

Adapting for Children amidst Disasters



Philippines

30
Years

*of Fighting Sexual
Exploitation of Children
in the Philippines*



Annual Report 2020

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Executive Message

The year 2020 hasn't been easy for us all, most especially for disadvantaged children and their families. The scourge of COVID-19 and disasters, such as the Taal Volcano eruption and a series of severe tropical storms and typhoons, have left countless Filipinos devastated and vulnerable. The "new normal" ushered an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to social distancing guidelines and nationwide lockdowns. Children's increased internet use in place of in-person activities had been massively exploited by online sex predators worldwide.

Non-government organizations were not spared from the effects of a global recession caused by the pandemic, impaired by their reliance on international funding. Nevertheless, ECPAT Philippines adapted and coped with the current crisis, maximized its resources to innovate, support and capacitate key actors in the fight against sexual exploitation of children online and offline.

Children have become vulnerable more than ever before, with increasing Internet use exposing children to new and evolving forms of exploitation. Reports of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines have increased by 203% in 2020. ECPAT Philippines contends that educating stakeholders on children's right to protection shouldn't be put on hold.

In the face of community lockdowns, ECPAT Philippines capitalized on the present ubiquitous role of technology to organize child protection webinars for vulnerable children, parents, teachers, service providers, law enforcers, and community members.

In partnership with national and local government agencies, significant initiatives were successfully institutionalized: an international hotline vs Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) online; an Anti-Child Trafficking Ordinance in the country's most populous city; and a nationwide capacity building program for the replication of a model ordinance on children's protection in travel and tourism.

Through our partners and support from the public, we were able to respond to the immediate needs of affected families in our assisted communities, to even go beyond what we set out to do this year. Despite limited resources, we were able to immediately send relief to areas that needed help the most.

Once again, we thank everyone who helped us help children on this incredibly challenging year.

Sincerely,
Dolores Alforte
Executive Director
ECPAT Philippines

The Board

Amihan Abueva,
Chairperson

Very Rev. Fr. Larry
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Corporate Secretary

Elizabeth Protacio-de
Castro,
Treasurer

Rodelio Arcilia,
Member

Dolores Alforte,
Ex Officio / Executive
Director



Highlights of 2020

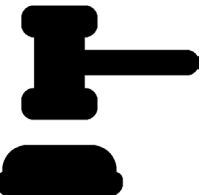
1,370 families affected by the pandemic and disasters **assisted** with immediate needs

1,923 teachers, barangay officials, and law enforcers **educated** and consulted on protecting children in education's new normal and online protection from sexual exploitation

59 child survivors and children-at-risk provided with direct services such as temporary shelter, educational, health, legal and psychosocial assistance



91 Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) removed from the internet



Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance enacted



International Internet Hotline vs Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM) established

1,430 students and parents **educated** on children's online protection in the new normal

788 tourism professionals nationwide capacitated to institutionalize child protection policy and mechanisms

46 in-person seminars and webinars on children's protection from sexual exploitation conducted for stakeholders



Survey on Children's Online Protection during Community lockdowns conducted

ECPAT Philippines and DICT-CICC:partnering to operate a Philippine INHOPE Hotline

ECPAT Philippines and the *Department of Information and Communications Technology- Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (DICT-CICC)* signed a Memorandum of Understanding to operate **eProtectKids**, an INHOPE Hotline in the Philippines.

INHOPE is a network of international hotlines that aims to quickly remove child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from the internet. It is a global prevention initiative that exists to tackle CSAM consumption and offenses which involve direct contact of a sexual nature with a child in a borderless digital world. It also retains information that can aid law enforcement investigations on cases of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) consumption is considered as the viewing or downloading of any images or videos that show a child engaged in or depicted as being engaged in explicit sexual activity.

