

# Terms of Reference:

## *For Research Coordinator for a 'National Study on the Nature and Extent of Online Child Sexual Exploitation in Cambodia'*

April-December 2018

### Summary

Action Pour Les Enfants [APLE]<sup>1</sup> and partner organisations<sup>2</sup> are seeking a research coordinator to develop and lead a comprehensive 'National Situational Analysis' (hereafter referred to 'the study') related to online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) in Cambodia, which is an emerging form of child sexual exploitation and abuse, mediated by the internet, that utilises websites, social media platforms, and smartphone apps. This research is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of OCSE in Cambodia, including the various capacities of legislation and key stakeholders (government and CSOs) to address the issue nationally. The study aims to build a strategic set of learnings (using the WePROTECT Framework) that feed into the development of a comprehensive action plan to address OCSE in Cambodia, as well as potential Cambodia-specific interventions for prevention, protection, and the provision of services, and criminal prosecution.

At present, national-level research related to OCSE in Cambodia does not exist and there is little in depth understanding of specific online threats and data to inform strategy to address OCSE. Thus, the overall objectives of the study will be to understand the nature and extent of OCSE in Cambodia and identify actionable and evidence-based recommendations for Cambodia-specific interventions, based on the WePROTECT Model National Response (MNR), as well as learnings from local and international best practice.

### Context

Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) is an emerging form of exploitation and child sexual abuse that is mediated by the internet, utilising websites and social media platforms and smartphone apps.

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<sup>1</sup> APLE is a local NGO that exists to strengthen national social and legal mechanisms for the protection of children at risk of, or affected by, child sexual abuse or exploitation.

<sup>2</sup>At present, our CSO partners include: Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE), Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH-NL).

It includes the production, possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material online, and the grooming of potential child victims online with the intention of sexual exploitation or abuse, including live streaming of child sexual exploitation and abuse (WePROTECT, 2016). Globally, access to affordable internet, personal computers and smartphones is rapidly increasing within poor and vulnerable communities. Within Southeast Asia, 75 percent of people have a mobile phone and more than two thirds of internet users access the web through mobile devices (We are Social, 2017). There are at least 750 million social media users across the region (We are Social, 2017).

Mobile internet connectivity, social media and use of technology have expanded dramatically in Cambodia in recent years; that trend is predicted to continue. Data collected in 2016, by interviewing 2061 participants aged between 15 and 65 years olds across Cambodia, shows that 48 percent of Cambodians were found to have at least one smartphone, a 21 percent increase from 2015. It also shows that Facebook use among Cambodians is continuing to grow; 48 percent of Cambodians say they use or have used Facebook (an increase of 39 percent from 2015, 106 percent from 2014 and 200 percent from 2013). Men reported using Facebook more than women (55 percent versus 41 percent). Little is understood in Cambodia about the specific online threats for children; however, OCSE is of increasing concern as global sources indicate that advances in internet and mobile technology contribute heavily to sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (ECPAT, 2016) and the availability of online child abuse materials (UNODC, 2006).

Access to affordable internet, personal computers and smartphones increases in poor communities has many social and economic advantages. However, it also poses significant risks for children and young people who tend to be advanced users of the Internet and actively participate in social media (UN Human Rights Council, 2014). This expansion of the internet has made child sexual abuse material more accessible, and has allowed for easier and faster dissemination of pro-pedophile literature among paedophiles and those with sexual interests in children (Elliott & Ashfield, 2011; Kierkegaard, 2008). As internet subscription fees lower and connection speeds increase, larger data transfers can be sent between users. The expansion of internet use has also allowed for the creation of supportive communities for perpetrators across regional and international boundaries (US Department of Justice, 2018; INTERPOL, 2018), thereby giving a pseudo sense of legitimacy to people with sexual interest in children (Kloss, et al., 2014). While the number of victims of OCSE globally is not known, the number of websites containing child sexual abuse material is cited to have increased by 147 percent between the years of 2012 and 2014 alone and recent estimates suggest that it is a significant problem which is rapidly increasing (UNICEF & The Guardian, 2016).

OCSE is known to be a significant issue in neighbouring South East Asian countries such as The Philippines and Thailand. The production of child sexual abuse material in the Philippines occurs on an industrial scale, and is estimated to generate up to \$1 billion a year (MSNBC, 2014). Key factors identified as causes for the increasing prevalence of OCSE in other ASEAN countries, are persistent and high poverty levels, a lack of jobs, internal and external migration, affordable and widespread internet access, and cultural norms that normalise or excuse online forms of sexual exploitation as harmful to children. The underlying factors that have driven OCSE in other ASEAN countries are

also present in Cambodia. There are strong indications of the potential for a repetition of the acute increases of OCSE observed in other ASEAN countries in Cambodia. Reports from partners indicate an increase of perpetrators using the internet to contact victims and children accessing pornography being linked to abusive and harmful sexual behaviours.

