World Vision

Community Perspectives on Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

A Study Examining Existing Knowledge and Awareness in Select Areas in the Philippines

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ACRONYMS

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
ATIP	Anti-Trafficking in Persons
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
CPC	Child Protection Compact Partnership
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
FGD	focus group discussion
GAD	Gender and Development
IACAT	Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking
IJM	International Justice Mission
LCAT	Local Council Against Trafficking
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGU	local government unit
NBI-AHTRAD	National Bureau of Investigation-Anti-Human Trafficking Division
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
NGO	non-government organization
OSEC	online sexual exploitation of children
PNP	Philippine National Police
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
WCPC	Women and Children Protection Center

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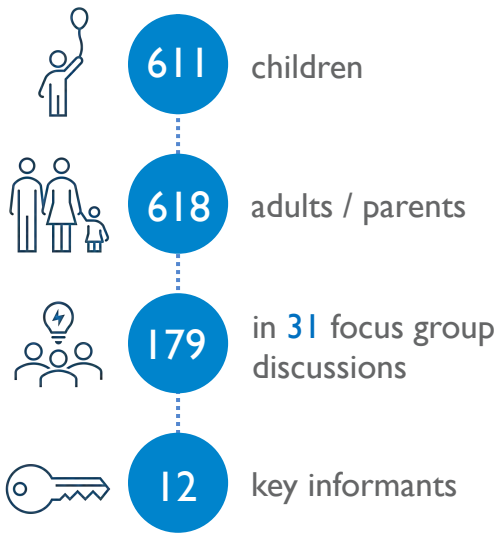
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) is gaining considerable attention in the international sphere, with partnerships formed between countries and between non-government organizations to effectively combat OSEC (see IJM, 2020 and Terres de Hommes, 2013). Such multi-country and multi-sector collaborations underscore the changing dynamics of human trafficking and the nature of response needed to combat the crime, where OSEC offenders are comfortably sitting in their homes, located oceans away from the exploited children. However, facilitation of the crime also happens within homes where facilitators are unfortunately, the child victims' parents, relatives, or even neighbors who all occupy a significant position in the children's circle of trust (Ramiro et al., 2019). This reality highlights the significance of complementing international collaborations between countries and law enforcers with localized prevention efforts against OSEC, empowering communities as front-liners to safeguard children from this type of sexual abuse and exploitation.

This research focuses on the experiences of select communities in the Philippines in OSEC prevention. In particular, it examines (i) the efforts of the government (from national to local) and other key stakeholders to prevent and address online sexual exploitation and identify gaps and key challenges in implementation; (ii) communities' awareness of online sexual exploitation, including their perceptions of their role in reporting online sexual exploitation to authorities; and (ii) communities' awareness of the existing structures and mechanisms in place to respond to and report cases of online sexual exploitation in their communities.

This research covered Taguig City in Metro Manila, and Lapu-Lapu City and Cordova municipality in Cebu province. Overall, 611 children and 618 adults or parents participated in the survey, 179 participated in 31 focus group discussions, and 12 key informants from different line agencies mandated to address OSEC were interviewed for the research. This research employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to map the existing knowledge of communities on OSEC and their assessment and awareness of existing community mechanisms and structures to prevent and report this crime. Findings from the different data gathering tools were compared to triangulate results.

Number of Respondents

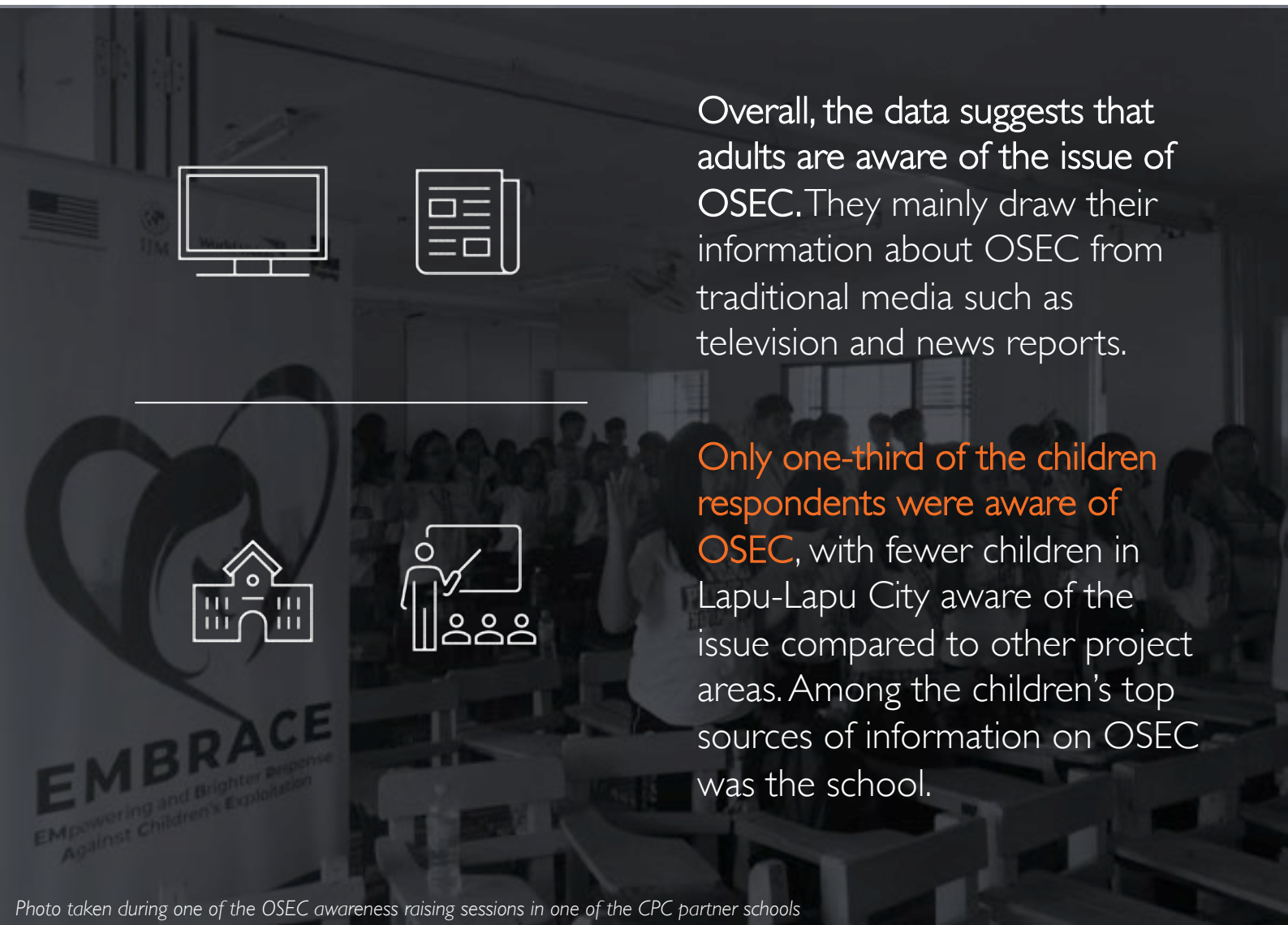


STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is organized as follows: Section I provides an overview of OSEC in the Philippines, the research objectives, and a background of the CPC Project. Section II discusses (i) the definition of OSEC; (ii) the pertinent Philippine laws related to OSEC; (iii) demographic patterns of OSEC victims, traffickers, and perpetrators; and (iv) existing efforts to prevent and respond to OSEC cases. Section III details the qualitative and quantitative research methods used to gather data from communities, as well as the ethical protocols observed to protect respondents.

Section IV provides (i) a brief overview of the demographic and socio-economic profile of the project areas, (ii) reported OSEC cases based on secondary data, and (iii) existing child protection structures in each city/ municipality. Section V presents the data while Section VI discusses the study findings. Section VII concludes the report and recommends ways forward for government, civil society organizations, and community members to combat OSEC.

KEY FINDINGS



Overall, the data suggests that adults are aware of the issue of OSEC. They mainly draw their information about OSEC from traditional media such as television and news reports.

Only one-third of the children respondents were aware of OSEC, with fewer children in Lapu-Lapu City aware of the issue compared to other project areas. Among the children's top sources of information on OSEC was the school.

Photo taken during one of the OSEC awareness raising sessions in one of the CPC partner schools

KEY FINDINGS

- **The study also shows the common notions of communities about OSEC.** Both adults and children associate the word "cybersex" with OSEC despite the difference between the two.

- Apart from highlighting that OSEC involves vulgar sexual acts mediated through the internet and social media, **another striking finding is how communities perceived offenders to be mainly "foreigners."** While national data shows this to be true, this finding also suggests that communities are largely unaware that the production and sharing of online child sexual exploitation materials can also be facilitated by Filipinos. members to combat OSEC.

- Adults generally understand that there are laws that prohibit and punish OSEC. However, **only one in ten children surveyed were aware of laws that protect them from online sexual exploitation** and abuse.

- **Very few adults and children were aware of community-based programs that address OSEC**, which also shows the lack of interventions against OSEC among communities.

- **Respondents themselves realized that they were closely related to or were neighbors of OSEC perpetrators.** Also, participants' responses on whether they have heard or seen cases of OSEC within their communities should not be used as a proxy indicator for the actual number of OSEC cases happening in these areas.

- **Parents and other adults in the community recognized their role in reporting OSEC cases to authorities** such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), the barangay chairperson, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Meanwhile, children recognized the PNP, the barangay chairperson, and their parents as authority figures that should be approached when they suspect that peers in the community are victims of online sexual exploitation.

Photo was taken during one of the OSEC awareness raising sessions in one of the CPC partner schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

On awareness raising activities

- Support LGUs in raising awareness on OSEC at the community level, particularly targeting parents and vulnerable children.
    - Maximize involvement of organized groups/ sectors within the community such as women's organizations, cooperatives/ associations, senior citizens, and churches/ faith-based groups.
    - Reach out to parents who may be having a hard time attending community activities.
    - Collaborate with agencies such as the DSWD and the PNP-Women and Children Protection Center that offer parenting education and OSEC prevention seminars.
    - Messaging must emphasize the risks and negative impacts of OSEC on child victims, to correct misconceptions about OSEC such as "no touch, no harm."
    - Encourage local reporting of OSEC cases by providing financial incentives to witnesses and actively relay contact information of authorities as well as reporting channels throughout communities.
- Work with schools and existing youth organizations within the community in educating children and youth about OSEC.
    - Explore creative and age-appropriate ways to raise awareness about OSEC and cyber safety among children/ youth.
    - Develop learning materials on OSEC that teachers can easily integrate in their subjects.
- Engage the private sector (e.g., internet shops, money transfer institutions, hotels, media, social media) in raising awareness about OSEC.
- Develop appropriate and more engaging social behavior change communication and information, education, and communication materials on OSEC, highlighting risks, laws, and encouraging reporting, targeted toward children, youth, and parents
- Where possible, collaborate with other civil society organizations and non-government organizations implementing OSEC prevention programs at the city, municipal, and barangay level to maximize impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On child protection structures

- Further capacitate frontliners across local government units (LGUs), including police officers, social welfare officers, violence against women and children (VAWC) desk officers, local committees (e.g. Local Council for the Protection of Children and Local Council Against Trafficking) on OSEC prevention and law implementation.
- Work with LGUs to ensure that OSEC prevention is included and funded in the annual work and financial plans of the barangays through the BCPC and gender and development programs.
- Support the crafting and passage of barangay ordinances on anti-trafficking in persons (for barangays that still do not have such policies).
- Support LGUs in reviewing current policies, programs, and activities related to OSEC to identify gaps and challenges and come up with strategies to improve or enhance these initiatives.
- Lobby for a more appropriate indicator on child trafficking prevention and response in the Child Friendly Local Governance Audit indicators.
- Strengthen coordination efforts among agencies, committees, and councils to address OSEC.
- Establish a unified case management data system for OSEC cases from the local to the national level to generate better data that can aid legislation and planning.

On the role of internet providers

- Lobby for the amendment of RA 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act) to provide more stringent requirements for internet service providers to filter (i.e., whitelisting, blacklisting) websites that promote child sexual abuse materials.
- Engage social media platforms to self-regulate and/or add more rigorous child protection mechanisms within their platforms.
- Lobby for stricter regulations for remittance and money transfer companies. Engage the private sector, particularly money transfer companies, to come up with codes of conduct and/or self-regulation to help monitor OSEC transactions.

On the underlying socioeconomic conditions that help perpetuate OSEC

- Link communities with government agencies that provide support for livelihood and enterprise development (e.g., Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Trade and Industry).

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Law enforcement experts and other practitioners engaged in responding to online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) often consider the Philippines as a "global hotspot" for OSEC, according to a 2020 report published by the International Justice Mission (IJM).

Online sexual exploitation is one of the internet-based crimes committed against children. This form of sexual exploitation and abuse can manifest in many ways, but for purposes of this research, the term is used to refer to "the production, for the purpose of online publication or transmission, of visual depictions (e.g., photos, videos, livestreaming) of the sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor for a third party who is not in the physical presence of the victim, in exchange for compensation" (International Justice Mission, 2020, p. 10).

Based on available comparative case data, OSEC may be more prevalent in the Philippines compared to other countries (IJM, 2020). The country received eight times more OSEC case referrals from international law enforcers compared to other developing countries such as Mexico, India, Cambodia or Thailand from 2011 to 2017. More alarmingly, the report also shows that the number of recorded OSEC cases in the country investigated by the Philippine anti-trafficking units have tripled from 2014 to 2017. From one OSEC case reported in 2014, the number of cases has consistently increased each year, with 43 cases recorded in 2017 (IJM, 2020, p. 12).

Data from the International Justice Mission (IJM) records 381 children rescued from online sexual exploitation from 2010 to 2017 (IJM, 2020). While IJM's data covers cases until 2017 only, recent news report show that there are still children subjected to online sexual exploitation (see Rappler, 2020; SunStar, 2020).

These statistics illuminate the extent of work that needs to be done to protect children from online sexual exploitation. On one hand, the increase in cases in the last three years could reflect that detection mechanisms and international collaboration among law enforcers are working. On the other hand, it also reveals the magnitude of response still needed from the government, non-government organizations (NGOs), technology companies, and even the general public to combat internet-based crimes against children, OSEC included. Exploitation persists,

and perpetrators continue to escape their crimes aided by technology and an unwieldy criminal justice system. This should force government agencies and NGOs to work together with a greater sense of urgency, to protect Filipino children from becoming victims of online sexual exploitation.

1.2 ABOUT THE CPC PARTNERSHIP

In April 2017, the United States and the Philippine governments signed the Child Protection Compact (CPC) partnership, a bilateral agreement to address child labor trafficking (CLT) and online child sexual exploitation of children (OSEC). The CPC Partnership is the "first of its kind" in the Asia Pacific region (US Embassy in the Philippines, 2017a).

Through the US Department of State and the Philippine Department of Justice's Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), both governments pledged strong commitment to materialize the partnership's four-year implementation plan, with activities primarily focused in major cities in the National Capital Region and Central Visayas.

