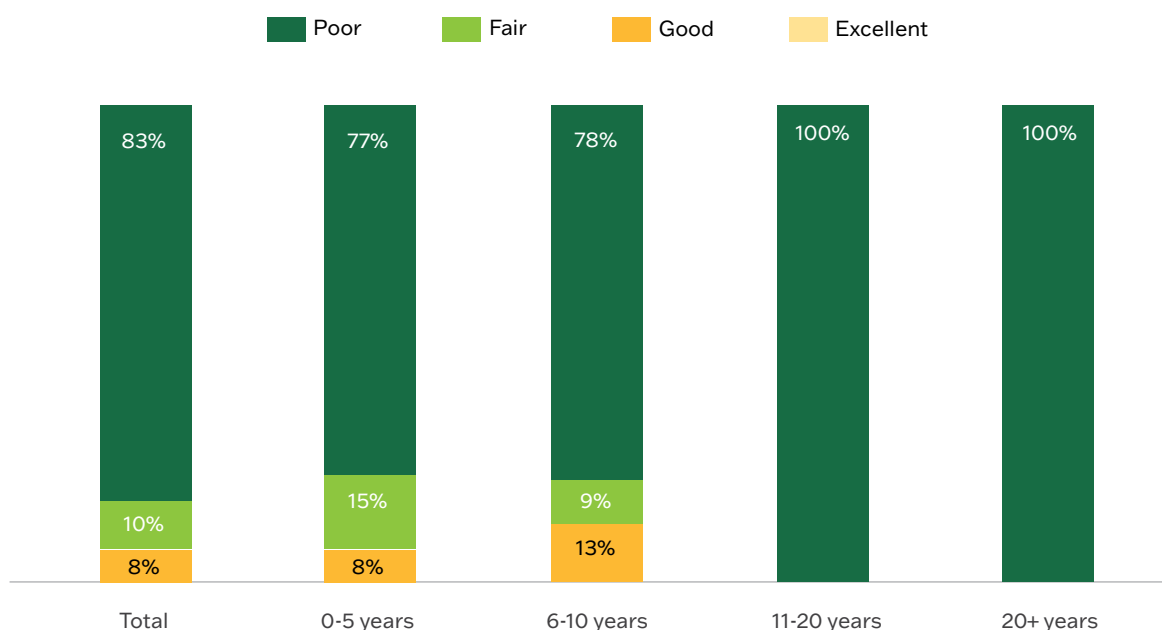
Frontline workers also proposed that more education and training is needed in order to increase public awareness in Peru:

> *"More training is needed for the institutions that deal with these cases. Job stability is needed for those who deal with these cases, so that they are more trained and more experienced, as opposed to staff changing at all times."*

In fact, this was a recurrent topic on survey qualitative responses. The data strongly suggests the need for knowledge and skills development amongst frontline support workers on how to identify and work with online forms of sexual exploitation and abuse:

> *"It would be good if all actors and institutions are trained to identify these cases and know how to address them."*

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Another frontline worker said that

> "[…] most of the professionals do not have the sensitivity or the necessary training to address the cases, they do not have exclusive spaces to provide an optimal service."

In the conversations, the young women consistently mentioned the need to promote information and prevention on topics related to the use of the Internet and social networks. They suggested that online and offline posters and advertisements should be used to promote awareness, including radio, television and social media:

> "There is no prevention […] on television; they deal with other issues, but I have never seen any prevention campaign on the matter, neither on television nor on the radio."
>
> (VoS-PE-10)

Another one reiterated:

> "Television and radio campaigns are very important, they should be done massively."
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

Some young women specifically raised the need to inform parents and adult family members so they become able to educate their children about the risks involved in the use of the Internet. One young woman said that these campaigns should alert about the risks of using the Internet without supervision, as children could trust those who reach out to them:

> "At that age, one believes that pigs fly and do not fly, when you are at that stage, you pretty much believe everything."
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

A number of them believe that the use of mobile phones and particularly of social media should be monitored by caregivers, who are the utmost responsible for children's safety online:

> "Regarding the applications, you always have to be careful because there are children, I can tell you, there are 8-year-old children who are on Facebook and are like this with friends[…]and an older person (a sex offender) can create a false profile, sweetens the child up and it's like that is very bad for children because they should prevent minors from having it."
>
> (VoS-PE-05)

One of them even suggested that the police should monitor social media to proactively to identify possible offenders:

> "[…] there is greater risk, the Police do not pay much attention to them [the social networks], because the Police are more aware of the streets, not the Internet […]"
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

Surveyed frontline workers had a similar opinion about the need to promote preventive measures. When providing qualitative input, two of them mentioned the need to address the roots of the problem, which would involve an awareness-raising approach:

> "The sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, goes beyond a psychological aspect; it is about addressing the issue from its roots; it is about re-educating families by generations, raising awareness, and implement the process from early ages with a preventive approach."