The regional experiences illustrated above, and emerging local trends suggest an urgent need to understand and address this serious threat before OCSE proliferates in Cambodia. It is on this basis that the study proposal seeks to draw on strong existing partnerships, the current available evidence, and the WePROTECT MNR to provide a comprehensive and wide ranging foundation of reliable data and knowledge, feeding into the development of project outcomes, and ultimately the development of a comprehensive action plan on OCSE.

## **Motivation for the Study**

While numerous anecdotal cases of OCSE have been reported, there is clear need for the development of a stronger base of evidence on the nature and extent of the problem, as well as the capacities of government, CSOs, and other stakeholders to address this emerging issue. At present, there is no national-level research related to any form of sexual exploitation, including OCSE, and consequently little understanding of online threats. The action plan addressing Violence Against Children in Cambodia (2017-2021) references the need for OCSE related interventions in virtually all domains, including policy and governance. However, the lack of accurate information on OCSE is likely to hamper progress and the action plan acknowledges the need to 'assess the scale and specific nature of online sexual exploitation against children in Cambodia', to inform developments. (RGC, 2017) Further, Cambodia is a signatory to the WePROTECT Global Initiative, thus this research falls in line with the existing national commitment to WePROTECT.

## **Scope of Work – Expected Tasks of the Research Coordinator**

The study should assess the current threat of OCSE in Cambodia, how it is manifested, how children are at risk and which group may be at an increased risk. The WeProtect Framework<sup>3</sup> will guide the development, implementation, and outputs of this research. This framework acknowledges that a coordinated national response to online child sexual exploitation cannot be addressed in isolation and thus requires a wider set of capabilities to be in place, to ensure a complete national response. Effective responses to OCSE, specifically, and to violence against children, more broadly, tend to adopt a multi-faceted and holistic approach, including children, their families, community, government, industry, and media in order to be effectively engaged in preventing and tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse. Thus, the objectives of the study exist within the following domains:

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<sup>3</sup> A part of the WePROTECT Global Alliance to End Online Child Sexual Exploitation (2016)

- **Policy and Governance** – Review and evaluate national legislation and policies relating to online sexual abuse, exploitation and cybercrime, assessing compliance with international standards and good practice.
- **Criminal Justice** – Explore current practices and challenges for law enforcement and the judiciary, including tools, capacity and training needs in the field of cybercrime and child protection.
- **Victim and Survivors** – Mapping the activities of existing stakeholders engaged in child protection, and online issues more specifically, to explore the current challenges, capacity, and training needs in the field of cyberspace related to social welfare, medical and education professionals. This will include engagement with children and young people to identify specific needs related to the provision of support services.
- **Society, Children and Communities** – Engage with children, young people and community members to assess the current online risks and threats in Cambodia, how they are manifested, and who is most at risk. This will include, but not be limited to, understanding how children and young people are using the internet and other relevant technologies; current online behaviour patterns; risks currently faced by children and how they mitigate those risks; and, what is required to strengthen the resilience of children and young people in online environments.
- **Industry** – Assess current mechanisms, attitudes, commitment, motivation, and capacity to fully engage with WePROTECT objectives; review current ICT ecosystem response – including Hotline reporting mechanisms, blocking or removing access to OCSE contents, and other industry engagement.
- **Media and Communications** — Review media content and coverage related to OCSE and related issues to gain understanding and inform strategy and messaging. This will include an assessment of the current awareness, capacity, and learning needs of media professionals and those entering the field, including an assessment on the use of appropriate terminology in reporting OCSE.

The research coordinator, working alongside of the National Research Advisor, will lead the development and coordination of the full project, including identifying field staff, coordination of fieldwork and desk review, the provision of analysis, and the subsequent drafting of the final report - alongside other relevant team members. Over the course of the approximately nine (9) month research initiative, the Research Working Group will provide essential inputs and support the development of a comprehensive action plan to address OCSE in Cambodia, including Cambodia-specific interventions.

The research coordinator and National Research Advisor, working with the guidance of the Research Working Group, will work collaboratively with our three existing partners (Terre des Hommes -

Netherlands; Save the Children, and APLE) who have interest and expertise in online safety and child protection.