The CPC Partnership's objectives are three-fold (US Department of State, 2017). First, it aims to support the government's efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict child traffickers. The second objective focuses on increasing the capacity of government and civil society in providing specialized child protection services. The third objective seeks to prevent OSEC and CLT by improving existing community-based mechanisms. All of these objectives build on the improvements and ongoing efforts of the Philippine government and civil society to address and prevent trafficking in persons (US Department of State, 2017b).

The CPC Partnership is implemented by IJM, WVDF, The Salvation Army, and World Hope International. WVDF's focus is on strengthening existing community-based mechanisms for identifying and protecting child victims of online sexual exploitation of children and child labor trafficking, including domestic servitude, and preventing these crimes.. The organization takes a collaborative and community-centered approach in the prevention of CLT and OSEC by working closely with the LGUs of Taguig City, Cebu City, Mandaue City, Lapu-Lapu City, the Municipality of Cordova in Cebu, faith-based organizations such as Alliance of God's Servants in Taguig Inc., Rock of Refuge and other evangelical churches, University of San Carlos, civil society workers, parents, and most importantly, children.

> Ultimately, the CPC Partnership is reflective of the "shared concern about the harmful and lasting impact of online sexual exploitation of Filipino children–especially when undetected–and a mutual interest in partnering to improve efforts to prevent children from becoming exploited in domestic servitude or other forms of child labor trafficking" (US Embassy in the Philippines, 2017b).

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research consulted children, parents, community leaders, and agency representatives to examine their awareness of OSEC and their assessment of mechanisms and structures in place to protect children from this form abuse and exploitation.

In particular, this research has three main objectives:

- to describe the efforts of the government (from national to local) and other key stakeholders to prevent and address online sexual exploitation of children and identify gaps and key challenges in implementation;
- to examine community's awareness of online sexual exploitation of children, including their perceptions of their role in reporting OSEC to authorities; and
- to assess community's awareness on the existing structures and mechanisms in place to respond to and report cases of online sexual exploitation of children in their communities.

Accurately assessing the nature and scale of OSEC in the Philippines remains a work in progress (IJM, 2020), and this research attempts to contribute to the ongoing discussions by considering the perspectives of communities which are at the frontlines of preventing (or perpetuating) OSEC: What are the common notions about OSEC in the community? How do children understand the phenomenon? What do parents think about their role in protecting their children from online sexual exploitation?

As with all other crimes committed against children, communities have a crucial role to play in preventing OSEC. Communities can amplify surveillance initiatives; improve crime reporting; and facilitate the rescue, reintegration, and restoration of children. It is only proper and timely to include their perspectives in the ongoing efforts to completely understand and accurately address OSEC.

This report should be read together with the "Community Perspectives on Child Labor Trafficking: A Study Examining Existing Knowledge and Awareness in Select Areas in the Philippines" as prevention and punishment of child labor trafficking is the other component of the Child Protection Compact.

Partners of the Child Protection Compact joined together to advocate against online sexual exploitation of children

II. ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN OVERVIEW

2.1 DEFINING ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

In the Philippines, there is no existing law that defines online sexual exploitation per se (Aritao & Pangilinan, 2018). Instead, the Luxembourg Terminology Guidelines of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse remains a helpful reference to many organizations and governments in defining OSEC. This document refers to OSEC as "all acts of sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that have, at some state, a connection to the online environment" (Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 2016, p. 27). These acts involve, but are not limited to the following:

- 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);
- identifying and/or grooming potential child victims online with a view to exploiting them sexually (whether the acts that follow are then carried out online or offline); and
- the distribution, dissemination, importing, exporting, offering, selling, possession of or unknowingly obtaining access to child sexual exploitation materials online (even if the sexual abuse that is depicted in the materials was carried out offline).

Simply put, for the purposes of this paper, OSEC is the sexual exploitation of children to create new child sexual exploitation materials (photos, videos or livestreaming) in exchange for payment. Depending on how this offense is construed, OSEC can manifest in many ways, particularly as a form of child abuse, child sex trafficking, and child sexual exploitation material (CSEM). OSEC involves the production, consumption, sharing or possession of child sexual materials in the forms of photos or videos. It is also a child abuse as children are often forced to participate in sexual acts alone or with other individuals to produce these materials. Most importantly, OSEC is a form of child sex trafficking, modern-day acts of human trafficking and sex slavery perpetuated online for profit. This spectrum of offenses is punishable under various laws, which will be discussed in the next section.

OSEC has become an overarching term for many offenses mentioned above, but the commercial element or the payment for the technology-mediated exploitation of children is what differentiates it from other types of internet crimes against children such as cyberbullying or sextortion. According to IJM (2020), the crime typically involves an OSEC in-person trafficker who sexually abuses or exploits a child in exchange for payment from an online offender. The trafficker has access to children, sexually abuse or exploits the child in person, documents the child abuse, peddles the sex abuse material on the internet, and receives payment from the OSEC offender through money transfer service. While the demand-side offender is not physically present where the abuse happens, the offender nonetheless actively participates in the abuse by dictating to the trafficker and/or the exploited children while watching the act via a live-streaming communication platform (IJM, 2020; Interagency Working Group, 2016).

OSEC is then used interchangeably as "on-demand child sexual abuse," "child sexual abuse to order," "pay-per-view" or simply, "livestreaming." In some cases when the exploitation is video or photo recorded, the material continues to circulate online and the perpetrators keeps profiting from the "revictimization" of children in the online material (Ramiro et al. 2019, p. 2).

Other concepts that are closely related to OSEC but are nonetheless different from it are sextortion and grooming. Sextortion is defined as the "blackmailing of individual using self-generated materials to extort sexual favors, money, or other benefits from her/him under the threat of sharing the material beyond the consent of the depicted person" (Interagency Working Group 2016, p. 52). OSEC and sextortion are both forms of sexual exploitation; however, in sextortion, abuse of power is exercised by threatening the person that the self-generated sexual material will be released if demands are not met. Grooming, on the one hand, is "a practice by means of which an adult 'befriends' a child (often online, but offline grooming also exists and should not be neglected) with the intention of sexually abusing her/him" (Interagency Working Group, 2016, p. 49). In some cases, the OSEC offender "grooms" the child, which is integral in getting their trust, before subjecting them to online sexual exploitation.

2.2 ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND OSEC PREVALENCE

In the past decade, internet-based crimes against children such as OSEC have lurked in the shadows of improving internet infrastructure in the country (IJM, 2020). Easier and more affordable access to the internet and a digital-savvy youth at ease with social media (UNICEF Philippines, 2015), coupled with the longer history of sex trade and travelling sex offender cases (Ofreneo and Rosalinda, 1998; Protacio-Marcelino et al., 2000 as cited in PRRC, 2017), are social structures that have given rise to OSEC in the Philippines. However, it remains a challenge to precisely understand how many Filipino children are subjected to online sexual exploitation across the country.

2.2.1 Recorded OSEC cases

More recently, IJM (2020) has attempted to fill this gap by using 2010 to 2017 data from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) CyberTipline, which is a centralized mechanism where electronic service providers (i.e., companies that provide communication services via the internet) based in the US report internet-based child sexual exploitation. NCMEC forwards data from CyberTipline to concerned countries to help local law enforcers track down OSEC traffickers. In the report, IJM (2020) reveals a consistently sharp increase in the number of Philippine-based IP addresses used for child sexual exploitation from 2014 to 2017. CyberTipline collects IP addresses which determine the "electronic network's location" of producers and consumers of sexual exploitation material (IJM 2020, p. 29). This means that the three-year period saw the rise of child sexual exploitation materials originating from the Philippines. However, the data could not reveal how many of the IP addresses were used specifically for OSEC (IJM 2020) and where exactly these abuses were happening.

However, this is not to say that OSEC is a new phenomenon. In fact, there have been reports of cybersex dens in Boracay in 2005 and Bacoor in 2008 (as cited in PSSRC 2017). In 2011, Terres de Hommes helped prosecute two Swedish nationals and three Filipinos for the live streaming of child sex acts. In 2013, they also created a photorealistic avatar to ensnare potential perpetrators (Terres de Hommes, 2013); "Sweetie" is a 10 year-old Filipina girl who talked to sexual predators in public chat rooms in order to uncover their personal data. Terres de Hommes then forwarded these collected data to law enforcers to help them track the predators. Over a 10-week period, the researchers were able to identify 1,000 predators across 71 countries. In fact, "Sweetie" helped police officers arrest an offender in Australia in February 2013 (Schweizer, 2014).

In terms of recency, the Department of Justice reported that OSEC cases have tripled in the last few months as a result of the lockdown triggered by the coronavirus pandemic Cayon, 2020).

2.2.2 Conditions of children rescued from OSEC

Despite advances in technology-facilitated methods of tracking OSEC customers, the limited data prevents authorities from getting a more complete picture of the scale of the crime to include the demographics of OSEC victims, customers, and traffickers, as well as how it is facilitated (IJM, 2020; UNICEF EAPRO, 2016). Some studies have attempted to fill this gap using quantitative (IJM, 2020) and qualitative methods (De Castro et al., 2018; Ramiro et al., 2019).

The data available on 90 OSEC cases investigated by IJM between 2011 to 2017 reveals that OSEC victims tended to be female (86%) with a median age of 11 years, although some cases involved exploitation of infants as young as two months old (IJM, 2020). On average, four children were involved and were either siblings or relatives (e.g. cousins). IJM also notes that some of these children were often unaware that they were being exploited. Meanwhile, Child Fund study results show that children subject to commercial and online sexual exploitation feel "a sense [of] anger, sadness, worthlessness, self-pity, and despondency, fear and anxiety, and hopelessness" (De Castro et al. 2018, p. 9). By interviewing 24 children involved in commercial and online sexual exploitation in Cebu City, they find that these feelings are important internal factors alongside external factors such as stigma and support from institutions that could spur these children to exit and/or re-enter commercial sexual exploitation arrangements (De Castro et al. 2018).

2.2.3 The role of communities

One common thread that the literature emphasizes is the role of families, neighbors, and relatives as OSEC traffickers–people who occupy essential positions within the child's circle of care and trust (De Castro et al., 2018; IJM, 2020; PSRRC, 2017; Ramiro et al., 2019; Terres de Hommes, 2013). Quantitative data analyzed by IJM show that 83% of investigated cases involved either the child's parents (41%) or other relatives (42%). Traffickers were usually female (IJM, 2020), with other reports showing that the trafficker was usually the child's mother (Hernandez et al., 2018). Ethnographic and interview data from

communities (Ramiro et al., 2018) also find that parents not only tolerated this activity, but actively participated in perpetuating OSEC because it provided "easy money" for the family and even sustained their vices. There are reports that show parents could earn between PhP1,000 (USD20) to PhP2,600 (USD52) or more per livestream. Among parents-perpetrators, there is also a perception that OSEC was less harmful and not against the law as compared to in-person sexual contact through prostitution (Ramiro et al., 2018). Children, meanwhile, felt a sense of guilt when their family member was convicted due to the crime, and this can result in "confusion, betrayal, shame, and broken trust" (IJM, 2020, p. 12).

"Self-generated" OSEC and cybersex dens are the other two types of OSEC facilitation aside from "family-facilitated" as earlier mentioned (Terres de Hommes, 2013). "Self-facilitating" or "self-generated" OSEC happens when teenagers send material to foreign sex offenders (see also PSCRRC, 2017; Ramiro et al., 2019). It might be difficult to determine if "grooming" led to online sex exploitation, but children are still considered too young to participate in financial transactions (IJM, 2020). Meanwhile, "cybersex dens" are places where multiple people are held and abused for years and sold to customers both online and offline. Dens tend to be run by organized crime groups as well as foreign nationals (Terres de Hommes, 2013).

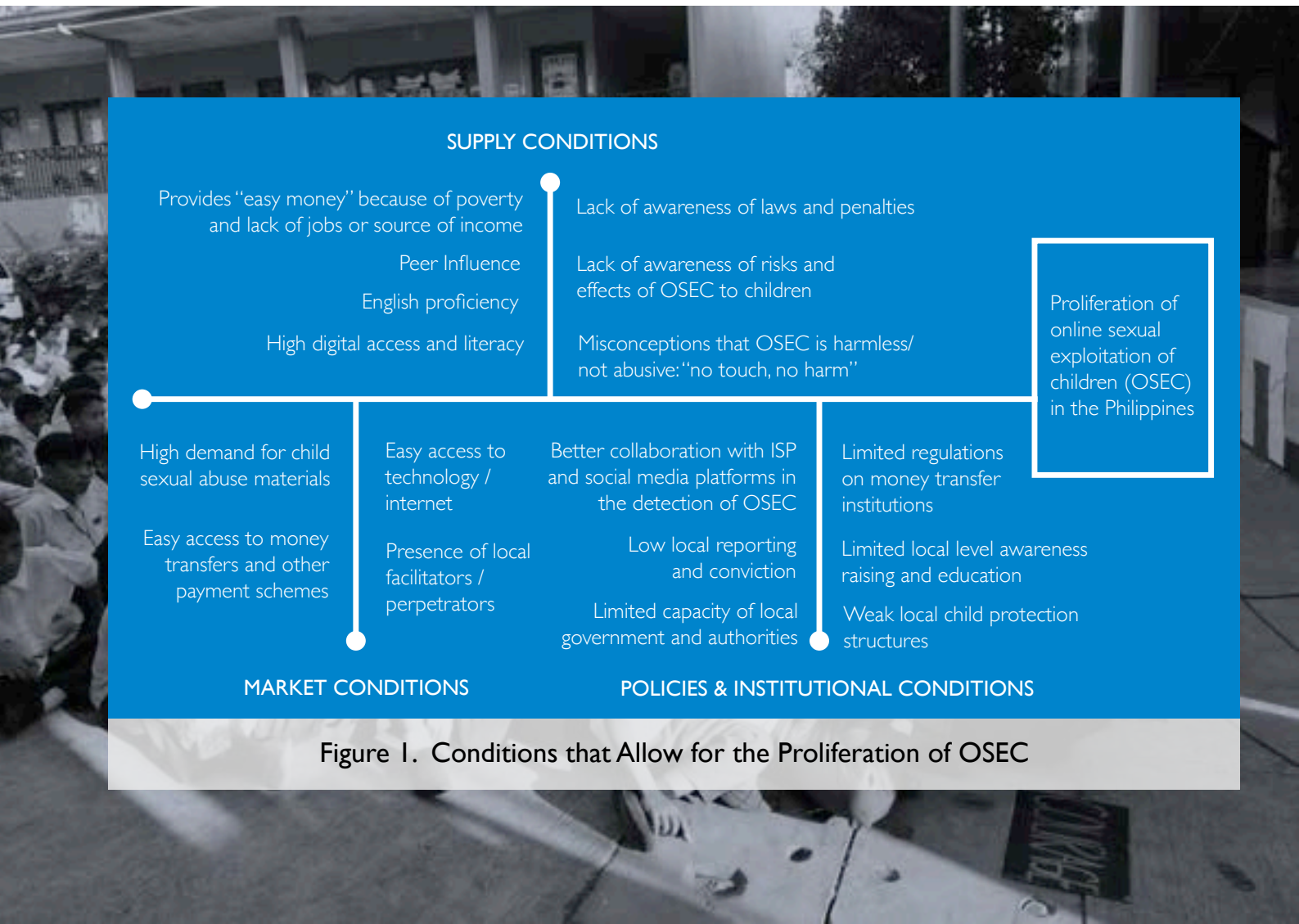


Figure 1. Conditions that Allow for the Proliferation of OSEC

Another study finds that while parents and children saw these activities as "inhumane" and "disgusting," these were nonetheless perceived as "normal" in communities where OSEC cases are rampant (Ramiro et al., 2019). In these cases, young people imitated peers in the community who were engaged in online sexual exploitation especially when they were deemed financially better off despite the severe harm that OSEC caused (Ramiro et al., 2019; ILO, 2007). Ethnographic studies find that young persons considered the benefits of such activities, but children "imitating" or modelling" other children engaged in commercial and online sexual exploitation had a "perception that [these] activities are normative (i.e., socially enforced, sanctioned, or encouraged among friends" (Ramiro et al., 2019, p. 9). OSEC survivors also confronted a dilemma when they returned to their family and community as they could face stigma from the same community members who tolerated the crime.