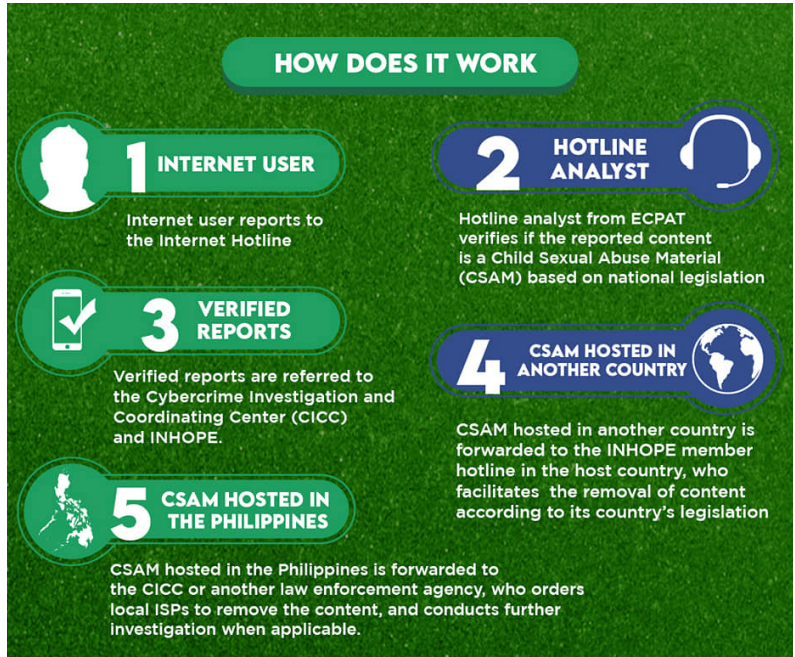


CICC Executive Director Cezar Mancao and ECPAT Philippines Board President Amihan Abueva sign the MOU on Oct. 13, 2020 at the CICC Office in Quezon City.

The Philippines is a top source of online CSAMs globally. CSAMs produced in the Philippines are being hosted outside the country, which makes them difficult to remove. With 46 member hotlines worldwide using the ICCAM tool, an advanced and secure system, INHOPE enables easier verification and exchange of reported CSAM between hotlines located in different jurisdictions.

eProtectKids is the first international internet hotline against CSAM in the Philippines. The hotline enables the public to anonymously report online material they suspect may be illegal, to have the content removed from the internet as quickly as possible. With the DICT-CICC as its law enforcement partner, the Philippines can now triage an efficient response to reports of CSAM from the public.

ECPAT Philippines was able to facilitate the removal of 91 Child Sexual Abuse Materials from the internet in 2020 by responding to reports from the public and referring cases to national law enforcement agencies and *Twitter*.



Persevering in educating communities: Series of child protection webinars held amidst pandemic

One of ECPAT Philippines' flagship activities is the regular conduct of child protection education sessions in communities affected by Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC). From sensitizing children and parents on their right to protection and how to seek help when in danger, to helping community councils to function effectively, these learning sessions are vital in creating safe environments for children.

Due to community lockdowns which started in March 2020, organizing in-person activities in communities haven't been possible. Nevertheless, in response to the alarming increase of reports of sexual abuse and exploitation online and offline since the onset of community quarantines, ECPAT Philippines strived to reach vulnerable children, families and community members in the grassroots by organizing a series of webinars, which were also accessible nationwide via video conferencing and livestreaming applications Zoom and Facebook Live.

From June to September 2020, the webinar series dubbed as *ECPAT Kwentuhan Online* (ECPAT Online Discussions) held seven 2-hour episodes of relevant issues pertaining to children's protection from sexual exploitation during the pandemic. Speakers from key government agencies such as *Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC)*, *Philippine National Police (PNP)*, *Department of Justice (DOJ)*, *Department of Education (DepEd)*, *Department of Tourism (DOT)*, local government officials and other child protection experts were invited throughout the series to share inputs and respond to questions from the public.

You're Invited!
LIVE WEBINAR

**Kwentuhan Online:
Karapatang Pambata**

SATURDAY **MAY 30** **4 PM**

REGISTER Via Zoom

WEBINAR SERIES
ECPAT Philippines

Kwentuhan Online:
EPISODE II

The Right to Protection, and Violence Against Children

With Resource Speakers:

- Ms. Ma. Ruth L. Marayag**
Officer-in-Charge
Public Affairs and Information Office
Council for the Welfare of Children
- Eric Dela Cruz**
Youth Advocate
EYCA

#NOTFORSALE

Friday
JUNE 12, 2020
4-5PM

REGISTER NOW VIA ZOOM
<https://tinyurl.com/ECPATWebinarEP2>

WATCH VIA FACEBOOK LIVE
<https://web.facebook.com/ECPATPhilippines>

WEBINAR SERIES
ECPAT Philippines

KWENTUHAN ONLINE

EPISODE III

PROTEKSYON LABAN SA OSEC
Exploitation of Children
SA GITNA NG PANDEMYA

Resource Speaker:

Ginno Corral
Project Development Officer
ECPAT Philippines

FRIDAY
JUNE 26, 2020
3-4:30PM

Register now via Zoom
<https://tinyurl.com/ECPATWebinarEP3>

Watch via Facebook Live
@ECPATPhilippines

EPISODE IV

TAYO LABAN SA OSEC
(ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN)

FRIDAY
JULY 17, 2020
3:00-4:30PM

REGISTER NOW VIA ZOOM LINK
<https://tinyurl.com/y9q2fh6l>

WATCH VIA FACEBOOK LIVE
@ECPATPhilippines

RESOURCE SPEAKERS:

- ATTY. ANGELA MARIE M. DE GRACIA**
State Counsel
Department of Justice
Republic of the Philippines
- MS. TRINIDAD MANEJA, RSW**
Deputy Director
ECPAT Philippines
- PLT. NOEBALYN TAMAYO**
Asst. Team Leader
Philippine Internet Crimes
Against Children Center
WCRC-PNP

EPISODE V

COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE
WORKING ON THE FRONTLINE TO
END HUMAN TRAFFICKING
#ENDHumanTrafficking
#HumanTrafficking

Resource Speakers:

- Pros. Lolita Lomanta**
Senior Assistant
Provincial Prosecutor, Cebu
DOJ-IACAT
- Ms. Salome Ujano**
Secretariat Coordinator
PACT
- Dr. Marcelina Carpizo**
National Chairperson
PACT

THURSDAY
JULY 30, 2020
3-5PM

Register via Zoom
<https://tinyurl.com/ECPATWebinarEP5>

Watch on Facebook Live
@ECPATPhilippines

KWENTUHAN ONLINE | EPISODE VI

Child Protection in Blended Learning

FRIDAY
AUGUST 21, 2020
3-5PM

Register via Zoom
<https://tinyurl.com/ECPATWebinarEP6>

Watch via FB live
@ECPATPhilippines

KWENTUHAN ONLINE | EPISODE VII

CHILD SAFE TOURISM:
PROTECTING CHILDREN
FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
AS TOURISM RESTARTS

SATURDAY | SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 | 3 - 5PM

REGISTER VIA ZOOM: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/ECPATWEBINARE7](https://tinyurl.com/ECPATWEBINARE7)

WATCH VIA FB LIVE @ECPATPHILIPPINES

Children's protection in a new normal for education

Major changes have been made in the educational system to navigate through the new normal. Alternative modes for learning delivery were put in place, including modular, blended, and online learning modalities for the school year 2020-2021, whose intention is to promote safety and overall health during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as a consequence of increased access to the internet, reports of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) have tripled since community quarantine measures were implemented in March 2020. Allowing online access to basic education only puts children at greater risk of OSAEC.