## Objectives and Outcomes of the Study

The overall objectives of the study is to understand the nature and extent of OCSE in Cambodia, including the various capacities of legislation and key stakeholders (government and CSOs) to address the issue nationally according to MNR guidelines (WePROTECT, 2016). The outcomes will identify actionable, evidence-based recommendations for the development of a comprehensive action plan to address OCSE in Cambodia and for the creation of Cambodia-specific interventions for prevention, protection, and the provision of services, and criminal prosecution. The project will directly link to these capacities and aims to generate comprehensive data, leading to specific recommendations to contribute to the development of an action plan, and accessible resources/tools focusing on behaviour change, designed to embed prevention at all levels in the long term. As a direct consequence, at community level the development of education and advocacy tools and activities with children, parents and caregivers will provide them with knowledge, skills and confidence to take positive action to ensure their children's safety. The study will also feed into the development of contextually relevant learning curricula, IEC materials, and advocacy tools for a variety of actors, including law enforcement, social welfare, medical and education professionals, industry and media, leading to the provision of improved services and support. In addition, the project aims to lead to the development of a secure reporting hotline/helpline for the public to report OCSE contents or find appropriate support.

The research coordinator will develop and oversee, ideally, two interconnected research teams: one focused on desk research and another focused on field research. While each of these teams will have their own mandates, it is vital that the teams work collaboratively to share information and develop coordinated and cohesive findings, analysis, and recommendations.

The desk review team will, ideally, take the lead on research applying to the domains of: 1) policy and governance and 2) Media and Communications. Within these domains, the following questions will guide the research process:

1. **Policy and Governance** – What is the nature, extent, and potential efficacy of regional (ASEAN) and national legislation and policies?; What opportunities exist within this context to comply with existing regional initiatives related to violence against children, and specifically online abuse and exploitation?; What are the key messages needed within this context for the development of education, awareness raising, and advocacy materials.
2. **Media and Communications** — What are the current awareness, capacity, and learning needs of media professionals and those entering the field?; How can we better inform the development of key messages for reporting, training, education, awareness raising, and

advocacy materials? (The desk review team will work collaboratively with the field research team within this domain.)

The field research team will, ideally, take the lead on research applying to the domains of: 1) Criminal Justice; 2) Victims and Survivors; 3) Society, Children, and Communities; and 4) Industry. Within these domains, the following questions will guide the research process:

1. **Criminal Justice** – What are the current practices and challenges for law enforcement and the judiciary in Cambodia, with regard to OCSE?; What are the current capacity-building and training needs with regard to cybercrime and child protection?
2. **Victim and Survivors** – Where in Cambodia is OCSE occurring?; Is it occurring in any particular geographical regions? If so, where? Who are victims (gender and age analysis)? Is there a connection with online and offline sexual exploitation 'hot spots'? How victims are identified? What services are available for OCSE survivors?
3. **Society, Children and Communities** – How are Cambodian children and young people using the internet / other relevant technologies?; What are the online and offline circumstances and behaviours that place Cambodian children at-risk of online exploitation?; What OCSE risks do Cambodian children and young people currently face and how do those risks arise?; How are Cambodian children being 'recruited' to engage in OCSE (e.g. through peer-to-peer networks, family members, or particular venues such as internet cafes)?; How do adults and children's perspectives on risk differ, as well as what parents and other duty bearers need to enable them to protect children and mitigate risks?; What are offending trends of OCSE in Cambodia or any particular geographical regions?
4. **Industry** – What are OCSE risks/problems identified by ISPs? What are the current mechanisms, attitudes, commitment, motivation, and capacity of ISPs to better protect Cambodian children from OCSE?; What responses exist within the current ICT ecosystem – including Hotline reporting mechanisms, blocking and removing access to OCSE contents, and industry engagement; What are the key messages needed for the development of effective reporting, education, awareness raising, and advocacy materials?

## Guiding Principles and Procedures

The design and implementation of the research should take into account the principles of confidentiality and use of appropriate and sensitive interviewing methods for vulnerable groups. This means, ensuring children are at the centre of the research, that principles of gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination are considered and acted upon throughout, and that the meaningful participation of children and other key stakeholders is promoted in the design and implementation of the research. The successful applicant will undertake to pay special attention to the "Do no harm" principle in order to mitigate any negative emotional, physical and psychological ramifications that may arise from improper and unethical research practices. Furthermore, the assessments are required

to be conducted in-line with the Child Safeguarding and protection policies of Terre des Hommes Netherlands, Save the Children, APLE, and other international guidelines on Child Protection and ethical standards in Monitoring, Evaluation and Research.