2.3 FIGHTING OSEC: LAWS AND INTERVENTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

2.3.1 Domestic laws related to OSEC

OSEC is punishable under several applicable laws in the Philippines, yet there is no existing law that specifically addresses its complexity as a crime. The laws that are applicable to OSEC are the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012, Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009, Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012, and Special Protection Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (Aritao & Pangilinan, 2018).

Table 1. Applicable domestic laws related to OSEC

Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 (amending Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003)	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, adoption, providing, or receipt of a child for the production of sexual exploitation material is a qualified human trafficking act that carries a penalty of life imprisonment.
Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009	The Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 defines child pornography as "any representation, whether visual, audio, or written combination thereof, by electronic, mechanical, digital, optical, magnetic[,] or any other means[,] of [a] child engaged or involved in real or simulated explicit sexual activities."
Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012	Under the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012, the acts punishable under the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 when "committed through a computer system" will be punishable by a penalty that is one degree higher than what is provided for by the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009.
Special Protection Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act	This Act provides special protection to children which includes not only those below 18 years old, but also individuals who are unable to protect themselves from harm due to a physical or mental disability or condition. The law punishes the sexual abuse of a child in various forms, including child prostitution, child trafficking, other neglects of cruelty and abuse, obscene shows, and employment of children beyond safe parameters.

Source: Aritao & Pangilinan, 2018.

The different laws outlined in Table 1 signify that the Philippines has a generally strong legal framework for addressing child abuse and exploitation. However, when applied specifically to the case of OSEC, these "constellation of laws […] present law enforcers and prosecutors with complicated strategic choices" that might not help in the efficient prosecution of offenders (Aritao & Pangilinan, 2018, p. 204). Another disadvantage is that despite these encompassing laws intended to punish all possible cases of child abuse, they fail to "capture the commensurate punishment for OSEC" (Hernando-Malipat, 2020).

Child rights groups have since urged legislators to enact a legal framework that is dedicated to fighting OSEC. Child Rights Network, the biggest network of child-focused organizations in the Philippines (to which World Vision Development Foundation is a member) called on the Philippine Congress to craft better laws to curb this phenomenon. Specifically, they emphasized the need to "review and update our current laws to encompass appropriate definitions of OSEC terms, accountability of the private sector to children, child rescue and rehabilitation, and punishment of perpetrators" (Hernando-Malipat 2020).

2.3.2 National efforts and international and multi-sector collaboration against OSEC

The Philippines has a general roadmap to fight OSEC and this is coordinated through different government agencies. The DSWD Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography leads the National Response Plan to Address Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. This plan outlines key result areas, core strategies, and planned outcomes which guide the work against OSEC from 2016 to 2019. In addition to this, the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) leads the Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children by 2025 (CWC, 2017). This plan is anchored on an ideal online safe space for children and also cites the government's related actions to fulfil its commitment to protect the rights of children and provide them an environment that supports their full potential. CWC has yet to evaluate the ongoing efforts to operationalize this plan.

An ideal cyber space for children

The use of the internet is…
• Free from all forms of violence, abuse, harassment and sexual solicitation
• Free from pornography sites and any explicit content
• Free from cyber bullying (postings and comments)
• Protected by mechanisms for blocking sites that can expose children to pornography sites or any sites with explicit content

Source: CWC (2017)

In terms of prosecution and conviction, the Philippines has specialized units that prioritize OSEC. First and foremost is the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Center (PNP-WCPC) mandated to investigate sex crimes against children and the National Bureau of Investigation Anti Human Trafficking Division mandated to investigate trafficking cases. The PNP Anti Cybercrime Group and National Bureau of Investigation Cybercrime Division can also investigate cases of online child abuse and exploitation, among other cyber security

threats and issues in the country. Personnel under these agencies are trained to strengthen their skills and capacity in investigating OSEC, particularly in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of the children involved (IACAT, n.d.), although there have been reports that have raised concerns about these authorities' inability to apply child-sensitive investigation procedures (UNICEF EAPRO, 2016).

Given the profile of OSEC offenders, majority of whom are based in other countries (IJM, 2020), international collaboration is thus central to any nation's effort to effectively combat OSEC. This is why existing mechanisms for global collaboration have been useful in referring 64% OSEC cases in the Philippines (IJM, 2020). In 2014, the Philippines was linked to the virtual private network of the NCMEC. The Office of Cybercrime at the Department of Justice, which is the central authority in all matters relating to international mutual assistance and extradition for cybercrime cases, now gets notified when NCMEC receives a report that has a Philippine nexus through its CyberTipline. The Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center was also established to strengthen collaboration between Philippines' law enforcers and foreign law enforcement agencies regarding OSEC.

Sector collaborations are also important to underscore such as the practice among NGOs of partnering with the private sector to eliminate online and offline child sexual abuse and exploitation (see Table 2). Case in point is End Child Prostitution and Trafficking's (ECPAT) collaboration with Accor Hotel's WATCH program to educate employees of member hotels on CSEA and Children's Legal Bureau's (CLB) engagement with media outlets in Cebu to raise awareness on child trafficking and OSEC. The Girls Advocacy Alliance project implemented by Terre Des Hommes Netherlands and Plan International Philippines also helped empower community leaders, children and youth, (some of which were even victims of abuse), to be advocates against child abuse and exploitation.

Table 2. Programs and Projects Responding to OSEC in the Philippines

Program Title	Description
1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking	The 1343 Actionline Against Human Trafficking was launched in March 2011 as a 24/7 hotline facility responding to crisis calls from human trafficking victims and their families and as a venue for the public to report cases of human trafficking.
Alambau,ph	Alambau,ph is an online hub developed by NGO Dakila in partnership with the Australian Embassy and The Asia Foundation that aims to educate, support and connect people to create a safer internet space for children. It also provides a reporting section directly linked to PNP's Angelnet.
Child Protection Compact	In 2017, the governments of the Philippines and United States signed the Child Protection Compact to strengthen efforts to reduce child labor trafficking and OSEC in the Philippines.
Cybersafe	The Department of Education has partnered with Stairway Foundation, UNICEF to develop online safety modules for teachers called Cybersafe.

Program Title	Description
Girls Advocacy Alliance	Girls Advocacy Alliance is a 5-year project led by Plan International, Terre des Hommes and ECPAT and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that aims to promote equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women, focusing on addressing gender-based violence including sexual violence, forced labor and trafficking. GAA in the Philippines developed "Face your PEERS: A Youth Peer Education Guide Against Sexual Exploitation of Children" that seeks to increase the awareness of children and youth on sexual abuse and exploitation (CSEC and OSEC), increase the capacity of children and youth to face and prevent sexual exploitation and establish a support mechanism among children and youth, including victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.
Project Angelnet	Project Angelnet is PNP – Anti Cybercrime Group's special program established purposely to address Internet based-concerns and abuses and to promote Internet safety and prevent its dangers among the children.
Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP)	The Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP) implemented by DSWD and IACAT providing for the recovery and reintegration services to human trafficking victims.
SaferKidsPH	SaferKidsPH is a 6-year project aimed at increasing public awareness of risks of OSEC, strengthen investigation and prosecution of OSEC cases and improve service delivery for OSEC prevention and protection of vulnerable children. Launched in October 22, 2019, it is jointly implemented by UNICEF, Save the Children Philippines and The Asia Foundation in partnership with DSWD, DOJ, DICT and DepED and private sector telecommunication companies.

Source: Author's own compilation

2.3.3 Challenges in combatting OSEC

Despite the presence of many agencies, councils, and committees addressing OSEC, the coordination between these agencies continues to be weak. This results in the lack of a comprehensive collection of cases as well as fragmented efforts to raise public awareness about OSEC. UNICEF Philippines (2017) recommends establishing mechanisms that can strengthen coordination among these institutions, increasing funding, and building capacity for a targeted advocacy on OSEC.

At the local level, efforts to address OSEC fall within the broader category of child protection activities and anti-trafficking initiatives of LGUs. However, despite their strategic role in preventing this crime, some LGUs do not have a unified child protection program and funding allocation for child protection services (CWC and UNICEF Philippines, 2016). For example, a CWC study finds that only about half (49.8%) or 21,790 LGUs (provincial, city, municipal, barangay) had

established local councils for the protection of children and only 9.5% or 4,156 LGUs had an ideal level of the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) functionality.

While the ATIP law mandates LGUs to allocate funding for these child protection and anti-trafficking efforts, there are lower-income LGUs that are faced with competing development priorities given their limited budget. These concerns prevent local-level implementers from carrying out programs that allow them to be proactive with regard to OSEC in their communities.

Existing community perception and practices also poses a challenge in preventing OSEC. The literature indicates that communities have a "culture of silence" when it comes to such incidents that prevents the timely reporting, if not the actual reporting of cases (CWC and UNICEF Philippines, 2016). There are various reasons for this. One is the lack of awareness of child protection services at the community level. The CWC and UNICEF Philippines (2016), for example, finds that only 3 in 10 children were aware of child protection services in their community, and only 30.5% of these identified or utilized women and child protection units. Another is the view that child abuse is a private matter to be settled within the concerned family and reporting the abuse to authorities may be considered meddling and can even result in repercussions on the person who reported the case (CWC and UNICEF Philippines, 2016). Children also manifest low help-seeking practice. The results of the National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children (CWC and UNICEF Philippines, 2016) show that less than 5% of children said they reported to authorities. Those who disclosed abuse mostly approached their friends and mothers, while a few went to professionals (i.e., teachers, guidance counsellors). As to why children did not seek help, 34.4% did not see it as a problem, 15.8% were shy or afraid to consult, while 15.9% thought that they can solve the problem on their own.

Overall, the existing literature on OSEC in the Philippines points to the role of communities —more specifically parents, neighbors, and peers—in the online sexual exploitation of children (De Castro et al., 2018; IJM, 2020; PSRRC, 2017; Ramiro et al., 2019; Terres de Hommes, 2013). Such findings, together with the flaws in local child protection mechanisms, underscore the crucial role of communities in responding to OSEC cases and preventing further incidences. While global collaboration has been proven effective in prosecuting OSEC offenders as almost 64% of investigated OSEC cases were initiated through international law enforcement referrals (IJM, 2020), there is also a need to complement these efforts at the community level in order to eliminate OSEC. This research contributes to achieving this by providing data on how communities understand OSEC, including their roles in reporting the crime.

Photos of Ibabaohanon community child protection advocates (CCPA) from Barangay Ibabao, Cordova

III. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to describe communities' knowledge of OSEC and their awareness and assessment of the existing community mechanisms and structures to report this crime. Findings from the different data gathering tools, as applicable, were compared to triangulate results. This section also details the research areas, tools, and protocols put in place to ensure the ethical conduct of research.

3.1 RESEARCH AREAS

The research was conducted in three CPC project areas: Taguig City in Metro Manila, and Lapu-Lapu City and Cordova municipality in Cebu province. These areas were chosen because the CPC project team has been working with these LGUs in preventing OSEC and child labor trafficking. Three barangays were selected as pilot sites in each area.

Table 3. OSEC Research Areas

City / Municipality	Barangays
Taguig City	Sta. Ana, Tuktukan, Ligid Tipas
Lapu-Lapu City	Babag, Maribago, Pusok
Cordova	Ibabao, Gabi, Day-as

In the Philippines, cities and municipalities are headed by a mayor, but cities are more urbanized areas than municipalities. Cities and municipalities are also both subdivided into barangays. The barangay is the smallest administrative unit in the Philippines, headed by a chairperson and seven members of the barangay council. In some barangays, there are two additional administrative sub-levels—sitios and puroks.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

The research utilized household surveys, focus group discussions, and desk reviews to gather data.

3.2.1 Household and child surveys

Parents and children aged 10 to 17 years were the respondents of the household and child surveys. The survey was divided into two parts. The first part was directed at parents or adult representatives of households. They were asked the following specific topics: (i) household's demographic profile and patterns of internet and social media use, (ii) housing characteristics and assets, (iii) livelihood and household activities, (iv) social protection, (v) awareness of OSEC and mechanisms to report it, and (vi) education and aspirations for children.

The second part of the survey was directed at the 10 to 17-year old children in the households. They were asked about (i) patterns of internet and social media use, (ii) community associations they are engaged in, (iii) awareness of OSEC and mechanisms to report it, and (iv) education and aspirations. Details on the household and child survey questionnaire are found in the Annexes.

It is crucial to note that the enumerator's introduction about the survey did not define OSEC outright; instead, the introduction focused on providing an overview of the survey and its objectives (i.e., that the survey will ask for their demographic profile and

patterns of internet use). This strategy enabled a "bottom-up" understanding of people's awareness of and assumptions about OSEC. After probing, enumerators then briefly discussed human trafficking and OSEC to equalize understanding and prepare the respondents for the next set of questions, on awareness of laws and interventions related to OSEC prevention and investigation.

The questionnaire was translated to the local dialect to ensure a better understanding of the questions among target respondents. Pre-testing of approved tools and mock surveys were facilitated to check the quality of translations and validity of the questions. The research team utilized the Kobo Collect mobile data gathering tool for efficient survey data collection. The data was uploaded to the main server to which only the primary researcher had access.

Household sampling

A two-step sampling method was used to carefully select the survey respondents. The researchers did cluster sampling to identify zones within villages (barangays), then proceeded to do interval sampling to identify household respondents within zones. Figure 2 illustrates this two-step sampling method.