Another one said that:

> "Prevention work is largely neglected, the only thing that is often sought is to attack the problem, always leaving the root cause untouched."

Barriers to disclosure

Barriers to disclosure were rarely raised by the young women organically in the conversations. This does not mean that are not barriers to children disclosing in Peru, but given that the participants controlled the topics of conversation, these young women perhaps did not encounter them directly themselves. For example, as already noted in the earlier section on gender, even though it was not their experience, the young women suspected that male survivors would have received different responses to disclosure.

The barriers to disclosure were explored in the survey with frontline workers, as indicated in Figure 7. The respondents were presented with a list of 18 factors that could potentially limit children's disclosure of online sexual exploitation and abuse. By far, the most commonly selected barriers to reporting were related to a pervasive culture of silence ("the stigma and shame that victims often experience") at 60% (n=48), followed by "fears about how others will respond to disclosure" and to "lack of confidence in being able to obtain helpful help" (at 41% and 40%, respectively). These accounts confirm the fears of anticipated shame and stigma associated with sexual exploitation and abuse. The attitudes and responses of those people charged with receiving these disclosures may have enormous impacts on children. Indeed, in the conversations one young woman said that she did not feel confident to describe her experience of sexual exploitation and abuse to a person that she barely knew, which became a

> "A traumatic experience"
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

Figure 7: Factors that potentially limit children's disclosure.

Factor	Percentage
The stigma and shame that victims often experience (culture of silence)	60%
Fears about how others will respond to disclosure? (e.g. blaming, punishing, not believing, mocking)	41%
Lack of confidence in being able to obtain helpful help	40%
Negative attitudes to, fears or difficulties asking for help and support	38%
The sensitive and upsetting nature of talking about the experience	28%
Lack of information and visible, dedicated services and support for children victims of sexual exploitation	24%
Talking about sex and sexuality is considered taboo	19%
High levels of physical of violence against children (e.g. common violent disciplinary practices)	10%
Children have low status and not respected as having their own rights (Belief that they will not be listened to or valued)	10%
Fear of being criminalised	10%
Lack of trust in confidentiality of services	6%
Police don't accept report	5%
Peers involvement in sexual exploitation (think their experience is normal)	4%
Social isolation (lack of trusting relationships with adults and/or peers)	3%
Non-existence of hotline/helpline	3%
Traditional child-rearing practices (e.g. touching of genitals)	1%

Multiple responses permitted, null responses removed.

When the surveyed frontline workers were asked what were the biggest problems raised by child clients who had experienced online sexual exploitation and abuse, the most mentioned were fear, trauma and anxiety (29%, n=23), followed by social isolation/marginalisation (26%, n=21) and family rejection (18%, n=14). One worker commented that often children have:

"Fear of their families and the environment for fear of being judged."

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

Support services

It is essential to understand the perceived quality, usefulness and accessibility of support services related to child sexual exploitation and abuse online. This section presents some insights on these elements, followed by a more detailed overview of the different types of support services provided in Peru, taking into account both the experiences of young survivors within these services as well as the views of frontline workers providing them.

Usefulness, quality, availability and awareness of support services

As mentioned above, the young women who engaged in the conversations accessed support services mainly from government institutions. Some of them were also assisted by non-governmental and religious organisations. When asked which were the first institutions that they thought about when they needed support, a number of them mentioned the national police, special protection units[11] and civil society organisations.

While they demonstrated being relatively aware of the services provided by these organisations, some of them did not know specifically what each institution could provide and how they could support children subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse online. They said that, once they knew about and accessed the services, the availability of support was very useful for them to recover. One young woman mentioned the psychological support as particularly useful in her recovery process:

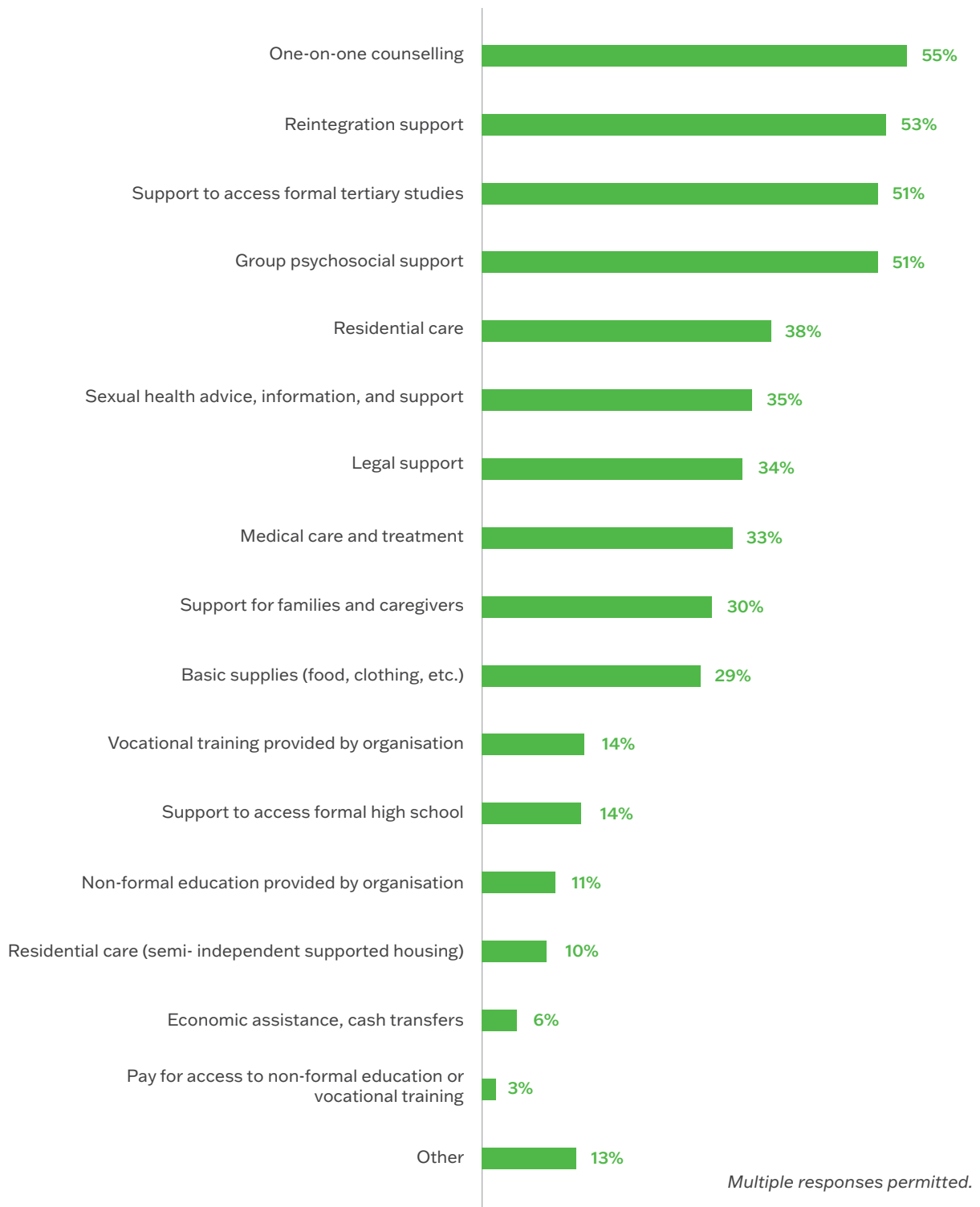> *"The psychologists were like my saviors."*
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

Coincidentally, psychological support was one of the most common services provided by the frontline workers. When asked about the different types of direct support services provided by their organisations to children who have experienced sexual exploitation, over a half (55%, n=44) reported offering one-on-one counselling. The other three most common services provided were reintegration support (53%, n=42), support for families and caregivers (51%, n=41) and group psychosocial support (51%, n=41). Describing the type of service provided, one surveyed frontline worker said:

> *"Accompaniment and emotional support to the victims and psychological evaluation."*

---

11.   In Peru, the special protection units (Unidades de Proteción Social) represent one of the services offered by the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations. They provide comprehensive protection to children and adolescents without parental care or at risk of losing parental care.

Figure 8: Direct support to children who had experienced sexual exploitation provided by the organisation.

Support type	Percentage
One-on-one counselling	55%
Reintegration support	53%
Support to access formal tertiary studies	51%
Group psychosocial support	51%
Residential care	38%
Sexual health advice, information, and support	35%
Legal support	34%
Medical care and treatment	33%
Support for families and caregivers	30%
Basic supplies (food, clothing, etc.)	29%
Vocational training provided by organisation	14%
Support to access formal high school	14%
Non-formal education provided by organisation	11%
Residential care (semi- independent supported housing)	10%
Economic assistance, cash transfers	6%
Pay for access to non-formal education or vocational training	3%
Other	13%

Multiple responses permitted.

