THE IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND COMMUNITY-BASED HEALING AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

Access to Justice and Remedies Project
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ecpat END Child Prostitution, Child Pornography & Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
CBHR	Community Based Healing and Recovery
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
DOJ	Department of Justice
GAD	Gender and Development
LCPC	Local Child Protection Council
OOC	Office of Cybercrime
PAO	Public Attorney's Office
PNP	Philippine National Police
PNP-DIDM	Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management
PNP-WCPD	Women and Children Protection Desk
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens Educational Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VAW	Violence Against Women
VGT	Virtual Global Task Force
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program

DEFINITION OF TERMS

"Child"	"Child" refers to a person below 18 years of age, or over but is unable to fully take care of himself/herself from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition (RA 9775).
"Child Victim/Survivor"	For purposes of this study, "Child Victim/Survivor" refers to children groomed by the perpetrator for his sexual gratification and exploitation. Generally speaking, these children are CSEC victims/survivors, the specific forms of which are online child sexual abuse and child sex tourism.
"Online Child Sexual Abuse"	In this study, "Online Child Sexual Abuse" refers to the act of engaging the child in real or actual sexual activities before a camera (hidden or otherwise) for the perpetrator's sexual gratification and exploitation.
"Psychosocial support"	In this study, "Psychosocial support" refers to the activities that enable the children victims/survivors of online child sexual abuse, and their families, to recover from their fears and other effects of the abuse.

i. INTRODUCTION

The **"Access to Justice and Remedies Project: Recovery and Reintegration for Child Victims/Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation"** seeks to empower and enable Filipino child victims of online sexual exploitation to access the criminal justice system, and claim their rights to recovery and reintegration services.

This project has two major goals:

1) First, is to identify, reach out and assist children victims/survivors of online child sexual exploitation.
2) Second, is to prevent online child sexual exploitation of children by educating communities, families and children on the impact of online sexual exploitation on children.

Concretely, the project hopes to accomplish the following:

1) Study and develop mechanisms and guidelines on how to identify and reach out to children survivors of online child sexual abuse.
2) Hold a consultation of stakeholders to present these guidelines to feed into a national protocol on the case management of children survivors of online child sexual abuse.
3) Establish a community-based recovery and reintegration program for children survivors of online child sexual abuse.
4) Lobby for the enactment of local ordinances protecting children survivors of online child sexual abuse.
5) Set up livelihood programs and provide psychosocial services for the parents and children survivors of online child sexual abuse.

This project is part of a larger tripartite research implemented simultaneously in three other countries, namely, Nepal, Thailand and Moldova. The research will gather data on access to justice and remedies of children victims/survivors of CSEC, specifically children victims of online child sexual abuse. Research in the Philippines is focused in Angeles City, which started on January 2015 to be completed on June 2016.

Project Background and Situationer

In 2013, ECPAT carried out a research study on **"The Scope and Magnitude of Online Sexual Abuse of Children in Highly Affected Areas in the Philippines."** Research from this study confirmed the widespread problem of online sexual exploitation of children happening in cybersex dens that operate in Internet cafés, private residences and commercial establishments around the country. Research focused on five geographical areas with reported incidence of online child sexual abuse—in the cities of Angeles and Taguig in Luzon; and in the city of Cebu, and the municipalities of Cordova and Dalaguete in the Visayas. Of the five areas selected for the 2013 study, Angeles City had the highest number of reported cases of online child sexual abuse. This present project picks up on the gains of the earlier ECPAT study (see section on ***Putting Lessons to Practice***), and warrants the selection of Angeles City as the current area of focus.

Figure 1 | **Angeles City, Pampanga location map**

The City of Angeles in the province of Pampanga is an important growth hub in the Central Luzon region. It houses industrial economic zones, which include the Clark Freeport Zone and Angeles City Industrial Estate. Once a major U.S. Military base, Angeles City is infamously known as a 'red light district'. Let alone the rampant prostitution and gambling in the area, multiple cases of cybersex have already been reported, and many cybersex operations had been raided by the police since 2004.