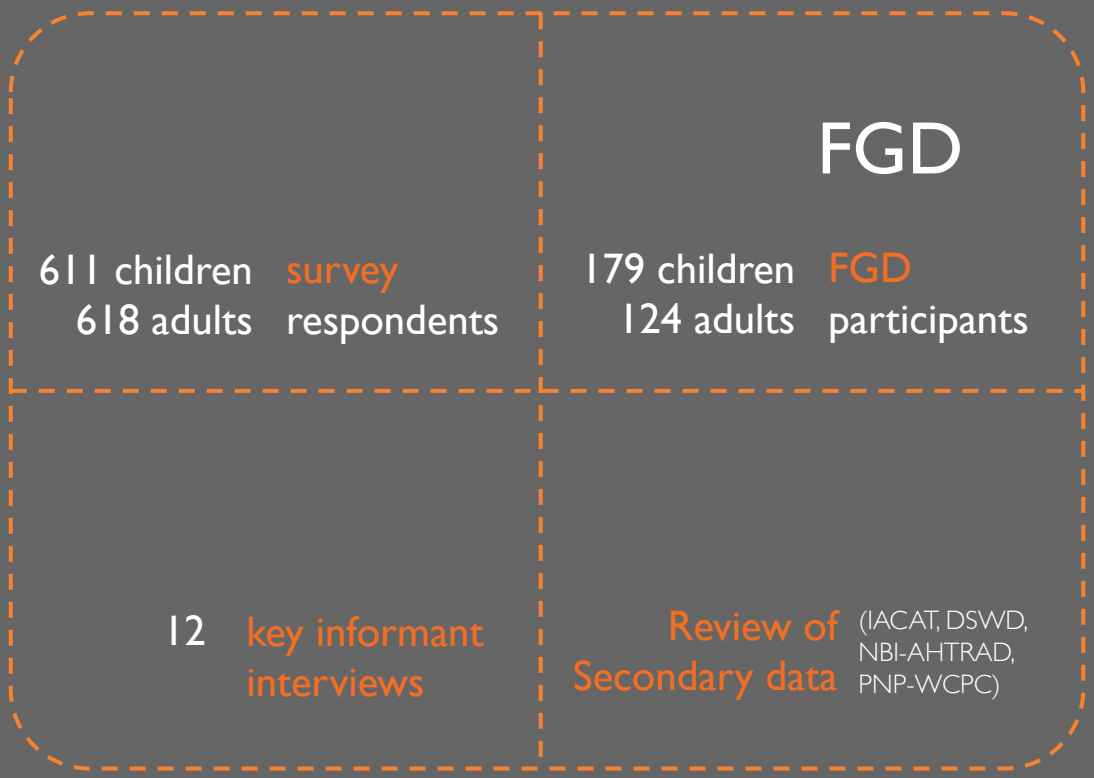


Figure 2. Research Methods

Photo taken during one of the OSEC awareness raising sessions in one of the CPC partner schools

Within each village or barangay, a cluster or area sampling was conducted to identify the zones (either sitios or puroks) to include in the survey. The main criteria for selecting the cluster or area are proximity to barangay centers and number of households. The team identified three zones in each barangay, for a total of 27 zones.

The research team then employed interval sampling to randomly select the respondent households within zones. In each zone, the research team requested the village leader to provide the complete list of households to be used for interval sampling. The sampling interval was calculated by dividing the number of households in the cluster by the number of households needed for the sample. Households selected through the interval sampling were then assessed if they fit the criteria of having 10–17 year old children in the family and if they also consented to be interviewed. If not, the enumerators then looked for the next household on the list that fit the criteria.

Initially, the total survey sample size was 618 adult and 611 child respondents. Tables 4 and 5 show the distribution of actual survey respondents.

Table 4. Distribution of Adult Survey Respondents (N=618)

City / Municipality	Male	Female
Taguig City	17	185
Lapu-Lapu City	33	176
Cordova	27	180
Total	77	541

Table 5. Distribution of Child Survey Respondents (N=611)

City / Municipality	Male	Female
Taguig City	99	103
Lapu-Lapu City	94	110
Cordova	92	113
Total	285	326

3.2.2 Focus group discussions

conducted with 13 groups of parents and 18 groups of children ages 6 to 17 years. An average of 9 respondents participated in each FGD. In total, 124 parents and 179 children participated in 31 FGDs as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of FGD Participants

City	FGD with parents		FGD with children	
	Number of FGDs	Number of participants	Number of FGDs	Number of participants
Taguig City	4	28	6	60
Lapu-Lapu City	5	53	6	58
Cordova	4	43	6	61
Total	13	124	18	179

FGDs were conducted to substantiate and/or validate the results of the quantitative data collected. A facilitator's guide with questions translated to the local dialect was developed for each focus group sector.

3.2.3 Key informant interviews

Interviews were conducted with selected key informants to identify the existing policies, programs, and community-level efforts to report OSEC in the study areas.

A total of 12 key informants from different line agencies and LGUs (see Table 7). At the national government level, informants were representatives from IACAT, DSWD, National Bureau of Investigation-Anti-Trafficking Division, and PNP-WCPC.

Representatives from IJM in the Philippines were also interviewed as they work closely with these government agencies in investigating OSEC cases. The counterparts of the national agencies in Region 7 were also interviewed.

At the level of communities, the research team consulted village officials such as the barangay chairperson and focal persons of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) or Gender and Development (GAD), and Violence Against Women (VAWC) Desks. They were also consulted about the challenges they encountered in addressing OSEC.

Table 6. Distribution of FGD Participants

Government agency		Number of KIs
National level	IACAT	1
	DSWD	1
	NBI-AHTRAD	1
	PNP-WCPC	1
	IJM	3
Regional level	DOJ IACAT REGION 7	2
	DSWD 7	3
	DILG 7	1
	PNP-WCPC Visayas Field Unit	1
	DepEd REGION 7	1
Total number of KIIs		12

3.3.4 Review of secondary data

The research team reviewed project documents and existing literature on OSEC such as international and local policies and issuances, studies, and lessons or good practices in the area of child protection and OSEC prevention. The result of the document review was used to inform the development of the tools and analysis of the research results. Information on OSEC cases was collected from different government agencies (e.g., Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine National Police, and National Bureau of Investigation-Anti-Human Trafficking Division) and IJM in the Philippines.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data completed through Kobo Collect and submitted online were downloaded, cleaned, and checked for consistency before finalizing the list of valid respondents. SPSS software was used to generate descriptive statistics from the quantitative data collected from the household and child surveys. Data from the key informant interviews and FGDs were transcribed, translated, and organized in an Excel matrix. Content analysis and Nvivo were used to look for themes and patterns in the qualitative responses.

Students participate in awareness raising activity on OSEC

3.4 ETHICAL PROTOCOLS

The following safeguards were put in place to protect the privacy of respondents and confidentiality of data gathered:

Pre-fieldwork

- The research team was oriented on World Vision's Child Protection Policy.
- A confidentiality clause was included as part of the contract of service signed by the research consultant with World Vision.

During fieldwork

- Before conducting the surveys and interviews, respondents were made fully aware of what the study was for and about. After this introductory process, they were asked if they were still willing to be part of the research and if they had further questions.
- All data collectors informed respondents that they can refuse to answer questions and stop the interview at any time.

Post-fieldwork and data analysis

- Only the research team lead had access to transcripts and databases, as these were secured in a password-protected laptop.
- Aggregated and/or anonymized information was used in the writing of reports.

3.5 LIMITATIONS

The lack of a household list in some barangays was a challenge in survey sampling. The research team resolved this by conducting manual interval sampling among households in the selected areas. This research also did not gather primary data from victim-survivors of online sexual exploitation themselves. Instead, the research team asked communities if they observed OSEC in their communities. However, observed cases are different from reported and verified cases, so the findings in Chapter 5, section 5.45 should be seen as an approximation rather than validated evidence. Finally, it should also be noted that majority of both adult and children respondents were female. While OSEC victims and traffickers tend to be female (IJM, 2020), this distribution of respondents was due to availability of household representatives for survey during fieldwork period.

3.6 COMMUNITY VALIDATION

In May and June 2020, WVDF hosted online community validations to present the findings for both OSEC and CLT research and sought the feedback of various stakeholders and community members where both studies were conducted. For the OSEC study, officials from all barangays as well as the local governments of Taguig City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Municipality of Cordova were present. Representatives of different government line agencies such as PNP-WCPC. Department of Education Region 7, Department of the Interior and Local Government Region 7, and City/Municipality Social Welfare Development offices were also present. Student leaders from different high schools also joined the discussion. Some of the discussions and recommendations during the community validation were included in this report.

IV. PROFILE OF RESEARCH AREAS

This section shows cases of OSEC in these localities based on secondary data and reviews the corresponding child protection structures that try to prevent further incidences of OSEC. It is outlined as follows: (i) a brief overview of the demographic and socioeconomic profile of these project areas, (ii) reported OSEC cases children based on secondary data from government agencies and news reports, and (iii) existing child protection structures in each city and municipality.

4.1 OSEC CASES IN THE RESEARCH AREAS

Research was conducted in select barangays in Taguig City in Metro Manila and Cordova municipality and Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu province, areas that are part of the CPC Project. Taguig City and Cebu are notorious among authorities as "hotspots" of OSEC in the country, along with provinces such as Pampanga and Tarlac (ABS-CBN News, 2019).

Taguig City is a highly urbanized city in the National Capital Region. It is considered the second largest central business district in the Philippines, after Makati City (Beltran, 2018), and is composed of 28 barangays. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) shows that the city has a population of 804,915 which accounts for 6.15% of the total population in the National Capital Region (PSA, 2016a). Meanwhile, 289,291 or 36% of Taguig's population are 18 years old and below (PSA, 2016a). Despite its prominence as a hub for commerce and business, the city has a significant number of OSEC cases. In 2019, for example, there was news about a busted cybersex den in Taguig City that was producing child exploitation material (ABS-CBN News, 2019). In the data collected by IJM from January 2011 to July 2020, there were 21 recorded OSEC cases in the city (see Table 8).

hand, Cordova is a third class municipality made up of 13 barangays. Only 7 kilometers from Lapu-Lapu City, it is a coastal town with tourism as a major revenue source. It has a population of 61,262 (PSA 2016a), with 45% being children (Local Government Academy, n.d.).

Both Lapu-Lapu City and Cordova municipality are infamous areas for sex trafficking crimes in Cebu (Rappler, 2020). Data from IJM recorded 31 OSEC cases in these areas, with 20 cases in Lapu-Lapu City and the rest in Cordova. The most recent news about OSEC in Lapu-Lapu City involved a 25-year-old trafficker arrested during the coronavirus lockdown in April 2020, who subjected her 13-year-old cousin to online sexual exploitation for two years (Rappler, 2020).

Table 6. Distribution of FGD Participants

	Taguig City	Lapu-lapu City	Cordova Municipality
Number of OSEC cases	21	20	11

Source: International Justice Mission
Note: Data from 1 January 2011 to 1 July 2020

Meanwhile, Lapu-Lapu City and the Municipality of Cordova are both located in the province of Cebu. Lapu-Lapu City is a first class urbanized city, known for its high-end resorts and luxury hotels. The second busiest airport in the Philippines, the Mactan–Cebu International Airport, is also located in Lapu-Lapu City. Census data shows that the city is composed of 30 barangays and has a population of 408,112, of which 162,999 (or 39.93%) are 18 years old and below (PSA, 2016b). Lapu-Lapu City's main languages are Cebuano, Filipino, and English. On the other Geographic and social indicators of OSEC are one of the major data gaps in the literature.

Without establishing this, government and civil society actors are left with an unclear reason why OSEC is prevalent in these areas and where else this crime is rampant. The literature on child trafficking, however, is a good starting point to understand these indicators. ILO (2007) shows that it is not the poorest municipalities (i.e., fifth class municipalities) in the Philippines that are highly vulnerable to child trafficking, but rather those municipalities that are from lower-middle income class (i.e., fourth class). The characteristics of Cebu—the easy transport
connectivity together with the presence of inequality and poverty—make for a conducive

area for traffickers. Reports have stated that Cebu is even one of the top five ill-famed places in the country for human traffickers (Campo, 2013; Dela Serna et al., 2017; ILO, 2007). However, these reports have not considered the quality of internet infrastructure and—most importantly—the capacity of LGUs or their child protection mechanisms that could help deter (or de-prioritize) incidences of OSEC in these communities.

4.2 LOCAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT OSEC

This study defines child protection as "all processes, policies, programs, interventions, and measures that aim to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the overall development of children to their fullest potential" (CWC and UNICEF, 2016). Efforts to protect children from online sexual abuse fall within the broader child protection and anti-trafficking initiatives of LGUs. This study finds that Taguig City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Cordova Municipality have been able to establish child protection structures, draft ordinances, and develop programs that counter OSEC, although implementation and prioritization differ in each area.

The core local structures tasked to respond to child abuse and exploitation more broadly, including OSEC, are the Local Council for the Protection of Children and the Local Council on Anti-Trafficking and Anti-Violence Against Women and Children. These are supposed to be present across all LGUs, but this study was not able to determine the extent to which these councils are functional (DILG, 2008). To add, all the barangays have existing Violence Against Women and Children Desks where they can report any instances of child abuse in their communities. Meanwhile, the PNP-WCPC is present at the city level to help keep women and children safe from any forms of abuse.

Table 6. Distribution of FGD Participants

Local government unit	L/BCPC	LCAT-VAWC	VAWC Desk	PNP-WCPC
Taguig City	Yes	Yes		Yes
Brgy. Sta. Ana	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Tuktukan	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Ligid Tipas	Yes		Yes	
Lapu lapu City	Yes	Yes		Yes
Brgy. Babag	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Maribago	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Pusok	Yes		Yes	
Municipality of Cordova	Yes	Yes		Yes
Brgy. Ibabao	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Day-as	Yes		Yes	
Brgy. Gabi	Yes		Yes	

While all the LGUs have LCPCs, not all have ordinances and initiatives on OSEC prevention (see Tables 10 and 11). Cordova distinguishes itself in this regard, as its programs and ordinances, both at the municipal and barangay level, exemplify the resolve of its local chief executive to prioritize the issue of OSEC. To illustrate, they have local laws that created the Cordova Council for Anti-Trafficking of Persons as well as the Children's Rights Protection Unit. The municipal legislators also penned an ordinance that monitors businesses engaged in money or value transfer services and internet cafes, establishments that are central to OSEC operations (Ramiro et al., 2019). Most importantly, the municipal government enacted legislation that provides a PhP20,000 (USD400) incentive for OSEC informants, to encourage communities to report OSEC cases. The three barangays within Cordova's jurisdiction also have ordinances that support the creation of the Barangay Council Against Trafficking.

Meanwhile, both Lapu-Lapu City and Taguig City have an Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance as mandated by the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. At the barangay level, Barangay Babag has an ordinance that prohibits children from being in internet shops during school hours, while in Barangay Maribago there is an ordinance that monitors internet shop operators.

Table 10. Local Ordinances Related to OSEC

Local government unit	Ordinances related to OSEC
Taguig City	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance
Brgy. Sta. Ana	None
Brgy. Tuktukan	None
Brgy. Ligid Tipas	None
Lapu lapu City	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance
Brgy. Babag	Prohibition of children in internet shops during school hours
Brgy. Maribago	Internet Café Monitoring
Brgy. Pusok	No data
Municipality of Cordova	• Ordinance No. 002-2015 Creating the Cordova Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons (CCAT) • Ordinance No. 004-2013 Regulating Businesses Engaged in Money or Value Transfer Services • Ordinance No. 001-2012 Creating the Children's Rights Protection Unit • Ordinance No. 001-2011 (amending Ordinance No. 006-2008) Regulating the Operation of Internet Cafes and Other Similar Business Establishments • Memo Order No. 12 S. 2011: Submission of list of households with internet connection in the respective barangays • Ordinance providing (P20,000) incentives to OSEC informants
Brgy. Ibabao	Barangay ordinance creating Barangay Council Against Trafficking
Brgy. Day-as	Barangay ordinance creating Barangay Council Against Trafficking
Brgy. Gabi	Barangay ordinance creating Barangay Council Against Trafficking

Some LGUs have initiated projects and programs that support their OSEC-related ordinances related. For example, Cordova has its Go-to-School Program to ensure that students and teachers are informed about OSEC. They also tapped the help of religious and academic sectors in their community awareness-raising efforts. The municipal government also deploys child rights advocates and community watch groups to different barangays to ensure that children are protected from various abuses, including OSEC. The different barangays also help raise awareness about OSEC through poster and slogan making contents and monitoring of internet shops in their respective communities.