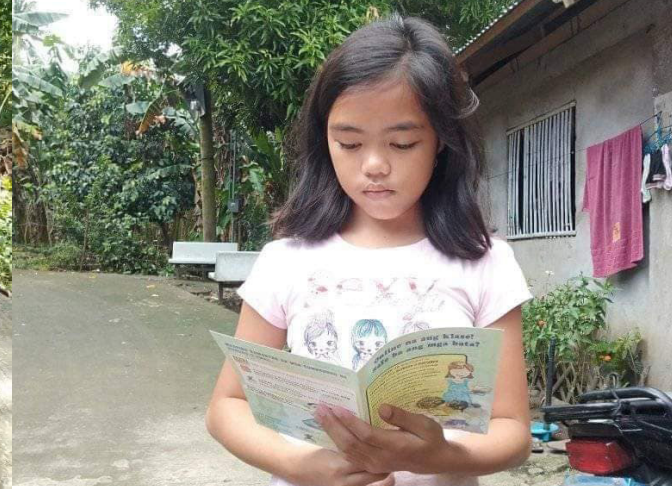
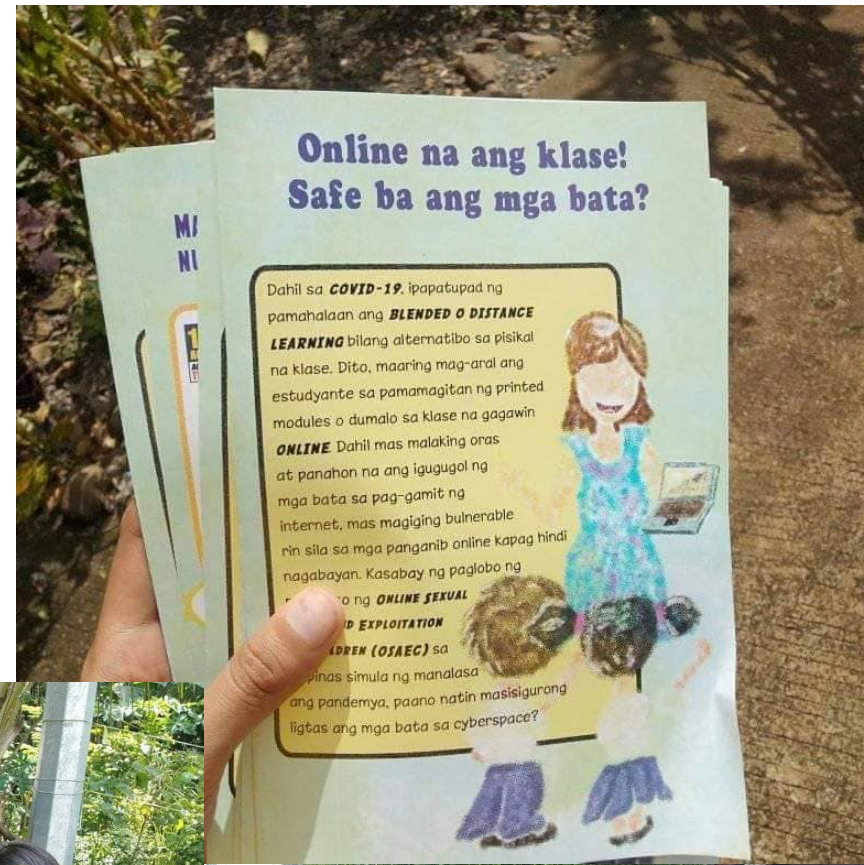
In response to the *Department of Education's* decision to conduct classes and circulate learning materials online, ECPAT Philippines called for the department to strengthen students' online protection through the amendment of its current Child Protection Policy or DepEd Order 40. S-2012.

ECPAT Philippines organized consultations for teachers in Region 3 (Central Luzon) to better understand the current situation and challenges for education in a new normal. Inputs and recommendations gathered from the discussions were shared with the DepEd and contributed to the drafting of its Supplemental Child Protection Policy to allow the agency to safe guard children across different learning environments.



Elementary and highschool teachers in Region 3 share their inputs and recommendations on children's online safety

Many children, especially in vulnerable communities, may not be safe to learn online. ECPAT Philippines actively seeks to inform the education community of the need to uphold children's online safety in blended learning environments. ECPAT produced and disseminated information and communication materials to children, parents, and teachers in vulnerable communities to help them recognize, prevent and respond to various forms of exploitation of children online.