When asked about the quality of government activities to address child sexual exploitation and abuse online in Peru, frontline workers provided some criticisms especially about the quality of government activities related to child sexual exploitation and abuse online. As shown in Figure 9, most of the respondents (70%-79%) rated the quality of the activities as "poor" or non-existent.

Figure 9: Frontline workers' views on the quality of government activities.
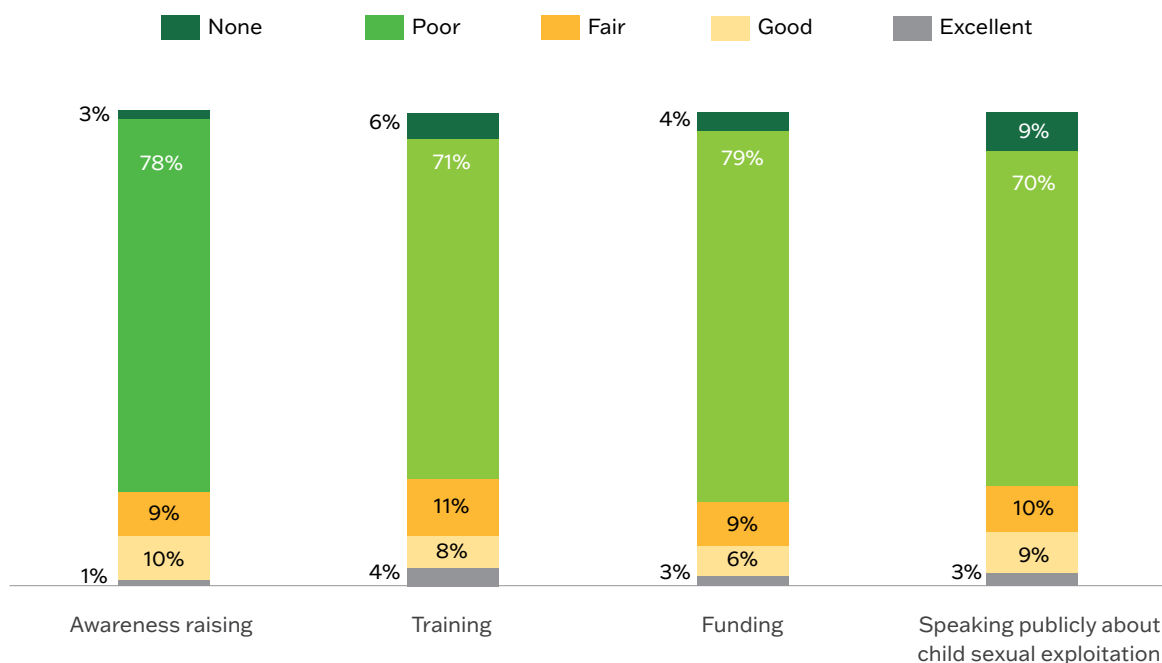
The frontline workers also expressed a certain level of dissatisfaction with both the availability and quality of medical, psychological, legal and reintegration services for children who have experienced online forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in Peru. Responses for psychological and reintegration services were more positive, with around 11-20% of frontline workers rating the availability and quality of these services as either "good" or "excellent". However, all four sets of services were rated as "poor" in terms of availability and quality by between 56%-70% of frontline workers, suggesting a broad need for improvement. One of them commented:

> *"The truth is that we have a long way to go to provide the care that these children need, this starts from families, all the way to institutions."*

Another one was more specific about what should be improved:

> *"The services provided by the state must be improved in terms of efficiency and quality, without discrimination."*

In the conversations, a quality issue raised by the young women was related to the lack of inter-institutional coordination. Three participants mentioned that when they first accessed the services,

they felt that the responsibilities of the different institutions were clear, but with time it became more diffuse and they felt that the cases were not adequately monitored. One young woman said:

> "At the beginning I had the help of state lawyers, I felt strange because I have never had lawyers. But now I don't know who my lawyer is, I'm a bit lost. They only send me papers to my house to read, I would have liked them to help me more."
> (VoS-PE-10)

From the perspective of the young women, the support services received did not fully met their needs and expectations. In the conversations, two young women said that their basic needs were not covered by the services that they accessed, which contributed to maintain them in a situation of vulnerability:

> "After the situation, I would have liked them to help me find a job to be able to support the expenses of my house. The Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations said they were going to help me, but in the end it did not happen; but they did help me with a scholarship."
> (VoS-PE-10)