In Lapu-Lapu, vigilance against OSEC primarily focused on monitoring internet cafes and Pisonet places across the city. In Taguig City, awareness-raising efforts on OSEC were concentrated at the city level. Nonetheless, OSEC is one of the topics discussed in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) development sessions for the city's indigents.

Table 11. Local Programs and Initiatives Related to OSEC Prevention

Local government unit	Program
Taguig City	• OSEC discussion included in 4Ps Family Development Sessions • Psychoeducation for parents and family meetings (CSWD)
Brgy. Sta. Ana	None
Brgy. Tuktukan	None
Brgy. Ligid Tipas	None
Lapu lapu City	Task Force Malasakit
Brgy. Babag	• Awareness raising in schools, prohibition of pisonet
Brgy. Maribago	• Internet café monitoring, DOLE Livelihood program, awareness raising
Brgy. Pusok	• Internet café monitoring, awareness raising
Municipality of Cordova	• Creation of the Child Rights Protection Unit (CRPU) which conducts monthly meeting and capacity building of BCPC • Creation of Child Rights Advocates and Community Watch Groups in barangay • Go-to-School Program which aims to raise awareness on OSEC in schools • Involvement of religious and academic sectors for community awareness raising • Personal Safety Lessons for teachers
Brgy. Ibabao	• Awareness raising campaigns including poster/slogan making • Purok visitation • UBAS (Ugnayan ng Barangay sa Simbahan) • Community Watch Group
Brgy. Day-as	• Awareness raising (through initiative of CLB, Bidlisiw and Forge but these projects already ended) • Community Watch Group
Brgy. Gabi	• Monitoring of internet cafes • Community Watch Group

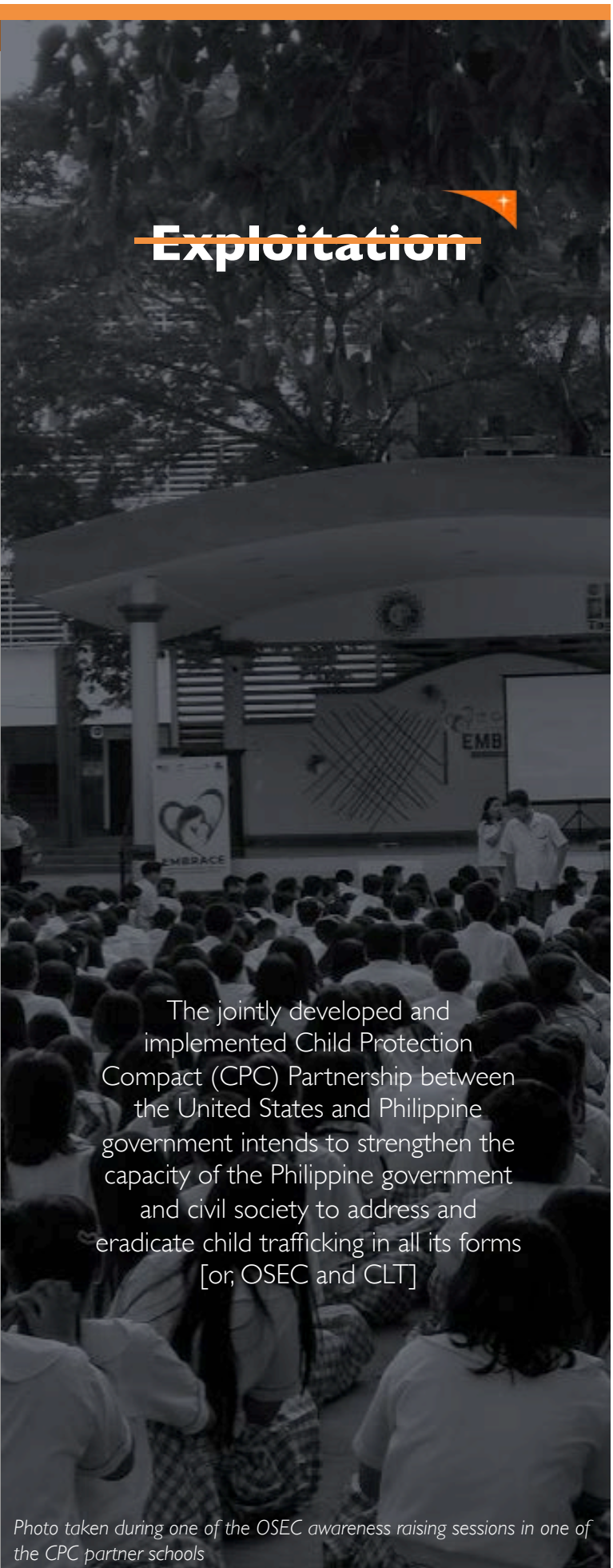


Photo taken during one of the OSEC awareness raising sessions in one of the CPC partner schools

Implementing ordinances and initiatives to combat OSEC is not without its challenges. In Taguig City, representatives from PNP-WCPC cited the need to build their capacity in detecting OSEC since it is done at home and aided by technology. They also shared the observation that communities consider OSEC less harmful due its "no touch, no harm" nature; they also think that this is the reason behind the low reporting of OSEC cases. At the barangay level, duty bearers highlighted the crime's socioeconomic roots, such as the lack of parents' income.

In Lapu-Lapu City, respondents found it difficult to monitor internet cafes that are spread across different communities. On the other hand, representatives from Barangay Tuktukan and Barangay Ligid Tipas remarked that they needed to intensify their efforts in encouraging parents to be more involved in the fight against OSEC. This was a challenge shared by respondents from Cordova.

Municipality, who also pointed out that there are money transfer establishments that fail to submit monthly reports, which limits them from monitoring for any suspicious transactions.

This study thus finds that OSEC cases have been recorded in all project areas, and that LGUs have different capacities and face different challenges when responding to OSEC. Though there are legitimate barriers that keep local governments from prioritizing OSEC prevention, including the lack of resources and competing development priorities, some local chief executives have managed to hurdle these barriers, thus showing that political will plays a significant part in plan implementation. Overall however, the data reveals one stark pattern—that government still has much work to do with regard to raising awareness of OSEC and the role of communities play in preventing the crime.

V. PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITIES

This section presents the findings from surveys, FGDs, and key informant interviews of over 1,200 community members, including parents and caregivers, children, and community leaders. The section includes (i) the socio-demographic profile of respondents, including patterns of internet and social media use; (ii) awareness of OSEC, (iii) awareness of laws and interventions related to OSEC; and (iv) community attitudes on reporting OSEC cases.

5.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND PATTERNS OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Majority (88%) of adult respondents were female, aged 31 to 50 years (71%). More than half of them were married (57%) while 22% were in a common-law relationship. Almost half (46%) of the respondents surveyed considered themselves as household heads. Across the three research areas, the average household size was between five to eight members, higher than the national average of four (PSA, 2016). In total, there were 1,707 children below 18 years old in all the households surveyed.

About half (44%) of all respondents were high school graduates, while only 6% of the total number of respondents were able to finish college. Majority of Cordova (88%) and Lapu-Lapu City (93%) respondents were from Cebu. In Taguig City, 60% were Tagalog, while the rest were of various ethnicities.

Project poster: EMBRACE – Empowering and Brighter Response Against Children's Exploitation

Data on residence ownership shows that more than half (59%) of the respondents owned the house they were currently living in, 11% were renting, and another 11% were staying in a government or public lot. While more than half (68%) of them stayed in single-detached homes, 12% lived in makeshift housing.

Table 12. Type of Work of Household Heads

Type of work	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
Construction work (i.e. mason, carpenter, laborer)	19%	14%	24%	19%
Small business (i.e. sari-sari store, food vending)	16%	14%	22%	11%
Transportation-related (i.e. driver, conductor, barker)	15%	19%	9%	18%
Unemployed	9%	3%	7%	15%
Factory worker	6%	0%	9%	7%
Informal services (i.e. mani, pedi, massage)	5%	8%	3%	4%
Government employee	4%	8%	0%	3%
Corporate office employee	3%	3%	3%	3%
Barangay staff	3%	2%	3%	3%
Sales representative	3%	2%	1%	4%
Overseas Filipino worker (OFW)	1%	1%	1%	0%
Agricultural laborer	0%	1%	0%	0%
Others	17%	22%	17%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Across all areas, the household head was typically in construction, i.e., laborer (19%), transportation, i.e., driver, conductor or barker (18%), and small business such as sari-sari store or food vending (11%), while 15% were unemployed (see Table 12). Among the respondents, 62% reported that their household income was below the poverty threshold (PSA, 2016).

Table 13. Average Monthly Income Per Household

Income (in Php)	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
Less than 2,500 per month	8%	10%	3%	10%
2,501 - 5,000	10%	12%	10%	8%
5,000 - 7,500	9%	6%	9%	11%
7,501 - 10,000	23%	17%	20%	33%
10,001 - 12,500	16%	14%	20%	13%
12, 501 - 15,000	11%	12%	16%	5%
15,000 - 20,000	9%	15%	8%	3%
20,001 - 25,000	2%	3%	1%	2%
25,001 - above	4%	6%	4%	1%
No answer	9%	4%	9%	14%
Others, specify	0%	0%	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Finances were the most the pressing problem for households across all areas (93%), followed by health or sickness (including mental health) (57%), and relationships within the family such as presence of conflict (29%). They also faced problems of safety and security (28%) and vices (13%).

Table 14. Most Pressing Problems in the Community

Most pressing problems	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
Financial	93%	83%	99%	98%
Health or sickness	57%	40%	70%	59%
Relationships	29%	10%	33%	43%
Safety and security	28%	13%	42%	30%
Vices	13%	11%	17%	10%

Note: Multiple response question

The age range of children surveyed was 6 to 17 years old. Majority were female (53%), between the age of 11 to 15 years (60%). Nearly all (98%) of children interviewed were enrolled in school at the time of survey, while 12 children reported that they were out of school. These children cited the lack of money for school expenses and family problems as the reasons for being out of school. Only 18% of children surveyed were members of organizations or groups such as school clubs, Sangguniang Kabataan, or Barangay Children's Association, among others.

The survey also asked patterns of internet consumption among respondents. Overall, 51% of adult respondents had internet access (see Figure 3). The percentage of adult respondents with internet access was slightly higher in Taguig City (65%) compared to Lapu-Lapu City (47%) and Cordova (43%). The respondents accessed the internet primarily through home internet providers or personal mobile data (87%), followed by Pisonet (8%), and internet café (6%). Others also reported internet use through public wifi (1%) or through their neighbor's internet connection (2%). There were more internet cafes and Pisonet users in Cordova (17%) and Lapu-Lapu City (21%) compared to Taguig City (6%).

Consistent with previous national data on internet usage in the Philippines (We Are Social, 2019), adult respondents accessed the internet using their smartphones (93%). Very few owned a tablet (3%), laptop (4%), or a desktop personal computer (14%). Half (50%) of adult respondents reported accessing the internet daily, while others said they accessed the internet three to four times a week (26%), and once a week (15%). For adults, the primary reason for accessing the internet was connecting with family (88%), followed by interest in watching videos online (29%), research (16%), making new friends (13%), and playing online games (9%). All adult respondents were Faceboook users, while very few browsed Youtube (12%) and Instagram (6%).

Not all parents and adult household representatives added the children in their family on their social media accounts, particularly on Facebook. Majority (70%) of them also did not have access to the Facebook accounts of their children. Only 52% of adult respondents said that they were able to monitor the social media accounts of their children.

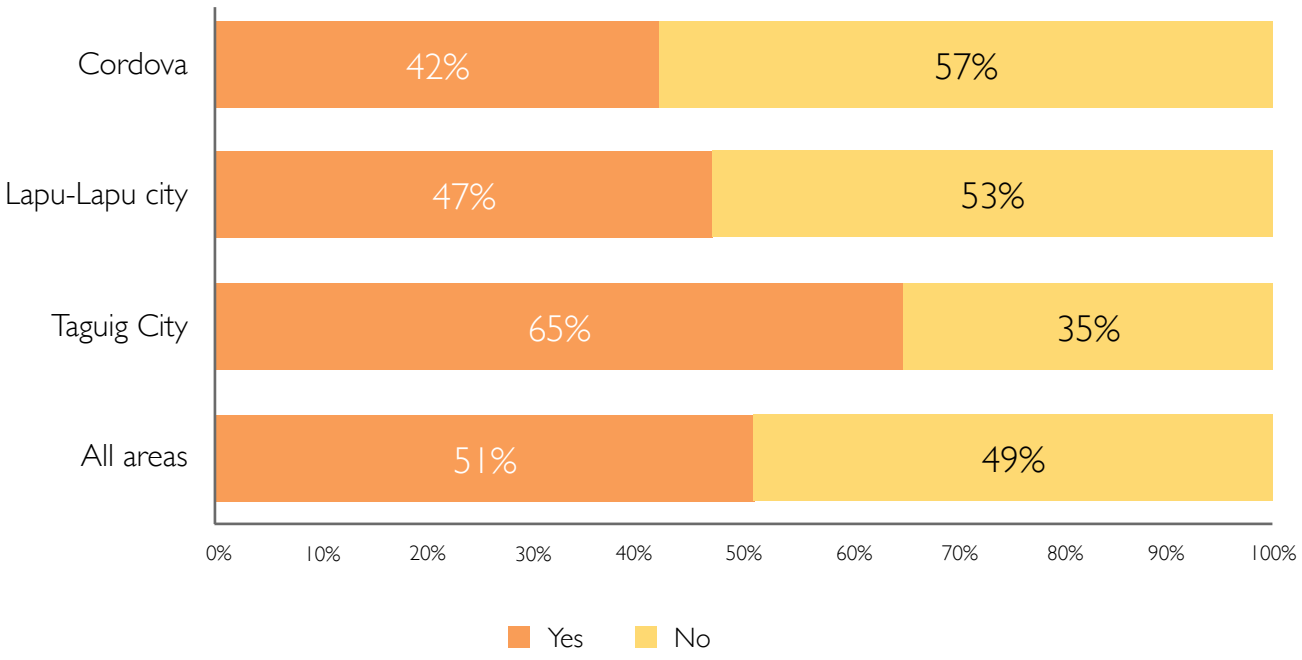


Figure 3. Access to Internet Among Adult Respondents

Children, meanwhile, are more avid internet users than their adult counterparts; 94% of them said that they had internet access (see Figure 4). There are more "disconnected" children in Lapu-Lapu City (8%) than in Cordova (7%) and Taguig City (3%). More than half (55%) of them used home internet and personal mobile data to access the internet, while some also used internet café (35%) and Pisonet (29%). Sixty percent of children browsed the internet through a smartphone, while others used a desktop computer (58%), probably in internet shops and Pisonet. Some of them were online everyday (40%) while others accessed the internet three to four times a week (11%).