Capacitating the tourism industry to institutionalize child protection policy

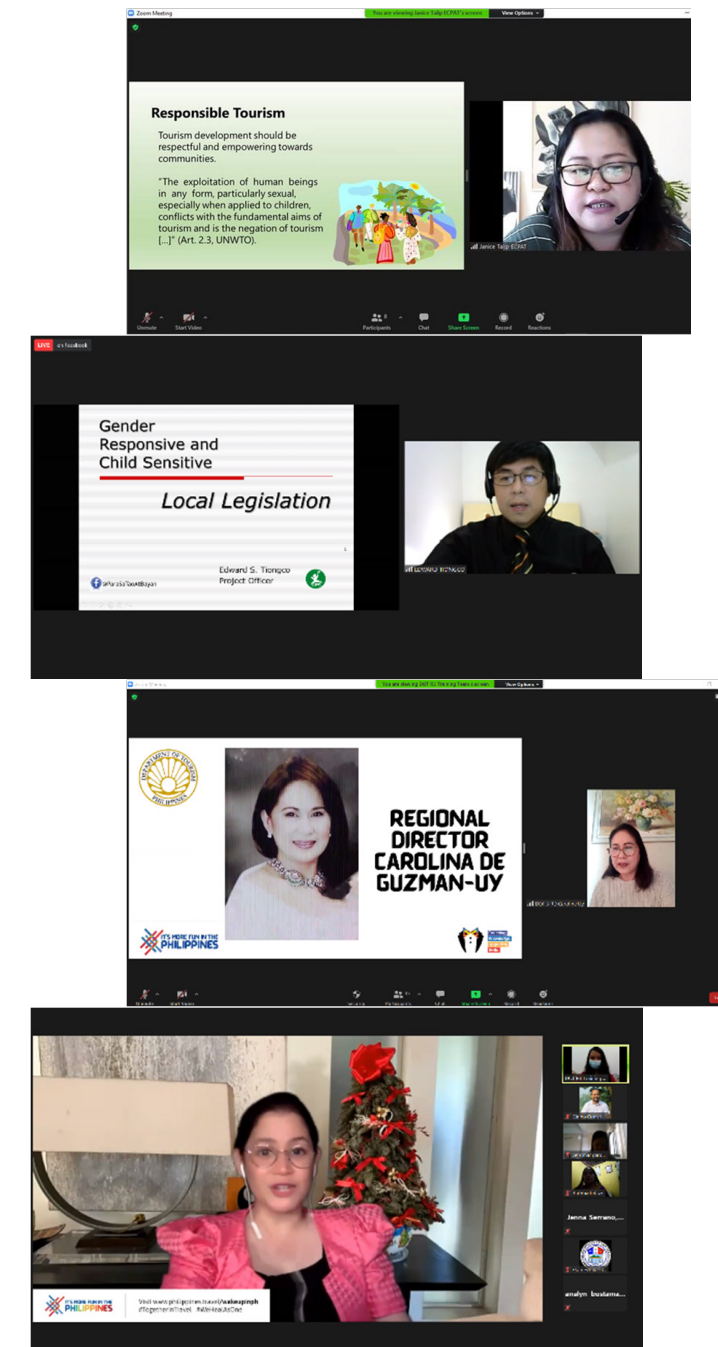
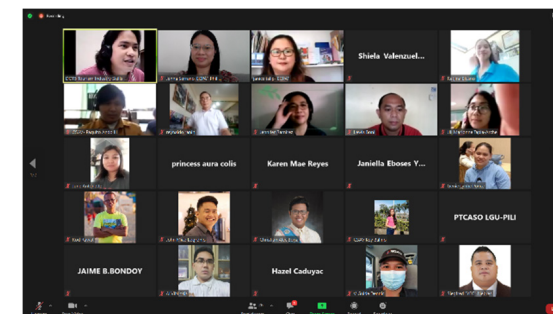
Keeping children safe is everyone’s responsibility and the travel and tourism industry is in a key position to promote child protection and safety. Travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic may have limited the movement of traveling sex offenders but it certainly hasn’t prevented them from victimizing children remotely. Reports showed COVID-19 created an unprecedented surge in online abuse of vulnerable Filipino children during the community quarantine.

Child sex offenders take advantage of poverty, social exclusion, and vulnerability to abuse and exploit, and it will be expected that perpetrators worldwide will waste no time as soon as travel and tourism resume, when they can move again to victimize children in person.



In its aim to establish child-safe destinations in the country, ECPAT Philippines partnered with the Department of Tourism (DOT) to capacitate local tourism officers and private entities and institutionalize children’s protection in tourism. ECPAT conducted a series of webinars from July to December 2020, which started conversations on how to mitigate risks of child sexual exploitation as the tourism industry restarts.

Drawing from ECPAT’s best practice in the province of Bohol, the webinar series provided stakeholders with tools and strategies in pushing for an ordinance that mandates tourism businesses to adopt a child protection policy and train their workforce to respond to cases of child sexual exploitation that may happen within their premises. ECPAT Philippines is consistent in its call to ensure that, as the travel and tourism industry bounces back, child protection and safety are given priority.



Anti-child trafficking ordinance enacted in Quezon City; action plan formulated in Laguna Province

While the Philippines has met the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking in the past years, reintegration for victims, including children, remains inadequate, as reported by the U.S. Department of State in 2020.

Quezon City is among the identified hotspots for child sex trafficking in the country. To strengthen the implementation of RA 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 as amended

by RA 10364 or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012, ECPAT Philippines pushed for the enactment of the Quezon City Anti-Trafficking in Persons Ordinance of 2020.