The other one said:

> "[…] I always had to search everywhere for things I needed, my mother could not provide enough […]"
> (VoS-PE-03)

On top of that, when accessing justice systems, they often reported feeling revictimised by professionals questioning their statements and doubting their complaints. One young woman said:

> "I would tell them to get more involved in the matter, not to ignore the accusations, because many times they say that there is not enough evidence. More help should be given to those who ask for it […] they should not be carried away by money, because that is what happened to me."
> (VoS-PE-01)

Another participant commented that in the process of accessing justice, she felt fear of being blamed:

> "I felt scared, I had appointments before with psychologists who told me that I could not change the version of things because they could blame me for it; that was a traumatic experience for me because I felt a lot of pressure with every word I said"
> (VoS-PE-01)

Shame and revictimisation from law enforcement officials were also concerns raised in the conversations. One young woman reported feeling revictimised by police officers when they rescued her from an experience of human trafficking. She said that she felt blamed, judged and threatened by those who were supposed to protect her and make her feel safe:

> *"When they found me, they did not treat me well… Instead of trying to understand my position, they took the position of the traffickers. They said to me: 'pretty girl involved in those things, how can you fall into those things?' I felt judged from the first moment they found me […]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Despite these challenges, all the young women mentioned that the support received had been important to access the care and justice systems and that, in addition, it opened the doors for them to access other types of services such as workshops and tools for personal growth. A successful example of support was mentioned by one young woman in the conversations. She perceived as adequate the support received by the Human Trafficking Prosecutor's Office, part of the Public Ministry. As a result, this motivated her to trust the authorities and continue with her recovery and rehabilitation process. When asked if the support offered was good she explained that she felt validated when the officers actually listened to her when she denied being related to the offender:

> *"Yes, for me it was because they were always there with me, because the lady [the offender], the one who was next to me, said that I was her daughter and I insisted that I wasn't her daughter, she pulled me because she wanted to take me with her […]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

Types of support services

Psychological support

In the conversations, the young women mentioned different psychological services that they had access to, including those provided by government and non-government organisations.

> *"They sent me to the psychologist… That was at the Units of Special Protection. I told her how the event took place and everything else, and that's how I was overcoming the situation […] I was kind of leaving it behind, it was like a year after, but I did not forget what had happened to me […]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Some of them reported having problems to access psychological support from government institutions, but in these situations, they did manage to access the services provided by civil society organisations:

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

> *"I had difficulties accessing the psychological services, as no state authority provided this service except for the organisation CHS Alternativo."*
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

While some of the young women received counselling for medium and long-term, responses indicated that support rarely lasted as long as the survivors needed it. They mentioned in the conversations that they would have liked to have a continued access to rehabilitation programmes as long as they felt they needed them:

> *"It would have helped me to have continuous psychological support to 'fill the gap' and pain that the situation had left. Also, I would have loved to have more workshops (theater, cooking, cosmetology, zoology), which I was able to receive from CHS Alternativo."*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Psychological support was very much appreciated by the young women who had access to it. They recognised this type of support as key to helping them overcome the impacts of sexual exploitation and abuse online:
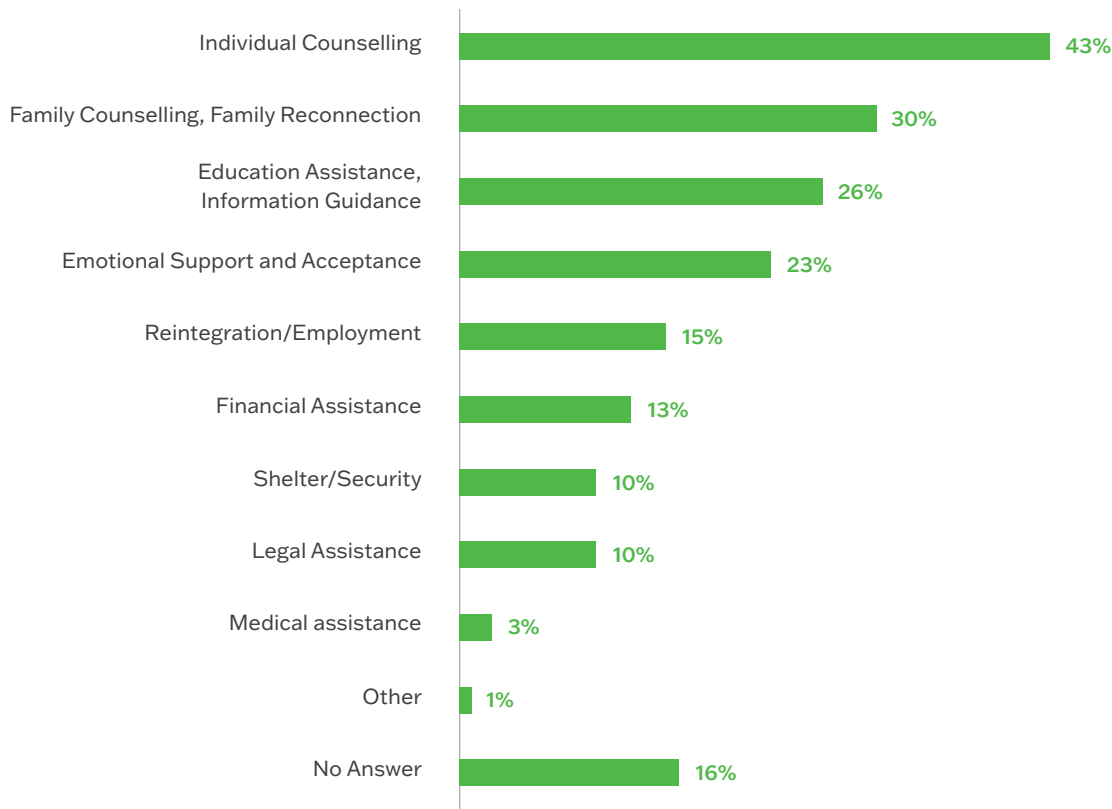
> *"The CHS psychologists helped me a lot, and they referred me to therapy. In addition, they gave me the opportunity to participate in the support workshops."*
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