Children have varied reasons for accessing the internet such as connecting with family and friends (65%), watching videos (44%), doing research (55%), playing online games (42%), and gaining new friends (17%). All child respondents report that they had Facebook accounts. Others also say that they had accounts on Youtube (25%), Instagram (13%), and Twitter (5%), which are the most popular social media sites in the Philippines (We Are Social, 2019). More children were friends online with their siblings (50%) than with their mother (32%) or father (18%). Only a few (18%) said that they were online friends with all their family members.

The enumerators also asked the children about some of their social media behaviors such as accepting friend requests from strangers; Half of the children surveyed reveal that they did not know all of their friends on Facebook, and majority (84%) report that they had experienced receiving friend requests from strangers. When asked what they would do when a stranger sends them a friend request on Facebook, 77% said that they would ignore the friend request, while

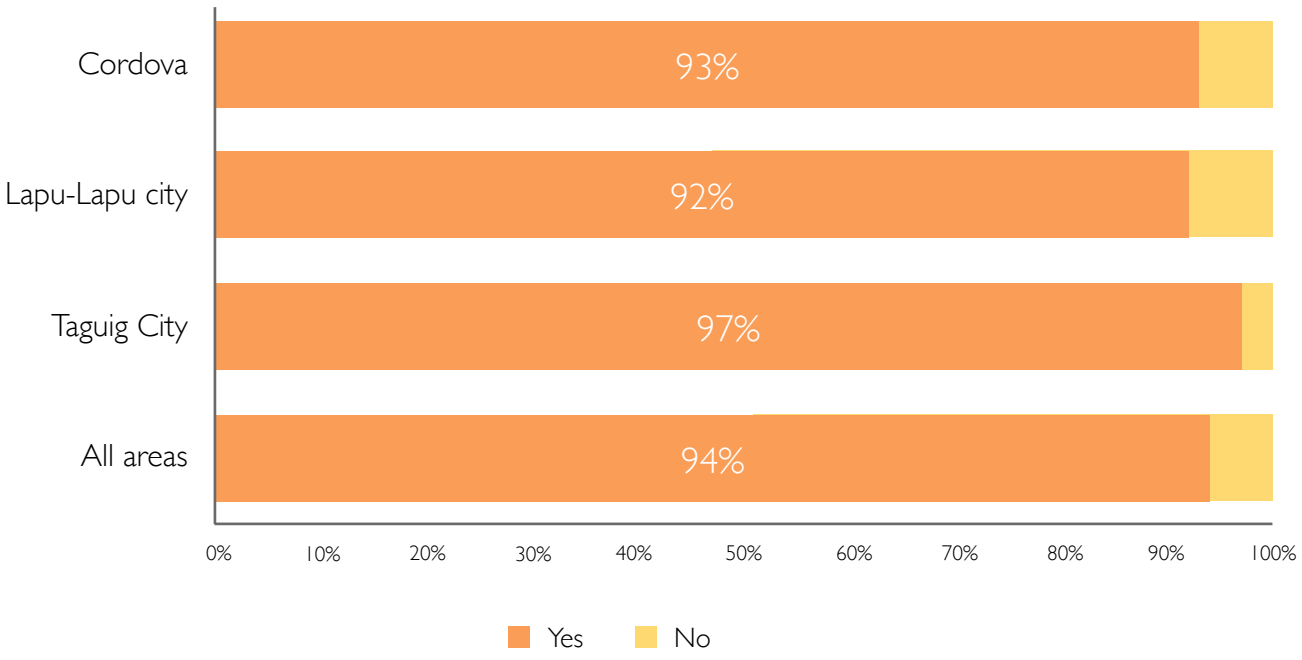


Figure 4. Access to Internet Among Children Respondents

14% said that they would accept it. The children were also asked what they would do if a stranger and a foreigner sends them a friend request; majority (82%) of them said that they would ignore it.

Students and teachers during one of the awareness raising sessions on OSEC

5.2 AWARENESS ON ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

The enumerators directly asked all respondents if they have heard of OSEC and what they know about this issue, without the enumerators defining or introducing OSEC to them at the start of the survey.

The data shows that 72% of adults have heard of OSEC (see Figure 5). There are more adult respondents who were aware of OSEC in Taguig City (83%) compared to Cordova (68%) and Lapu-Lapu City (66%).

When probed about what exactly they know about OSEC, the survey was able to capture a diverse range of understanding about the issue from adult respondents. Their responses to the open-ended question were collated to create a word cloud that shows common words associated with OSEC (see Figure 6), Some of the words in bold font below are: bata (child), ibaligya (to sell), dili (should not be [done]), hubo-hubo (stripped naked), gamiton (to use [children]), anak (child), bayaran (to pay), makakwarta (to make money), bastos (vulgar), biktimahon (victimized), cybersex, foreigner, and online.

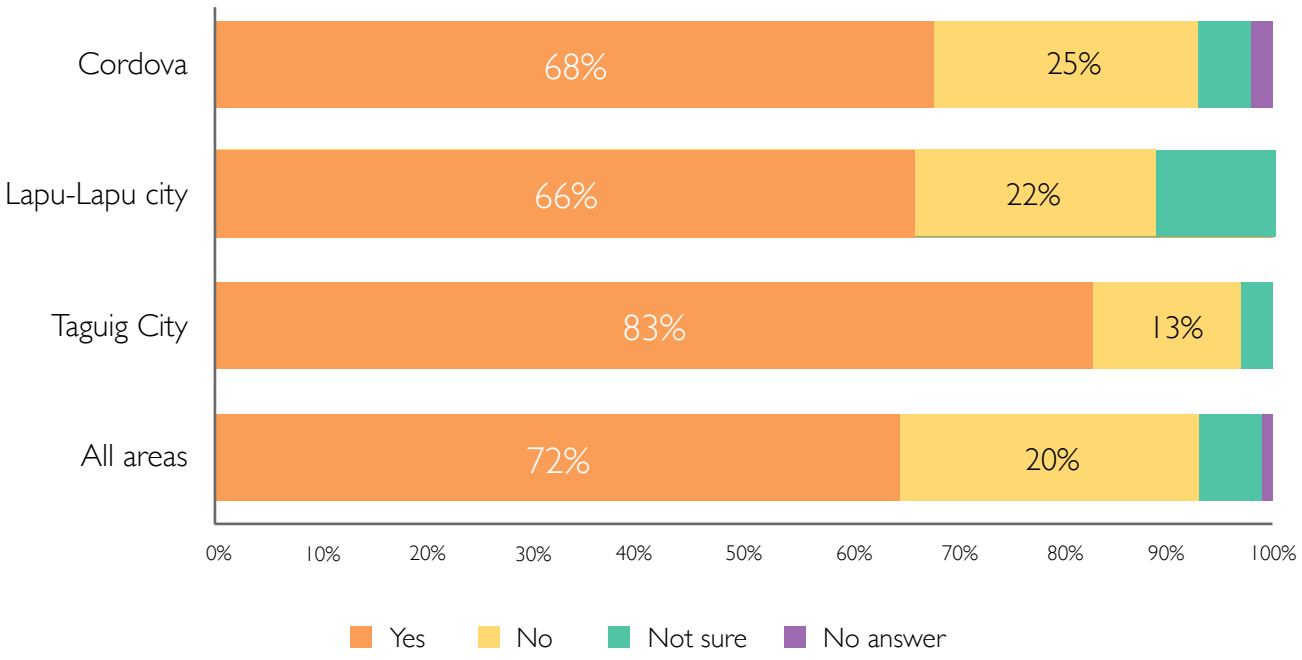


Figure 5. Adults' Awareness on OSEC

Figure 6. Commonly Associated Words Used by Parents and Other Adult Household Respondents to Describe Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

The analysis also coded each respondent's response to assess which elements or components of OSEC the respondents were aware of. Table 15 shows that the use of technology (23.68%), closely followed by sexual acts (22.25%), and the exploitation of a child (15.31%) are the most common themes that emerged in their description of OSEC. Sexual acts include adults' description of children stripped naked ("gipahubo" or "hubo hubo"), raped, or forced to do other vulgar ("bastos") acts. Technology captures the use of internet, social media (particularly Facebook), digital camera to record and publicize the sexual acts performed by children or to chat with the offender. Many also highlighted the exploitation component that makes OSEC a trafficking offense. They used the words "gikwartahan," (to make money), "gibaligya" (to sell), or "ibugaw" (to pimp). The use of the term "cybersex" (8.8%) to describe OSEC was also a common response among adults.

Another striking finding to highlight is that all adult respondents who identified offenders described them as foreigners (8.85%). Some of them used words such as "kano" (American) to refer to the offenders.

Meanwhile, in responses that specified the traffickers, all respondents noted that these were usually the parents.

Other themes that emerge in their description of OSEC were pornography (3.11%) and child abuse (3.83%). Some also recognized that the act was unacceptable (3.11%), and that they felt a need to protect children (1.20%) from

online sexual abuse. Other terms associated with OSEC, albeit from very few respondents, were "pedophile," "scandal," "drug-related," and "organ selling." The survey also recorded that respondents were aware that OSEC is happening in their communities (2.63%), a response that will be discussed at greater length in the last section.

As mentioned in the Methodology section, it is important to note here that the data presented in Table 15 employed double coding, which means that one survey response could fall under one or more codes depending on how elaborate the respondent's description of OSEC. For example, in one survey response, the (i) sexual act, (ii) the medium (use of technology or internet), (iii) the exploitation of children (selling of the child sexual exploitation material), (iv) the offender involved, and (v) the role of parents as traffickers, were all mentioned. This means that in this one response alone, five coding themes were identified.

Table 15. Adult Respondents' Common Notions About OSEC

Description of OSEC	Frequency*	Percentage
Technology	99	23.68
Sexual acts	93	22.25
Exploitation	64	15.31
Cybersex	37	8.85
Foreign offender	37	8.85
Parent trafficker	18	4.31
Child abuse	16	3.83
Pornography	13	3.11
Unacceptable act	13	3.11
Awareness that it is happening in the community	11	2.63
Need to protect children from it	5	1.20
Agency's role	2	0.48
Risky to a child	2	0.48
Trafficking	2	0.48
Punishable	2	0.48
Pedophile	1	0.24
Scandal	1	0.24
Drug-related	1	0.24
Organ-selling	1	0.24
Total	418	100

*Note: The number of times the theme/code emerged in all the responses

Meanwhile, Table 16 shows that television was the adults' top source of information on OSEC across all research areas. However, the data also shows that there were differences in each area where for example, there were more respondents who reported that television was their source of information in Taguig City (91%) and Lapu-Lapu City (92%) compared to Cordova (66%). There are also more respondents in Cordova who reported their neighbors (59%) as their source of information about OSEC compared to respondents in Taguig City (29%) and Lapu-Lapu City (33%).

The internet is the third source of information about OSEC, but there are also significant differences in the responses for each area. For example, only 13% of respondents in Taguig City and 15% in Cordova reported that they found information about OSEC online compared to 41% in Lapu-Lapu City. The same pattern is also observed in terms of radio as a source of information on OSEC.

While differences in sources of information about OSEC are observed, which could reflect the media habits and media access of respondents, what remains the same for all is that they did not find out or hear information about OSEC from the community or school announcements.

Table 16. Adults' Sources of Information on OSEC

Source	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
TV	84%	91%	92%	66%
Neighbors	40%	29%	33%	59%
Internet/ Social Media	22%	13%	41%	15%
Radio	17%	1%	36%	19%
Trainings/ Seminars	12%	9%	8%	19%
Newspaper	8%	1%	12%	12%
Community announcements	6%	1%	4%	13%
School announcements	1%	0%	1%	1%
Others, specify	1%	0%	2%	1%

Note: This is a multi-response question.

Only one-third (38%) of respondents who were children reported they had heard or knew about OSEC (see Figure 7). There are differences across areas that are noteworthy to highlight, as more children in Cordova (49%) and Taguig City (43%) were aware of OSEC compared to 21% in Lapu-Lapu City.

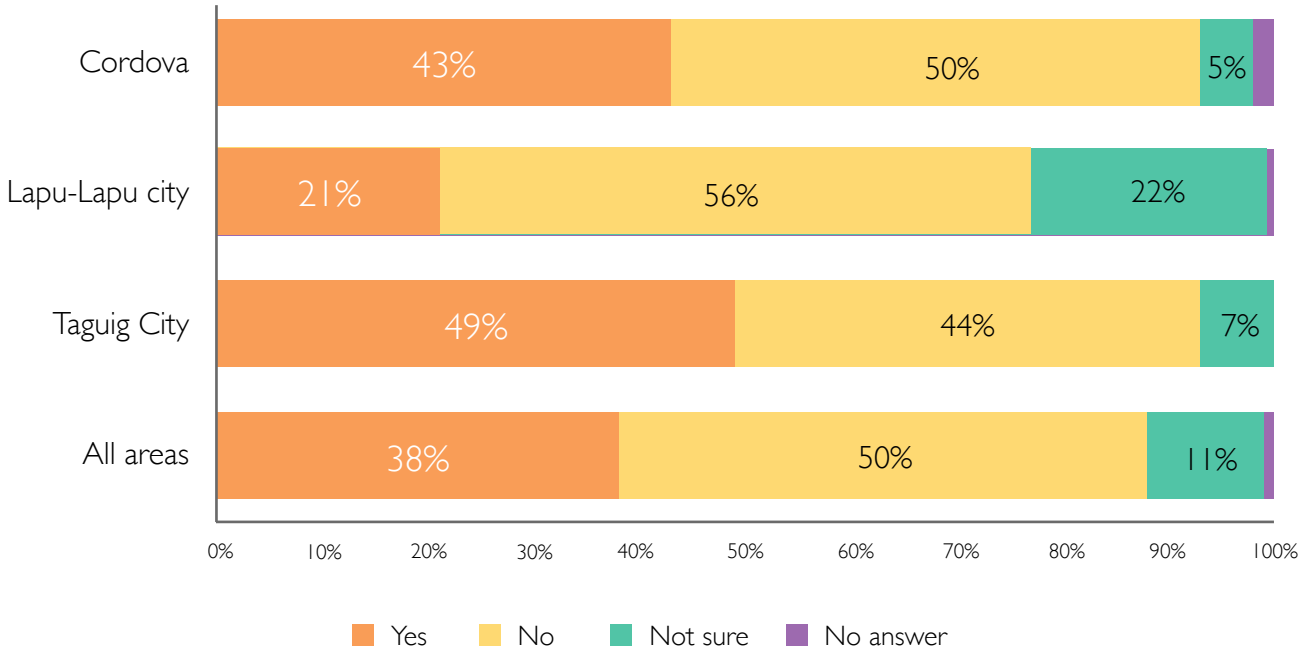


Figure 7. Number of Children Aware of OSEC

The answers of children were also coded to glean insights as to what exactly they know about OSEC. The word cloud in Figure 8 gives an overview of the common words associated with OSEC, with "bata" ("child"), "pornography," "cybersex," "ginagamit" (use of [children]), "foreigners," and "internet" being the top words used in this regard.

Figure 8. Common Words Used to Describe OSEC by Children Respondents

Table 17 provides the frequency of the themes in the word cloud from the responses of children. As with adults' responses, children described OSEC by referring to (i) the sexual acts (63%) such as "paghubo-hubo" (stripped naked) and (ii) the use of technology, particularly the internet and social media (30.77%), to record and publicize the sexual act as well as to communicate with the offender. They also used the word "cybersex" (11.79%) and interchanged it with OSEC. Children had a common notion that offenders were foreigners (11.28%), while only a few mentioned that there was exploitation in OSEC (4.62%).