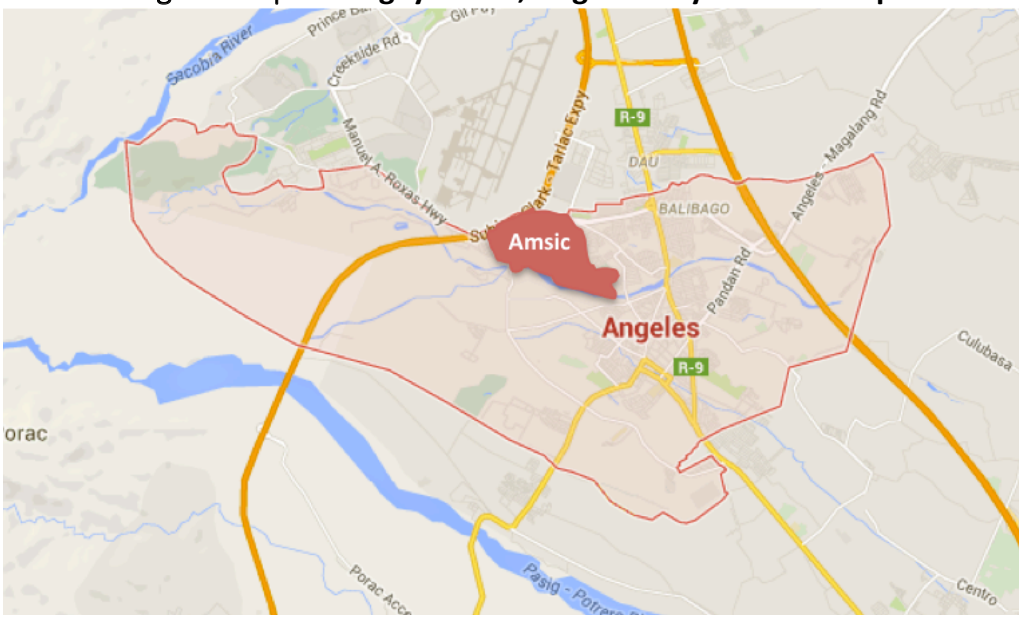
The local office of the Philippine National Police (PNP) admit they face numerous challenges when dealing with cases of sexual exploitation of children in Angeles City. They attribute this to the fact that the city is a major destination for leisure and amusement, where foreign and local tourists flock to experience and enjoy entertainment establishments like luxury hotels, casinos and bars. Many foreign pedophiles capitalize on such a scenario, disguising themselves as tourists and preying on innocent children in the city. Sometimes these pedophiles are assisted by Filipino cohorts in finding and exploiting their children victims.

Barangay Amsic in Angeles City

Barangay Amsic is one among 33 barangays in Angeles City. It has a population of 13,777 individuals and 2,971 households based on 2012 data. The female population is 8,765 while the male population is 5,012. There are 5,416 registered voters in the barangay as of 2016. The major source of income for the people in Barangay Amsic are wages earned from working in construction and factories.

Barangay Amsic is located three kilometers from the Poblacion and two kilometers from the National Highway. To its north is the Clark Air Base, and it is bounded by the barangays of Pampang, Anunas and Malabanas on the south, west and east, respectively. It is classified as urban with a total land area of 161,132 hectares, and land use is for purely residential purposes.

Figure 2 | **Barangay Amsic, Angeles City location map**



The barangay had been in existence since 1942 but was only officially recognized as a barangay of Angeles City in 1989, by virtue of Resolution No. 94-B-79 of the Sangguniang Panglungsod. Incidents such as mass evacuation during the Japanese times (1942), the anti-dissident

campaigns (1949), and failure to meet legal requirements led to the late recognition of the place believed to have been one of the early barrios known as Kuliat.

According to data provided by officials of Barangay Amsic, criminality in the barangay consist mostly of theft, physical injuries, damage to properties, threat, and oral defamation. For the case of children, crimes committed by boys include physical injuries (14), theft (5) and damage to property (2). Recorded offenses committed by girls involved physical injuries (8), theft (2) and damage to property (1).

A community highly at-risk

According to the PNP, certain **"red flags"** have been observed in Barangay Amsic, tagging the community as **"highly at-risk"** for online child sexual abuse. For one, the community is a favored hideout of wanted criminals and other lawless elements. Many foreigners also choose to live in the community because of the cheap rent and low cost of living. Some of these foreigners had already bought lands, built houses and established businesses in the locality.

Take the case of the perpetrator of online sexual abuse of 31 children documented in this study. He is a foreign national who has lived in the area for 10 years. He was able to invest in a frozen products business and owns apartments for rent. The perpetrator has his properties and businesses under the name and care of a Filipino caretaker, also living within the same community.