Indeed, surveyed frontline workers said that children who experienced sexual exploitation and abuse online most commonly identified counselling among their biggest needs (43%, n=34). A respondent elaborated that children need:

> *"Psychotherapy to understand what it means to have been violated and to be a victim of violence, support the family to accompany the recovery process."*

Figure 10: Biggest needs that children say that they have, according to frontline workers.

Individual Counselling	43%
Family Counselling, Family Reconnection	30%
Education Assistance, Information Guidance	26%
Emotional Support and Acceptance	23%
Reintegration/Employment	15%
Financial Assistance	13%
Shelter/Security	10%
Legal Assistance	10%
Medical assistance	3%
Other	1%
No Answer	16%

Psychological support was also considered essential by the frontline workers who responded to the survey. In the hypothetical scenarios frontline workers were presented with in the survey, counselling/psychotherapy was frequently noted by participants as key to the response they would recommend. For example, providing qualitative input on one of the scenarios,[12] a worker suggested that it would be necessary to provide:

"Psychotherapeutic intervention to the family as well as to the adolescent."

Legal and medical support

A number of young women who engaged in the conversations reported accessing legal support and medical examinations from institutions such as the State Office of Forensic Medicine, the National Police of Peru and the Specialized Prosecutors for Human Trafficking Crimes. In accessing these institutions, two of them said that they felt intimidated because they:

"Had to declare [what had happened formally]."

(VoS-PE-05)

---

12. Scenario question: *Recently, uncle Pablo had commented on beach photos posted by his 10-year-old nephew Felipe, that he was looking handsome. Uncle Pablo then wrote messages to Felipe on Facebook asking to meet secretly at his house. Do you believe that Pablo has committed online child sexual exploitation and abuse? What practical steps would you take if you were the service provider supporting 10-year-old Filipe?*

Overall, the young women found legal assistance necessary and useful to navigate their own cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

> "[…] Yes, to me, it was […] because they were always there with me […]"
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

However, some of them conveyed that they feared that they couldn't say the wrong thing or make changes in their statements.

As shown earlier in this report, in Figure 8, 34% (n=27) of the surveyed frontline workers reported that their organisations offered legal support for children who have experienced sexual exploitation and abuse. Legal assistance was also amongst the steps recommended by participants in the scenario-based questions. For example, in a scenario-based question, to help a 10-year-old boy,[13] legal action was raised by 41% of the surveyed frontline workers (n=33). When asked for qualitative input in the survey, one frontline worker said:

> "[…] on the legal side, a case takes so long that sometimes the victims get discouraged from the process and decide not to follow up or not attend scheduled proceedings."

The perhaps unspoken indication here is that for young people to make it through such complex and drawn out justice processes, they will also need guidance, and ongoing support.