There are two responses recorded where children revealed that they knew OSEC was happening in their community.

The children also remarked that OSEC (i) was an unacceptable act (3.08%), (ii) was a form of child abuse (2.05%), or (iii) a form of pornography (1.54%), and (iv) related to the issue of HIV (0.51%) and teenage pregnancy (0.51).

Table 17. Children's Common Notions on OSEC

Descriptions	Frequency*	Percentage
Sexual acts	63	32.31
Technology	60	30.77
Cybersex	23	11.79
Foreign offender	22	11.28
Exploitation	9	4.62
Unacceptable act	6	3.08
Child abuse	4	2.05
Pornography	3	1.54
Awareness that it is happening in their community	2	1.03
HIV	1	0.51
Need to protect children	1	0.51
Teenage pregnancy	1	0.51
Total	195	100

*Note: The number of times the theme/code emerged in all the responses

Children's top sources of information on OSEC differ in each area. In Taguig City, TV (51%), internet and social media (36%), and schools (29%) were their top sources of information (see Table 18). In Lapu-Lapu City, internet and social media (79%) was their top source, followed by TV (77%) and neighbors (23%). In Cordova, children got their information about OSEC mostly from schools (49%), followed by TV (36%), and the internet (23%). As with adults, these differences may also be due to the varying degrees of access to different media (e.g., television

or internet). In comparison with adults' responses however, it is noteworthy to mention that schools were among the children's top three sources of information on OSEC. This could validate the related awareness-raising activities being done by various groups in schools.

In contrast, friends (2%), newspapers (2%), and family (1%) were the least popular sources of information on OSEC. This could indicate that OSEC may not be a comfortable topic to be discussed within the family, much like the topic of sex in general.

Table 18. Children's Sources of Information on OSEC

Source	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
TV	51%	54%	77%	36%
Internet/ Social Media	36%	28%	79%	23%
School announcements	29%	17%	16%	49%
Neighbors	14%	0%	23%	25%
Trainings and seminars	6%	0%	2%	14%
Community announcements	5%	0%	5%	10%
Radio	3%	0%	5%	5%
Friends	2%	4%	0%	0%
Newspaper	2%	0%	5%	2%
Family	1%	3%	0%	0%

Note: Multiple response question.

5.3 AWARENESS ON OSEC-RELATED LAWS AND INTERVENTIONS

Communities were also asked about their awareness of laws and local ordinances related to OSEC, as well as the projects and programs in their localities that aim to address it.

Figure 9 shows that overall, 34% of adult respondents were aware of the existing laws in the Philippines related to OSEC. Among the choices in the survey questionnaire, the law against child abuse (RA 7610) was the most cited, followed by laws addressing child pornography (39%), cybercrime (32%), and human trafficking (11%). Some adult respondents also mentioned other laws such as the law against child labor (21%). Across all areas, 59% of adult respondents were aware that OSEC is punishable by law, and they knew that offenders can be imprisoned and fined for the crime. The FGD with parents also confirmed that adults had a general understanding that OSEC is a crime and prohibited by the law; however a few participants could not specifically identify what these laws are.

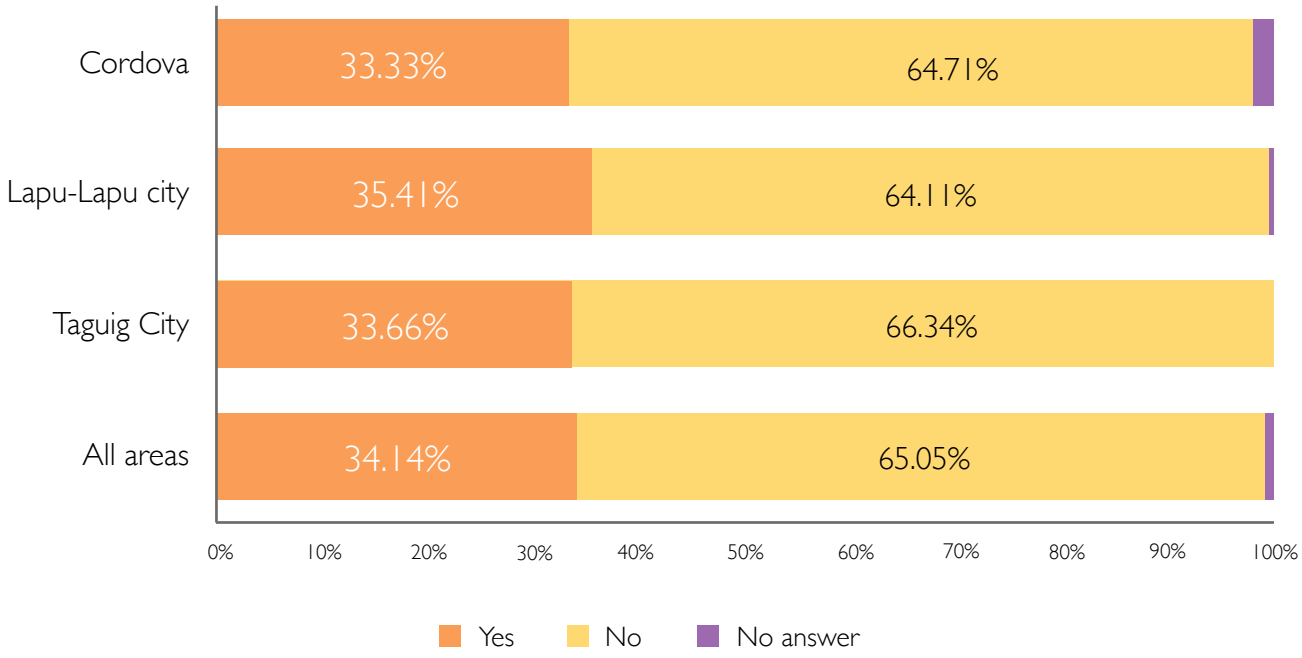


Figure 9. Percentage of Adult Respondents Who Are Aware of Laws and Local Ordinances Related to OSEC

Only 25% of adults were aware of local programs and projects related to OSEC (see Figure 10). Of this, they cited awareness-raising activities in their communities such as trainings and seminars and information, education and communication materials, and livelihood projects as among the initiatives of government and NGOs that aim to prevent the incidence of OSEC in their localities.

In one barangay in Taguig City, FGD participants shared that they were aware of information dissemination to combat cybersex which is integrated in the programs of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children and gender and development programs. In Sta Ana, Taguig City, one respondent shared that OSEC was one of the topics they discussed during the 4Ps development sessions.

During FGDs, participants were also asked about other activities, programs or learning resources that they would recommend to help them and other community members address OSEC. Some provided specific recommendations related to awareness raising such as putting up posters (that include contact details of authorities) in public areas "where many pass by." Another participant recommended that discussions about OSEC be included in parents' assemblies in schools so awareness is not limited to 4Ps members in the community. One particular topic of importance to participants is how to help parents detect early signs of OSEC activities. Some recommended stringent efforts to monitor internet shops, while others urged the government and NGOs to focus on creating livelihood opportunities for them such as livelihood.

Meanwhile, the percentage of child survey respondents who are aware of laws and local ordinances as well as projects and programs aimed to safeguard them from OSEC was very low. Only 14% of children were aware that there are laws and local ordinances against OSEC (see Figure 10), while only 9% said tFigure 10. Percentage of Children Respondents Who Are Aware of Laws and Local Ordinances Related to OSEChat they knew of programs and projects in their communities related to OSEC.

During FGDs, children report that activities related to OSEC prevention were mostly happening in their schools and classrooms. For example, one participant shared that OSEC was being discussed in their Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao class along with the topic on cyberbullying.

As with their adult counterparts, children emphasized the need to focus on cascading information about OSEC in their communities through posters and information, education and communication materials to inform parents about the risks it poses as well as the authorities to whom children can report. Some pointed out that efforts should also be made to help parents find employment in order to eliminate OSEC in their communities, which highlights the fact that children are very much aware that OSEC is a multi-faceted issue, with poverty as one of the main conditions for its prevalence.

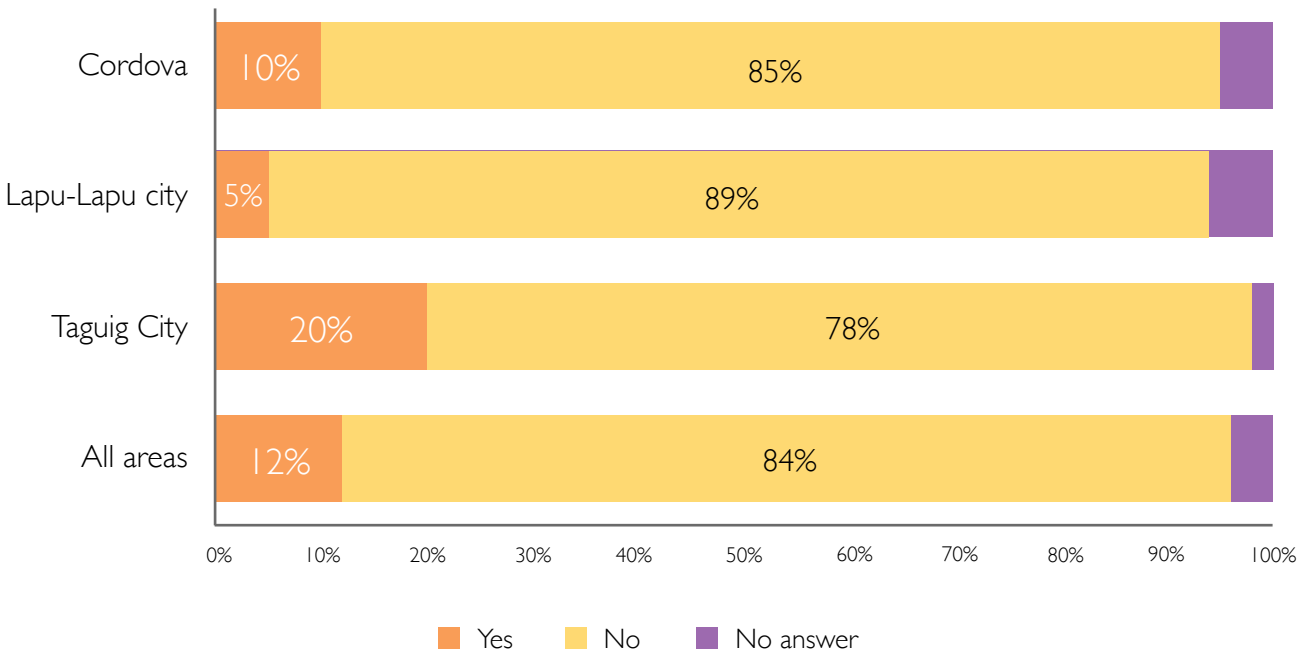


Figure 10. Percentage of Children Respondents Who Are Aware of Laws and Local Ordinances Related to OSEC

5.4 REPORTING OSEC IN THE COMMUNITY

This research has also paid considerable attention to attitudes within communities with regard to reporting OSEC cases. It has been established that there were incidences of OSEC in the study areas, based on secondary data from IJM. The survey respondents have even validated this when they acknowledged OSEC cases in their communities ("Naa daghan diri" [There are many here.]").

Survey results show that 28% or 170 respondents across all the research areas said they knew or have heard of an OSEC case in their communities (see Figure 11). There are more adult respondents in Taguig City (37% or 74 responses) who shared that they had heard of an OSEC case in their community compared to Cordova (26%) and Lapu-Lapu City (21%). Meanwhile, FGD participants from three of the nine barangays shared stories of OSEC cases involving their close relatives or neighbors. For example, one participant in Taguig City recounted a case when the police arrested one of his neighbors for committing OSEC. There is also one barangay in Cordova that FGD participants pointed at for having notoriously high incidences of OSEC.

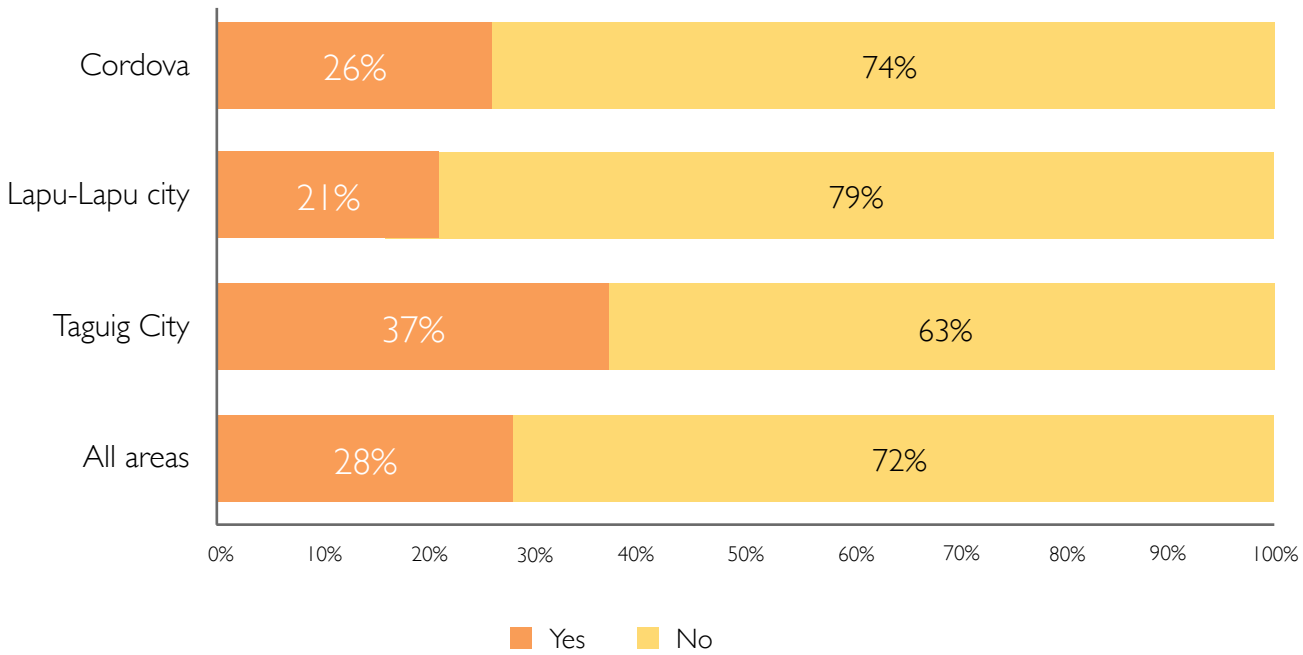


Figure 11. Percentage of Adult Respondents Who Reported They Have Seen or Heard of OSEC Cases Happening in Their Communities

Meanwhile, only 11% or 68 children said that they had heard of or witnessed OSEC in their communities (see Figure 12). As with the adult respondents, there are more children in Taguig City (17%) who said they observed OSEC in their areas compared to children respondents in Lapu-Lapu City (4%) and Cordova (12%). Children who participated in 2 out of 18 FGDs shared stories of OSEC incidents involving their close relatives (e.g., a cousin) or neighbors. Like adults, there are children who knew of one barangay in Cordova that had a high incidence of OSEC and noted the frequent police raids in that community because of it.