Box 1. Online Child Sexual Abuse by the Numbers

The Philippines is among the top ten countries with rampant cyber pornographic activities involving mostly boys and girls ages 10-14, according to Virtual Global Taskforce, a group of international agencies working against child pornography. The country's child pornography industry is apparently one of the biggest in the world, exceeding US$1 billion dollars a year.

A report by the Office of Cybercrime (OOC) of the Department of Justice confirm the alarming increase in the number of cases of abuse and exploitation of Filipino children online. Online pornography represent a significant percentage of cybercrimes committed in the country, with majority of the cases received by the OOC pertaining to child pornography.

The crime of child pornography became prevalent online following higher Internet usage in the Philippines as a result of the accessibility and affordability of Internet connection, and as it remains undeterred by existing government policy on cybercrime suppression, investigation and prosecution. Research and news reports reveal the growing number of parents cajoling their own children into cybersex with foreign clients in exchange for money.

According to Chief Superintendent Rodolfo Mendoza Jr., Deputy Director of the PNP-Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management, there are about 50 to 75 cybersex dens operating in the country today, accessible from anywhere around the world through chat rooms over the Internet. "Based on international impressions, the Philippines now ranks fourth, next to Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, as one of Asia's child prostitution centers," Mendoza said during a forum on "Building Alliances to Combat Child Pornography" sponsored by the United Nations Children's Educational Fund.

Putting lessons to practice

The context and implementation of this particular project drew heavily on the **findings and recommendations** of the 2013 study on **"The Scope and Magnitude of Online Sexual Abuse of Children in Highly Affected Areas in the Philippines."** Recommendations such as the conduct of information activities, provision of necessary legal and psychosocial support, capacity building, skills inventory and livelihood training, and strengthening interagency efforts and coordination at the local level, were all pursued and applied in this current project.

Information activities on online child sexual abuse were administered to the different sectors and agencies in Angeles City. Since January 2015, a total of 34 community education sessions were conducted and attended by sector leaders in the different barangays in Angeles City.

Necessary legal and psychosocial support were provided to 31 children who were identified as victims of online child sexual abuse in Barangay Amsic, Angeles City. Legal and psychosocial support include intake interviews, group counselling activities, financial assistance, and case follow-ups and referrals to local and international agencies concerned with the cases of the children victims. Other consultations, workshops and psychosocial activities were conducted, for both parents and children, to enable them to express their experiences without fear, guilt and shame in a safe and supportive environment.

For ***capacity-building*****,** ECPAT conducted a **"Training on Strengthening Investigation and Management of Child-Victims of Sexual Exploitation"** on August 20-21, 2015 in Angeles City, at the request of the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) of the PNP. The training was provided to 45 law enforcement officers, who expressed their need to understand the different laws regarding the protection of children. The training also helped the officers understand their limitations when pursuing cases and in the management of cases of victims of online child sexual abuse.

Skills inventory and livelihood training aims to equip parents and children so they could take advantage of income-generating opportunities and earn additional income for their families. Participating families prefer rag-making as their home-based livelihood program. This component of the project is in its early implementation stage at the time of the writing of this report.

Strengthening interagency efforts and coordination at the local level involved coordinating with the Office of the Mayor and Office of the Vice Mayor of Angeles City, and working closely with relevant local government and non-government offices. These institutions include the Social Welfare and Development office, the Gender and Development office, the Local Child Protection Council, other non-government organizations present in the locality, barangay officers and women and youth organizations in the community.