With the support of councilors Lena Mari Juico, Peachy de Leon, and Shaira Liban, and Vice Mayor Gian Sotto, the ordinance was approved on its 3rd and final reading last December 14, 2020.

Key provisions of the Quezon City Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIP) Ordinance include:

- Establishment of the Quezon City Council on Anti-Trafficking (QCCAT) for the oversight and implementation of the QC ATIP ordinance, including the formulation of ATIP comprehensive action plan, advocacy and awareness-raising, monitoring of cases, and victim recovery and integration;
- Formation of the Quezon City Joint Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons, primarily tasked for surveillance, investigation, and rescue operations;
- Creation of shelter for victims of trafficking and provision of specialized services, including financial assistance;
- Development of city and barangay trafficking in persons prevention plan;
- Visitation powers of the city to conduct inspection of houses, buildings, or establishments reported as being used for TIP.



Hearing of Anti-Trafficking Ordinance at the Quezon City Hall

Meanwhile, as an NGO member of Laguna’s Provincial Committee on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and their Children (PCAT_VAWC), ECPAT Philippines spearheaded the Anti-Trafficking planning process which resulted in the formulation of a Plan of Action aligned with the province’s Anti-Trafficking Ordinance of 2011.

Assisting neglected Korean-Filipino Children

Through a study conducted in 2006, ECPAT Philippines first confirmed the growing problem of Korean male tourists impregnating young Filipino women and leaving the mothers behind without any support. Most of the girls were teenagers at the time, some no more than 15 years old. The problem is a recurring theme and has persisted to date, leaving many thousands of Filipino women to rear their children alone, pushing them further into poverty.

Many *Kopino* (Korean and Filipino) children have no contact nor knowledge of the father’s private details, be it a South Korean phone number, address, let alone a Korean name. ECPAT Philippines and ECPAT Korea partnered to provide financial assistance to abandoned Kopino children and to help them locate their fathers in South Korea.

Kopino – a portmanteau of Korean and Filipino – is a term first coined in 2004 to refer to a child born to a Filipino mother and a South Korean father – who has often run away

From 2015-2017, six Kopino children have successfully found their fathers through this project and were able to seek regular financial support for their education and daily living.

In 2019, five more families were provided with legal assistance under the project which also aimed to prevent more cases from happening by raising awareness among Korean males. In 2020, all five cases have been filed in court and scheduled for a hearing.

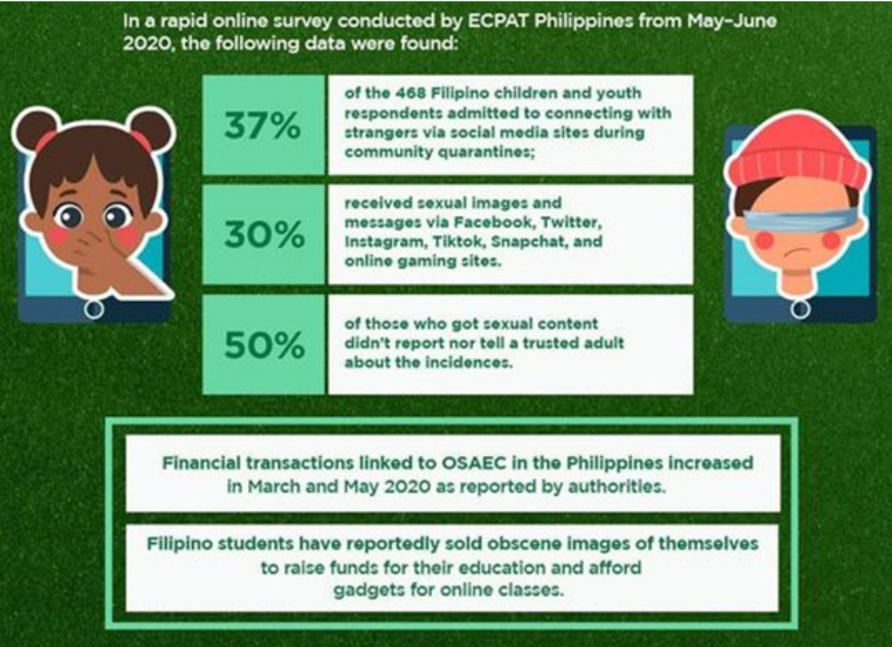
Empowering Children and Youth

The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns meant a greater presence of children online and on social media. To better understand children’s online behavior amidst the pandemic, The *ECPAT Children and Youth Advocates (EYCA)* conducted an online survey from May to June 2020.