A majority (77%) of adults across the study areas said that if their child or any children in their communities were subjected to OSEC they would report the incident to the authorities, while 7% remarked that they would not do anything (see Table 19). For those adults who said that they would seek the help of authorities, the barangay captain (65%), PNP (42%), and the DSWD (29%) were cited as authority figures and agencies that should respond to OSEC cases (see Table 20).

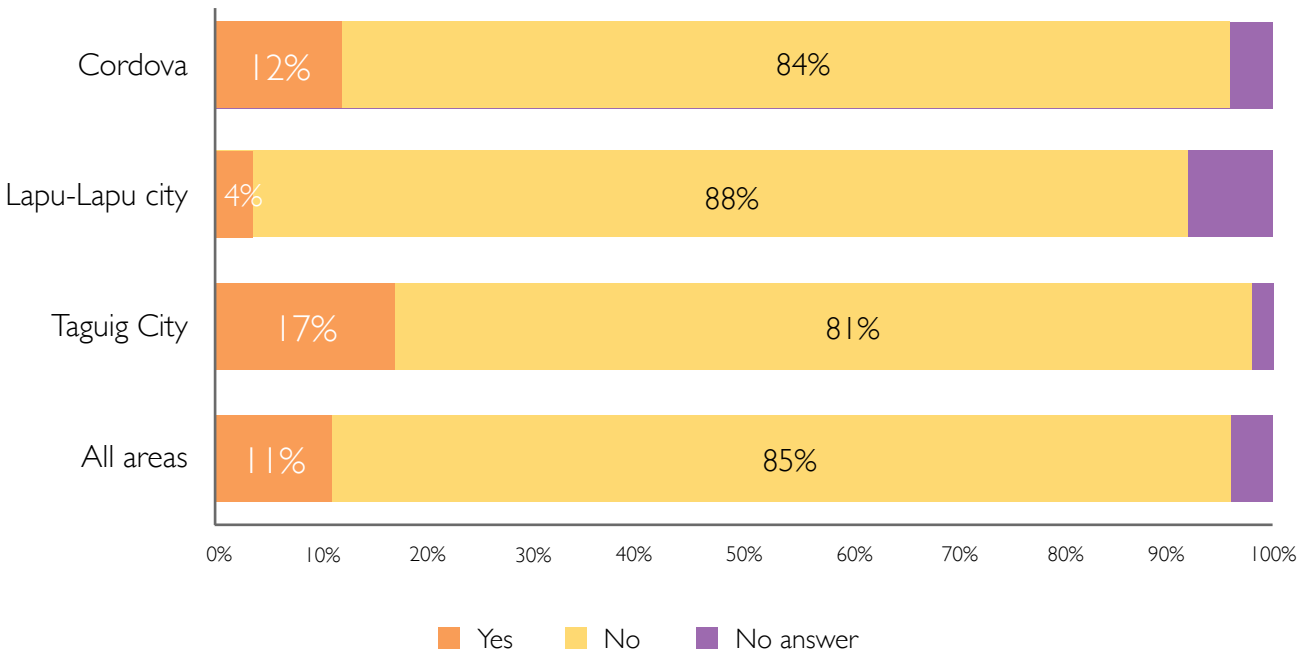


Figure 12. Percentage of Children Respondents Who Reported They Have Seen/ Heard of OSEC Cases Happening in Their Communities

Table 19. Adults' Actions to Take When Their Own child or Other Children in Their Neighborhood are Subjected to Online Sexual Exploitation

	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova Municipality
I will report to authorities	74%	73%	84%	66%
I will talk to the recruiter	2%	3%	1%	2%
I will not do anything	7%	9%	6%	7%
I don't know what to do	5%	4%	3%	7%
Others, specify	12%	10%	6%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

It should be noted that the data on OSEC incidence shared here should be treated with caution. While a certain number of respondents said that they had seen or heard OSEC cases happening in their communities, this should not be treated as a proxy indicator for the number of OSEC cases happening in that community. One reason is that a number of respondents may be referring to one case only and had heard of it through informal channels (i.e., the community "grapevine"). Despite this, the insight is clear: many community members—at least 3 in 10 adults and 1 in 10 children surveyed—have heard or seen OSEC in their communities, and it is crucial to unpack the experience and describe the exact actions they would take when confronted with this issue.

Meanwhile, 62% of child respondents said that if their friend or a child in their neighborhood is subjected to OSEC (see Table 21), that they would also report the matter to authorities. In particular, children said they would report the cases to the PNP (50%), the barangay captain (46%), and their parents (26%) (see Table 22). However, note the differences across the study: for example, there are more children respondents in Cordova (72%) and Lapu-Lapu City (69%) who said they would report to authorities compared to only 49% in Taguig City.

Table 20. Authorities to Whom Adults Would Report the OSEC Case

	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova Municipality
BCPC	6%	0%	14%	2%
VAWC Desk	7%	1%	16%	3%
DSWD	29%	14%	43%	27%
PNP	42%	39%	48%	38%
Barangay Captain	65%	68%	69%	58%
Teacher/ Principal	0%	0%	0%	0%
Others, specify	2%	3%	2%	2%

*Note: This is a multi-response question.

Table 21. Children's Actions if a Friend or a Child in Their Neighborhood is Subjected to OSEC

	All areas (N = 561)	Taguig City (N=203)	Lapu-Lapu City (N = 182)	Cordova (N = 176)
I will report to authorities	62%	46%	69%	72%
I will talk to the recruiter	1%	1%	0%	2%
I will not do anything	8%	6%	7%	11%
I don't know what to do	21%	25%	24%	15%
I will talk to the victim	4%	12%	0%	0%
I will report to parents	1%	2%	0%	0%
No answer	1%	3%	0%	0%
Others, specify	2%	4%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 22. Authorities to whom children respondents would report the OSEC case

	All areas	Taguig City	Lapu-Lapu City	Cordova
BCPC	1%	0%	2%	0%
VAWC Desk	1%	0%	2%	0%
DSWD	8%	8%	10%	6%
GAD Focal	0%	0%	0%	0%
PNP	50%	44%	60%	44%
Barangay Captain	46%	44%	47%	47%
Teacher/ Principal	4%	2%	2%	7%
Parents	26%	23%	29%	26%
Others	1%	2%	0%	0%

However, it is equally important to note that a considerable number of adult (5%) and child (20%) respondents said they did not know what to do if they witnessed OSEC cases happening in their communities. Some parents from one FGD expressed fear in reporting OSEC cases, to which another parent clarified that OSEC cases can be reported anonymously to prevent any risk of potential backlash.

The overall data presented in this section suggest that adults in the community recognized their role in reporting OSEC cases. In one FGD in Ligid Tipas, for example, one parent stressed the importance of reporting incidences of OSEC especially when a fellow parent is involved or facilitating the crime. This response shows that communities are aware that parents can be OSEC traffickers. Group discussions also captured a prevailing community perception that showing sexually explicit images and videos of children is less harmful because there is no physical contact with the clients and customers. These and other insights confirm and reaffirm the need for urgent responses to address this issue.

V. DISCUSSION

Overall, the data suggests that adults were well aware of the issue of OSEC. They mainly draw their information about OSEC from traditional media and news reports on television. On the other hand, only a third of children were aware of OSEC, with fewer children in Lapu-Lapu City aware of the issue compared to other project areas. Also, the school was among the children's top sources of information on OSEC, which means that the issue is already being discussed within the confines of the classroom. These findings provide insight as to where activities and interventions should be focused on when targeting adults and children. For example, one respondent suggested to expand the discussion on OSEC to include non-4Ps members in the communities through parent assemblies conducted in schools. However, one important gap that the research was not able to address is how to reach out of school youth who are more vulnerable to different forms of abuse and exploitation (ILO, 2007). What are the other avenues where the out-of-school youth could be reached to in order to inform them about their rights and protect them from online sexual exploitation?

The report also showed the common notions of communities about OSEC. Both adults and children associated the word "cybersex" with OSEC despite the difference between the two.

The Luxembourg Guidelines (International Working Group, 2016) did not include cybersex in its definitions, but communities' associating cybersex with OSEC may be due to how the term was used in the media to refer to "cyber-enabled" sexual acts and illegal sex trades such as prostitution, which have helped popularize the term.

Apart from highlighting that OSEC involves vulgar sexual acts mediated through the internet and social media, another striking pattern is how communities perceived offenders as mainly "foreigners." While existing national data (IJM, 2020) shows that the case is true, this finding also suggests that communities need to be informed that the production and sharing of online child sexual exploitation materials can be facilitated by Filipinos themselves (Toerrogoza, 2020). This insight can help improve detection of OSEC offenders and child sexual abuse material consumers that might not conform to these common notions of communities.

Adults have a general understanding that there are laws that prohibit and punish OSEC as a crime. But only 1 in 10 children surveyed were aware of laws that protect them from sexual exploitation and abuse, including OSEC. While it is possible to veer away from legalistic definitions and discussions about OSEC, data from this study suggests that it is important to stress among children that there are laws to penalize OSEC offenders and that the government is mainly responsible for keeping them safe from OSEC as well as other forms of abuse and exploitation. Such a move is important to ensure that, in case these abuses happen at home, they would know what to do and which authorities to approach.

The findings also show that very few adults and children were aware of community-based programs and interventions that address OSEC.

Data from the surveys and FGDs revealed an awareness of actual OSEC cases in the communities as well as an experience of OSEC perpetrators being close relations and even actual family members. This should raise an alarm, as OSEC is normalized in the community (Ramiro et al. 2019), where for example, field researchers noted that in one barangay in Taguig, some respondents identified individuals and houses of suspected OSEC facilitators casually as if it was a regular occurrence in their community.

Adults, particularly parents, recognized their role in reporting OSEC cases to authorities (e.g., PNP, barangay chairperson, DSWD) especially when they know that parents are also facilitators of the crime. This finding highlights the need to hasten and promote the cascading of authorities' contact information at the local level, especially in identified community "hotspots" in order to facilitate the reporting of cases and break the "culture of silence" in communities that help perpetuate child abuse and exploitation (CWC and UNICEF, 2016).

Photo was taken during one of the CPC awareness raising sessions on OSEC

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research focused on the experiences of select communities in the Philippines in the prevention of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC). In particular, it examined:

1. the efforts of the government (from national to local) and other key stakeholders to address OSEC and identify gaps and key challenges in implementation;
2. communities' awareness of online sexual exploitation, including their perceptions of their role in reporting online sexual exploitation to authorities; and
3. communities' awareness of existing structures and mechanisms in place to respond to OSEC cases.

This research was conducted in select barangays or villages in Taguig City (Metro Manila) and Cordova Municipality and Lapu-Lapu City (Cebu), areas which are covered by the Child Protection Compact Project. Taguig City and Cebu are notorious among authorities as "hotspots" of OSEC in the country. (ABS-CBN News, 2019).

The Philippines has a "constellation of laws" related to OSEC (Aritao and Pangilinan, 2019, p. 204), including the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012 and the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009. Inter-agency councils and committees have been created to coordinate efforts to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation. In addition, the Philippines is actively collaborating with other countries and foreign law enforcement authorities to strengthen efforts against OSEC. At the local level, initiatives to protect children from online sexual abuse are located within the broader child protection activities and anti-trafficking initiatives. This study finds that Taguig City, Lapu-Lapu City, and Cordova Municipality were able to establish child protection structures that respond to OSEC, although implementation and prioritization differed in each area.

Thus far, the research attempted to glean insights specific to the prevention and reduction of OSEC incidents by strengthening child protection systems at the local level and empowering children and communities. There is a stark disparity between the number of adults and children who reported that they were aware of the OSEC issue. This study suggests awareness-raising activities should target children, to build on current efforts in schools to include it as a topic of discussion. Meanwhile, parents urged authorities to disseminate information on agencies where they can anonymously and safely report facilitators of the crime in their communities, as well as early signs of OSEC activities that they should watch out for.

Despite the limited project scope, the experiences of these areas are useful case studies that can be scaled to include more barangays and/or cities. Other researchers may also see the opportunity to expand on this study's limitations, such as its focus on children in schools rather than those out of school. This research also looked at certain social media behaviors of both children and parents but was not able to include insights from social media companies and internet service providers and their efforts to combat OSEC.

Based on the data from communities and government agency representatives as well as the overall insights gleaned from the research, this report makes following recommendations:

On awareness raising activities

- Support LGUs in raising awareness on OSEC at the community level, particularly targeting parents and vulnerable children.
    - Maximize involvement of organized groups/ sectors within the community such as women's organizations, cooperatives/ associations, senior citizens, and churches/ faith-based groups.
    - Reach out to parents who may be having a hard time attending community activities.
    - Collaborate with agencies such as the DSWD and the PNP-Women and Children Protection Center that offer parenting education and OSEC prevention seminars.
    - Messaging must emphasize the risks and negative impacts of OSEC on child victims, to correct misconceptions about OSEC such as "no touch, no harm."
    - Encourage local reporting of OSEC cases by providing financial incentives to witnesses and actively relay contact information of authorities as well as reporting channels throughout communities.
- Work with schools and existing youth organizations within the community in educating children and youth about OSEC.
    - Explore creative and age-appropriate ways to raise awareness about OSEC and cyber safety among children/ youth.
    - Develop learning materials on OSEC that teachers can easily integrate in their subjects.
- Engage the private sector (e.g., internet shops, money transfer institutions, hotels, media, social media) in raising awareness about OSEC.
- Develop appropriate and more engaging social behavior change communication and information, education, and communication materials on OSEC, highlighting risks, laws, and encouraging reporting, targeted toward children, youth, and parents
- Where possible, collaborate with other civil society organizations and non-government organizations implementing OSEC prevention programs at the city, municipal, and barangay level to maximize impact.

On child protection structures

- Further capacitate frontliners across local government units (LGUs), including police officers, social welfare officers, violence against women and children (VAWC) desk officers, local committees (e.g. Local Council for the Protection of Children and Local Council Against Trafficking) on OSEC prevention and law implementation.
- Work with LGUs to ensure that OSEC prevention is included and funded in the annual work and financial plans of the barangays through the BCPC and gender and development programs.
- Support the crafting and passage of barangay ordinances on anti-trafficking in persons (for barangays that still do not have such policies).
- Support LGUs in reviewing current policies, programs, and activities related to OSEC to identify gaps and challenges and come up with strategies to improve or enhance these initiatives.
- Lobby for a more appropriate indicator on child trafficking prevention and response in the Child Friendly Local Governance Audit indicators.
- Strengthen coordination efforts among agencies, committees, and councils to address OSEC.
- Establish a unified case management data system for OSEC cases from the local to the national level to generate better data that can aid legislation and planning.

On the role of internet providers

- Lobby for the amendment of RA 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act) to provide more stringent requirements for internet service providers to filter (i.e., whitelisting, blacklisting) websites that promote child sexual abuse materials.
- Engage social media platforms to self-regulate and/or add more rigorous child protection mechanisms within their platforms.
- Lobby for stricter regulations for remittance and money transfer companies. Engage the private sector, particularly money transfer companies, to come up with codes of conduct and/or self-regulation to help monitor OSEC transactions.

On the underlying socioeconomic conditions that help perpetuate OSEC

- Link communities with government agencies that provide support for livelihood and enterprise development (e.g., Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Trade and Industry).

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