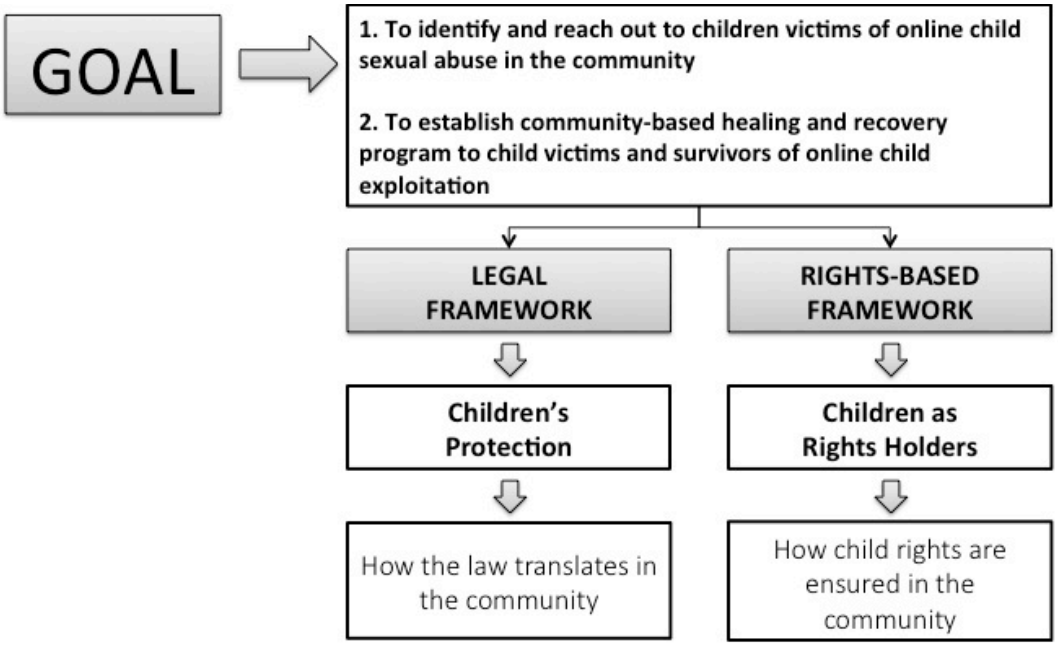
ii. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Adopting a Legal and Rights-based Framework

The issue of online child sexual abuse should be viewed on a different perspective and context in the community. Children must be treated as victims whose **rights had been violated**, and need to be **protected through legal remedies**. Victims and survivors of online child sexual abuse, as rights-based holders, should be able to claim their rights as children, while their families and other stakeholders in the community are enabled to protect their rights should these be violated.

This project adopts a framework firmly grounded on the rights of the child, and which is complementary to existing legislative instruments and policy for the protection of children. The overall direction and goal of this project is anchored on two approaches—the Legal Framework and the Rights-based Framework—which, in combination, govern the implementation of this project as a whole. Both frameworks lead the study in identifying children victims of online child sexual abuse in the community, and in the establishment of community-based healing and recovery program for victims and survivors of online child exploitation. The framework is focused on the protection of children's rights through effective implementation and monitoring of various laws on children in the communities.

Figure 3 | **Legal and Rights-based Framework**



The legal framework sets the foundation for examining the different laws on children, including international instruments and local policies, to prevent and mitigate online child sexual abuse. The rights-based framework requires a contextual understanding of how such laws are translated in the communities in order to protect and ensure the rights of children.

International instruments and Local Laws

1. **1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. This convention recognizes the need for protection of children against economic exploitation, from performing hazardous work or those harmful conditions that interfere with the child's education, physical health, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and further recognizes the need to prevent abduction, sale or traffic in children for any purpose.

   Article 34 of the UN CRC: On Sexual Exploitation. The child is entitled to protection, from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including prostitution, and pornography.