One young woman considered that the medical support provided was not what she would expect:

> "I would have liked to be treated well in the hospital, since when I came for a medical problem, I did not get adequate care and I did not receive good treatment."
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

In contrast, two other participants were satisfied with the care received in the medical examination. One of them said that during the exams she

> "Felt encouraged not to give up."
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Financial support

Frontline workers were asked whether child victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse have the possibility to seek formal financial compensation via civil or criminal court proceedings, whether from convicted offenders or via State-managed funds. More than a half of the respondents (50%,

---

13. Ibid.

n=40) indicated that they did not know the answer, while (40%, n=32) responded positively and the remaining 10% (n=8) indicated that child victims do not have the possibility to seek formal financial compensation. As provided in article 92 of the Peruvian Penal Code, victims of crimes can claim civil reparation for damages caused by a crime as determined in the conviction together with the penalty for the offender.[14]

Figure 11: Do child victims of online child sexual exploitation or abuse have the possibility to seek formal financial compensation via civil or criminal court proceedings from convicted perpetrators or country-managed funds?
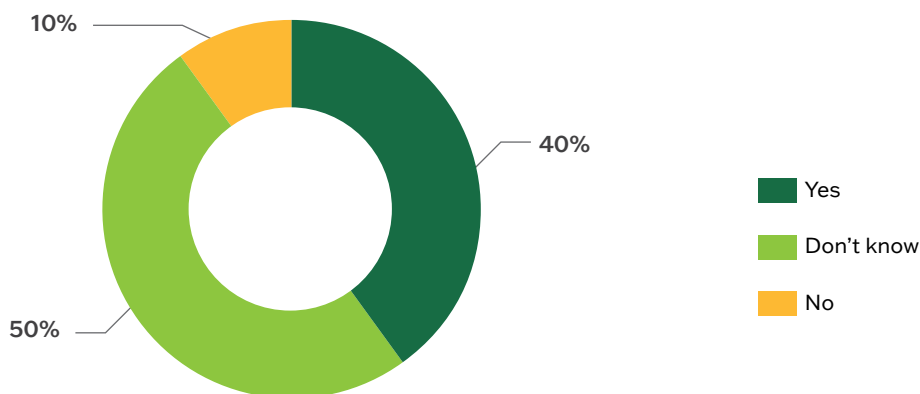
When asked in the survey if they know of any children who had been subjected to online sexual exploitation and abuse and had received compensation for the crimes they suffered in Peru, the majority of surveyed frontline workers either indicated that they did not know of any children (49%, n=39), or that they didn't know how to answer the question (44%, n=35).

Figure 12: Based on your work experience, do you know if any child subjected to online sexual exploitation and abuse have received compensation for the crimes they suffered in Peru?
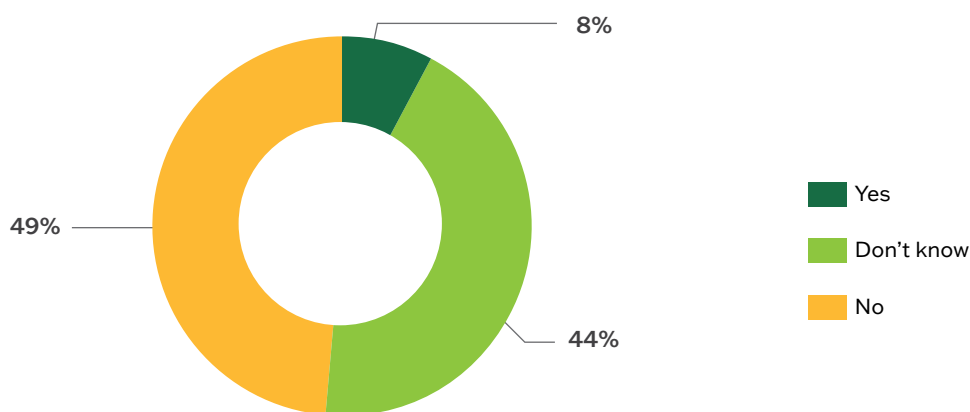
The young people who engaged in the conversations did not talk about benefiting or not from financial compensation.

---

14.   Government of Peru. (1991). Criminal Code. Article 92.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Photo by Carlos Ruiz Huaman

The recommendations presented below are primarily drawn from the conversations with the young people who took part in the conversations. While the survey with frontline workers raised important issues and supported the analysis, this report seeks to privilege the voices and perspectives of survivors. Additional clarification and explanations from the analyses are provided in places from the project partners contributed during the analysis and write-up stage.

1. Promote information and awareness campaigns about risks in the online environment related to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as about how to access help and formally report crimes.