The survey found that out of 468 children and youth respondents from different parts of the country, thirty-seven percent (37%) admitted to connecting with strangers via social media sites, and thirty percent (30%) to receiving

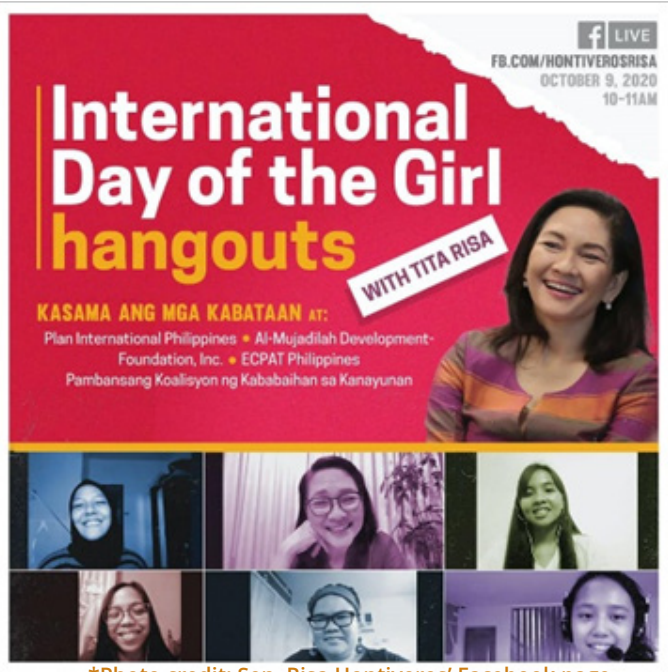
sexual materials and messages during the quarantine period. Worryingly, half of them (50%) did not report nor disclose the incidences to trusted adults.

Alarmed by the vulnerabilities created by children’s unhampered and unsupervised access to the internet and social media, EYCA held a series of online child-friendly talk shows where participants learned about child rights, ways to stay safe online, and how to get help when victimized online and offline.



EYCA also produced animated videos on online safety to encourage parents to guide their children on safer internet use, and for children to protect themselves from abusers lurking online. The videos were published on social media for easier access and sharing to a wider audience.

In celebration of *International Day of the Girl*, Michelle, an ECPAT girl advocate, participated in a discussion on girls’ rights broadcasted online on October 9, 2020. Girl advocates from different parts of the country talked about their right to a safe home, community, and cyberspace, especially in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion was an initiative of Sen. Risa Hontiveros together with *Plan International Philippines*, *Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Inc.*, *ECPAT Philippines*, and *National Rural Women Coalition*.



*Photo credit: Sen. Risa Hontiveros’ Facebook page

Alternative report to the UN CRC Committee on Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines

ECPAT International and ECPAT Philippines submitted a Supplementary Report on Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC) in the Philippines on March 1, 2020, as its contribution to the fifth and sixth periodic reports of the Philippines on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which includes reporting on the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). The report highlighted gaps in addressing the issue of SEC and

recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the convention in the country.

On October 5, 2020, ECPAT Philippines participated in the 87th pre-session of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. As a result, ECPAT's recommendation for the state to establish a Philippine INHOPE Hotline was included in the List of Issues (LOI) published by the CRC Committee in November 2020.

Supporting disaster-hit children and families

Children and families become most vulnerable to exploitation during disasters, when traffickers take advantage of people's dire need for food and other basic resources for survival.

From the eruption of Taal Volcano in February to the onslaught of Typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses in the second half of 2020, ECPAT Philippines supported affected children and families in Quezon City, Angeles City, Laguna, Batangas, and Bohol. Immediate needs such as food, sleeping kits, hygiene kits, face masks, and face shields were distributed to a total of 1370 families.



Psychosocial sessions for children affected by Taal eruption in February 2020



In partnership with TUI Care Foundation, ECPAT Philippines also provided 44 tablet computers, to help children with their online education.



Development Partners





ECPAT Philippines

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