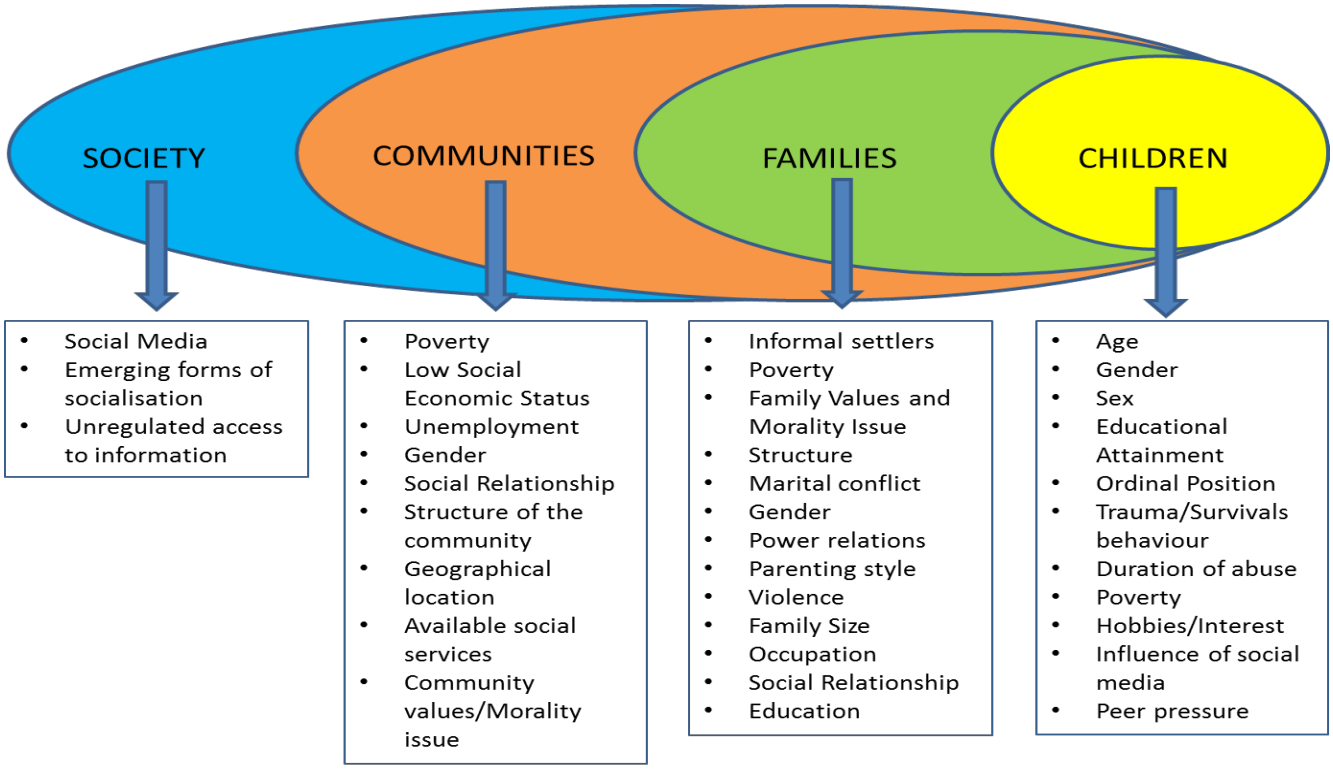
   2nd UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. The Protocol prohibits the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and creates obligations to criminalize and punish activities related to these offenses. Child victims must be supported with necessary medical, psychological, logistical and financial support to aid their rehabilitation and integration.
2. **RA 7610 –** Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act. This law provides measures for the protection of children from abuse, exploitation and discrimination.
3. **RA 9775 –** An Act Defining and Penalizing the Crime of Child Pornography, prescribing penalties thereof and for other purposes.
4. **RA 10175 –** Anti Cyber Crime Law. An Act defining Cybercrime providing for the prevention, investigation, suppression and the imposition of penalties thereof and for other purposes.
5. **RA 9208 –** Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. It established policies to eliminate trafficking in persons especially women and children.
6. **RA 10364 –** Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012. It amends the lists of acts considered as promoting human trafficking, such as destroying or tampering with evidence, influencing witnesses in an investigation, using public office to impede an investigation or execute lawful order, and increases funding for government agencies involved in the fight against human trafficking.

7. **RA 9262 –** Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act. It protects women and their children from physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and economic abuses.
8. **RA 9231 –** Anti-Child Labor Law. It provides for stronger measures to protect working children, amending RA 7610 or the Child Protection Act of 1992 and RA 7658 or the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act. This law has taken into consideration the provisions and standards of the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (ILO Convention No. 182).

Taking an Ecological Approach

The **Ecological Approach** views the **child** in the context of his/her **family** (micro-environment), and his/her immediate **community** and the larger **society** (macro-environment). This approach also examines the dynamic interactions occuring between the child and these institutional, social and geographic contexts. Using an ecological approach helps to understand the gaps within these contexts and interrelationships, and pinpoint where children's rights are not respected and promoted.

Figure 4 | **Contexts and Risk Factors of Online Child Sexual Abuse**



The intention of taking an ecological approach is to see the child in different environments, and in the process identify both the **risk factors** and **potential protective factors** for online child sexual abuse. The identification of these factors in the victimization of children revealed key strategies and approaches for implementing an effective intervention program for victims and survivors of online child sexual abuse. The stories and experiences of the children collected through this project provided a wealth of insight on children's everyday circumstances in both their micro- and macro-environments.

Risk factors at the child, family, community and society level

A number of risk factors for online child sexual abuse surfaced in the contextual analysis, whether it was at the level of the individual child, the child's family, community or the society in general.