In the conversations, the young women mentioned that it is necessary to promote information in accessible forms to reach communities and young people, for example:

> *"Putting up posters as I told you, because they are useful, you can read information […]"*
>
> (VoS-PE-05)

This recommendation was supported by the surveyed frontline workers. When provided the opportunity to share any last thoughts at the end of the survey, 28% (n=22) emphasised the lack of general public awareness related to this topic as a major issue in Peru. One of them said that:

> *"I believe that an information campaign on the matter is necessary because many adolescents are vulnerable to being caught because they are unaware of the risk to which they may be exposed."*

2. Better promote intersectoral coordination to provide a full range of specialised support services for children subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse online, including long-term assistance for those who need it.

A quality issue raised by the young women in the conversations was related to the lack of inter-institutional coordination. A number of them mentioned that at the beginning they felt that the responsibilities of the different institutions were clear, but with time it became more diffuse, giving them a sense that the cases were not adequately monitored.

Some young women also felt that the services did not necessarily meet their needs, as they did not always provide what was necessary to them such as job opportunities or financial support.

Well-coordinated, specialised and victim-centred services should be available at any time to children and young people who have survived online sexual exploitation and abuse, including long-term assistance in situations where it is needed or requested by the victims.

> *"It would have helped me to have continuous psychological support to cover the emptiness and pain that the situation left me in […] Because if they have hurt you, there is a gap that remains, which will not be filled overnight […] "*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

3. Secure funding to provide training on victim-centred approaches to professionals within the justice system.

While legal assistance was considered useful and necessary by the young women, they repeatedly said in the conversations that they did not feel confident while navigating the justice system, either because they felt pressured or revictimised.

Any child who goes through such an experience should have access to specialists prepared to help them, offering the best possible approaches to make them feel safe. These professionals should be specialised and know the specifics of these cases.

> " At times, we won't have the best lawyers, while others do, and you end up being left aside […]"
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

Providing final thoughts in the survey, one frontline worker highlighted that

> "Most of the professionals attending them do not have the sensitivity or the necessary training to address the cases, they do not have exclusive spaces to provide an optimal service."

4. Young people should have access to a range of helping professionals wherever they are located, and have choices in who supports them, including being able to choose their gender.

A number of young women believe that the services would be more child-friendly if children could choose the gender of the professional they will talk to. This would make them feel more comfortable and able to talk more openly about what happened.

> "They should assign a psychologist [in the legal medical examination], a woman to speak to a woman, or a man to speak to a man, because you could feel strange when a man comes to deal with you, especially if you have been raped. A more understanding psychologist, I felt that the one who supported me was very abrupt and did not understand me. I wish my grandmother was there to help me."
>
> (VoS-PE-06)

5. Improve the investigation and prosecution of online sexual crimes against children.

In the conversations, the young women demonstrated being concerned about the lack of investigation and prosecution of online forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The perception of some of them is that more mechanisms of investigation and prosecution are needed:

> *"There must be stronger penalties and better or more effective mechanisms to capture offenders. The authorities must take more action on the matter so that this does not happen."*
>
> (VoS-PE-01)

Therefore, law enforcement should improve approaches to conducting investigations of online forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Improvements are needed to ensure offenders are brought to justice and that those who have been subjected to such crimes are able to access compensation and other legal remedies. This would also encourage other children to report sexual abuse and exploitation.

> *"Real justice is necessary for these victims so that cases do not go unpunished, and the offenders are not left free to continue taking advantage of more girls."*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Indeed, when providing final thoughts to the survey, one frontline worker said that it is necessary to

> *"Prioritise the protection of children and adolescents and give more resources to prosecute the crimes."*

6. Impose legal duties on and promote collaboration with Internet service providers and social media companies.

Some young women mentioned Internet service providers should guarantee more security for children. One of them suggested that there should be an alarm that allows the companies to detect when a young person is in danger, so that the police can intervene immediately.

> *"Let them try to locate the victims, also the offenders; because sometimes they are the ones who demand that you upload photos that shouldn't be uploaded."*
>
> (VoS-PE-03)

It is therefore necessary to impose legal duties on and promote collaboration with Internet service providers and social media companies to ensure they promptly comply with law enforcement requests for takedown of child sexual abuse material as well as to comply promptly with law enforcement requests for information. This will assist investigations into crimes and limit the wide distribution of child sexual abuse material.

> *"There are false profiles, sexual harassment, criminals who capture[...] Nobody sees or does anything."*
>
> (VoS-PE-04)

Child sexual exploitation and abuse online:
Survivors' Perspectives in Peru

ecpat
INTERNATIONAL

CHS Alternativo
Capital Humano y Social

WeProtect
GLOBAL ALLIANCE