Further, the research approach will need to be agile and adaptive in recognition that OCSE is an emerging issue, so as to develop a better understanding of the relationship between the online and offline environments and the risks and potential for violence and sexual abuse and exploitation as a consequence of that interaction.

## **Expected Deliverables**

Under supervision of the Research Working Group, the selected applicant should deliver the following<sup>4</sup>:

### **(i) Inception Report**

The inception report should include a brief literature review on understanding of the characteristics (nature) and extent of OCSE in Cambodia and propose a sound and feasible set of research tools and methodology, for undertaking the full research within the above-specified domains of the WePROTECT framework.

### **(ii) Zero Draft Research:**

The Zero Draft Report will be based upon desk review and initial key findings from fieldwork. While this will be less structured than the revised draft report, it will constitute a first attempt to assemble salient themes and patterns emerging on from fieldwork on the nature of OCSE in Cambodia. This report will be presented to the Research Working Group, National Research Advisor and the Research Coordinator will work with this group to further analyse and develop the findings.

### **(v) Revised Research**

The Revised Report will provide a structured analysis of the characteristics and extent of OCSE in Cambodia and identify potential actionable recommendations for Cambodia-specific interventions. This report and its findings will be presented to and discussed with the Research Working Group, National Research Advisor and other key Cambodian stakeholders, who will provide inputs to help develop recommendations into specific and actionable items for the Cambodian Context.

### **(vi) Oral presentation/meeting and ongoing debrief with project staff**

As part of an ongoing project, the selected applicant will be required to conduct a presentation to the working group on the findings of the research, indicated evidenced based changes over the project period, including final findings, and suggestion of a Dissemination plan with key stakeholders. The

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<sup>4</sup> These deliverables are subject to change as the project develops, based upon the advisement of the research working group.

de-briefing meeting will provide an opportunity to clarify outstanding aspects of the research before finalization.

**(vii) The Final Report:**

The selected applicant will be expected to produce a final report, with comments from the debriefing taken into account. This report will be the polished final version of the research, detailing the characteristics and extent of OCSE in Cambodia and identify actionable and evidence-based recommendations for Cambodia-specific interventions, based on the WePROTECT MNR indicated within the WeProtect Framework, as well as best practice both locally and internationally.

**(viii) Research Launch:**

Following the completion of the final report, the Research Advisor, the Research Coordinator, and research team will be responsible for collaborating with stakeholders and playing an active role to present the findings of the research.

## **Time frame of the research**

The research will be undertaken from April to December of 2018. The activities will span over a period of approximately nine (9) months. The activities will be based on the envisaged timelines indicated below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Projected Dates</b>
Development and Drafting of Inception Report	April (one week)
Selection of teams	April (one week)
Overseeing Literature/Legislative desk review	April - May (eight weeks)
Initial mapping exercises	April (one week)
Criminal Justice field-data collection	May (four weeks)
Victim and Survivor field-data collection	June-July (eight weeks)
Society, Children, and Communities field-data collection	August-September (eight weeks)
Industry field-data collection	Early October
Media and communications field-data collection	Early October

Comprehensive analysis <sup>5</sup> of field data	Late October
Drafting of Zero-Draft Report	May - October (10 weeks)
Drafting of Revised Research	End of October (2 weeks)
Oral presentations of field findings	Ongoing throughout project
Writing of Final Report	End of November (two weeks)
Preparing of Final Presentation Materials	December (one week)
Final Presentation	December 2018

## Child Safeguarding

In line with the UNCRC, APLE strives to keep children safe in all its undertakings. The successful applicant will be required to read, understand, and commit to abide by APLE Child Protection Policies and guidelines. The applicant will sign the policies to indicate an understanding of, and intention to follow the policy requirements. The methodologies used in this study, along with any additionally-hired team members, must abide by the universally acceptable standards for involving children in research.

## Required Experience and Qualifications

- Minimum of a masters degree in social work, sociology, anthropology, international development, or related field
- Minimum of five years conducting field research with children and/or vulnerable people groups
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Competent applicant must have experience in conducting child-focused research
- Technical knowledge and understanding of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Knowledge of the local area of research (geographical) desired
- Proven track record in qualitative and quantitative research
- Track record in conducting surveys and research on children's rights in Cambodia or GMS Region
- Understanding of and strong commitment to ethical research processes, including child protection and child safeguarding

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<sup>5</sup> While it is understood that analysis will be an ongoing process throughout each stage of the fieldwork, this phase of "comprehensive analysis" will review the cumulative findings of each stage of fieldwork and desk review to develop key themes and learnings . This will inform the draft report, which will be submitted to, and discussed with, the advisory group.