At the child level, parents who were interviewed said there were observable **changes in the children's behavior** once they were identified as victims. The parents mentioned that the children used to always come home late at night, bearing with them new things such as shoes, bikes or cell phones. Often, their children would have the money to buy food and even play games at the Internet shop. But, when the children found out that the house of the abuser was raided, they no longer wanted to step out of the house, and what's more, the children became

anxious and restless. The entire community was in panic as the barangay, media and law enforcement officers started looking for the children who were suspected victims of the abuser.

Another risk factor is **gender**, or their socialization pattern at home and in the family, including the ascribed roles imposed by society. All the identified victims were boys, except for one girl but with a gender/sexual orientation of a boy. As boys and survivors of online child sexual exploitation, it was difficult for them to disclose about the abuse. Young as they are, they are still males who, in our society, are disinclined to admit they fell victim to any form of abuse.

The **educational level** of the children affecting their **survival behaviors**, and their **ordinal position in the family** are also noted as risk factors. The children are mostly of school-going age, and have fears of being identified as victims of online child sexual abuse in the school community. This also explains why they would rather keep the abuse to themselves, unless otherwise forced by circumstances to disclose. Most of the children belong to families with **large family size**, which is highly associated with **poverty**. Most of these families are informal settlers, where the parents have no fixed or regular sources of income. Poverty is viewed as one of the reasons why many of the children fell prey to the perpetrator, because of the financial gains they receive from engaging in the activity either once or multiple times.

Other risk factors at the individual child level are **duration of the abuse**, **exposure to various forms of social media** and **peer pressure**. Some of the victims go to the perpetrator's house together in groups, and afterwards count together the money they received. They spend it on food, drinks and for playing games in Internet shops together with their peers.

At the level of the family, the risks factors identified include **poverty**, being informal settlers in the community, **family values**, and **family structure**. Many of the families are headed by a single parent, while some families have complicated family structures, with a stepfather, stepmother, stepsiblings, or even stepfamilies, wherein parenting styles of the stepparents may include violence or other forms of abuse. Most of the families have large family size, with four to eight children in a single family. **Poverty** and the poor economic situation of the children and their families are harsh realities that pushed a lot of the children to return again and again to the house of the perpetrator despite the knowledge that *"it is wrong"* and *"it is bad"*.

In the community, the risk factors seen include **poverty**, **low social and economic status**, **gender**, **community structure** and **community values**. Most of the children victims belong to poor families whose parents work as vendor, security guard, caregiver, manicurist, massagist, or who turn to other informal ways of augmenting their family income. For most families, it is the women who work to sustain the family's upkeep. The complexion of the community is also such

that there had been reported cases of crimes and presence of lawless elements. There are limitations in the quality and extent of social services provided to children victims of online sexual abuse.

On the society level, risk factors include the **emerging forms of socialization**, and **unregulated access to information** through various forms of **social media**. Developments in the various forms of social media have influenced changes in the children's communication formats, from face-to-face communication, to texting using mobile phones, to conversations inside online chatrooms. Unregulated access to information is apparent through easy access to the Internet, where children find plenty of unguided information, or forge relationships through virtual communities.

Group dynamics and behavior of children and parents

Taking an ecological approach, the study examined the dynamic interactions occurring between and among the children victims and their parents. The activities in this project provided various opportunities to observe and contextualize how each individual's behavior and actions are influenced by particular social groups within the community.

Observing how the children behaved in group settings, the project staff recognized certain **"grouping" tendencies** among the children. For example, during the conduct of interview sessions and psychosocial activities, children grouped together by **age**, **gender**, **educational level**, or if they have **common hobbies** like playing basketball. The children had to be grouped

together with their peers or “kabarkada” usually with the same ages, or those who went “with their groups” in going to the house of the perpetrator. These children came in groups or in batches of two to three boys when going to the house of the perpetrator.

In terms of age, those in late childhood (ages 13 to 17) will not join in activities with middle childhood children (ages 6 to 12). Older children do not want to discuss their experience of abuse with younger children. High school students will not mingle with those from the elementary level. At times, younger children are bullied by older children.

Grouping tendencies among children were apparent as a child will easily identify other children victims belonging to his own group or “barkada”. But, the children do not want to be identified with other children outside of their own group or “barkada” even if they recognize the other children victims from their own community.

In like manner, certain “groupings” and “alliances” emerged among the parents of children victims. Apparently, the parents also have their own **“safe groups”** in the community where they feel comfortable and at ease to share their experiences, ideas and needs.

A deeper understanding of the factors and dynamics prevailing within the micro- and macro-environment contexts examined through this project shed light on key strategies and approaches that may be useful when implementing intervention programs for victims and survivors of online child sexual abuse. The ecological approach pointed to practical ways for engaging with victims and their families, and encouraging community participation in programs for healing and recovery from online sexual abuse.

Methods for Data Collection

Methods used to gather data combined both **micro and macro approaches**, through personal interviews with children and their parents, and using group discussions and group workshop activities, respectively.

Face-to-face **intake interviews** were conducted for the children and their parents. The intake interview questionnaire asked for basic information about the child and the family, the present problem of the child, and background history of the problem presented. The objective of the intake interview is to be able to come up with an initial profile and assessment of the current functioning of the child.

The intake interviews were done in batches and were held in a safe venue outside the community, where the children and their parents can talk for the first time about the abuse as a family, without fear of being identified or talked about in the community. There were at least six batches of children, each group consisting of four to six children, who were interviewed for the first time and disclosed their stories in the presence of their parents or guardians.

A second method used an **interview tool**, which enriched and deepened further the data gathered through the intake interviews. The tool was administered to both parents and their children, with questions focused on the child's victimization, dynamics of family relationship, gender arrangements, interactional patterns and parenting styles. The tool also delved a little on the child's perception about the abuse, survival behaviors and recommendations concerning his victimization.

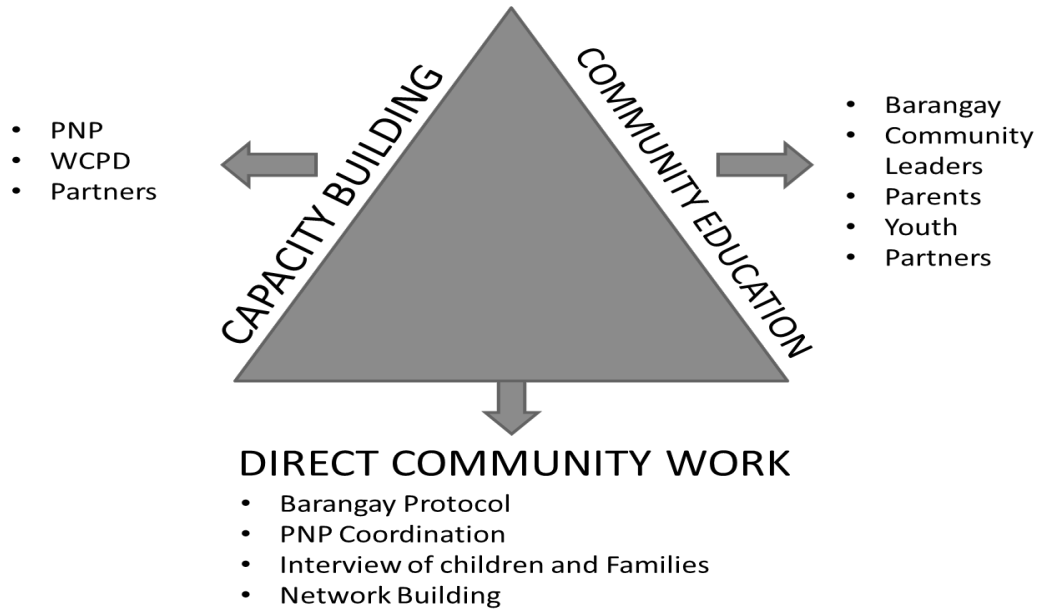
The final method involved the organization of a joint **psychosocial cum workshop activity** for all the 31 children and some of the parents who were available to attend the two-day activity. **Focus group discussions** were conducted during the workshop to enable the children and the parents to loosen up, relax and let up on their feelings about the abuse.

PART ONE |
IDENTIFYING VICTIMS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Thirty-one children survivors/victims of online child sexual abuse in Angeles City have been identified and interviewed in this project. Most were residents of *Barangay Amsic*, while three of the children were from nearby *Barangay Anunas*.

A **triangular approach**—applying the three strategies of **direct community work**, **capacity building** and **community education**—was used in identifying children victims of online child sexual abuse in the community.

Figure 5 | **The Triangular Approach**



First, the project staff used **direct community work** to identify victims of online child sexual abuse. With initial assistance from PNP officers, and later on the barangay officials, who accompanied the project staff, they were able to locate, make contact and interview parents and children victims of the online child sexual abuse case in Barangay Amsic.

Simultaneous with direct community work, project staff also provided **capacity building** to 45 officers of the PNP and the WCPD in Angeles City. These local law enforcement officials requested to be oriented on the laws on children, particularly RA 9775 or the Anti Child Pornography Law.

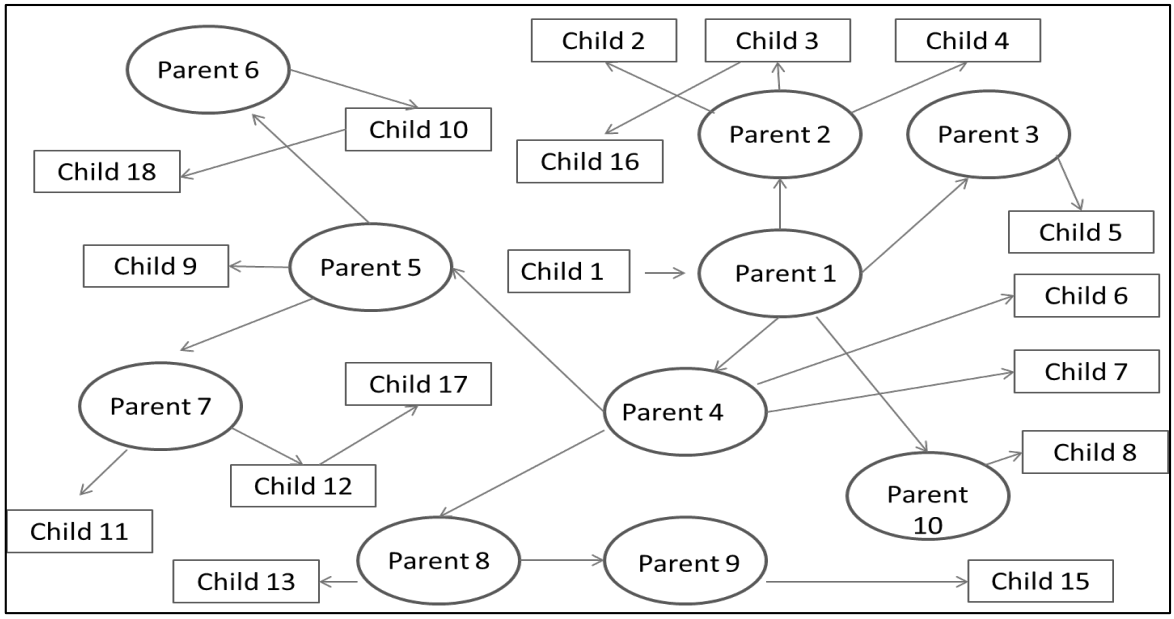
A series of **community education** activities on the issue of child pornography were conducted among barangay officials and community leaders in Angeles City. Through this series of activities, concerned members of the communities were informed about the occurrence of online child sexual abuse. It is through these community education sessions, particularly during the open forum, when participants admitted they were aware of some cases of online child sexual abuse in their communities. However, they were reluctant or afraid to disclose the identities of the victim/s and the perpetrator.

Direct community work, which involved personally interviewing the children victims and their parents, proved to be the most effective among the three strategies employed in the triangular approach. The conduct of face-to-face interviews helped to gain the trust of the children and their parents, as well as other members of the community who were aware of the issue.

Upon learning about the interview of one child victim, parents of other children victims approached the Angeles City PNP-WCPD. These parents volunteered to be interviewed and offered information regarding the incident. Conversations with one set of parents led to the identification of other parents whose children were also victimized by the same perpetrator. The same pattern emerged for the children victims interviewed, resulting in a kind of **"domino effect"**. Each child interviewed identified other children whom they knew were also victims of online child sexual abuse.

Using the direct community approach brought to fore a total of 31 children victims in the community. When mapped out, this pattern of identification appeared like a **web** for which it was called, **"The Identification Web"**. Figure 6 below clearly shows that in a community, it is conceivable to identify victims of abuse through **"child to child"** and **"parent to parent"** direct community work.

Figure 6 | **The Identification Web**



Had it not been for this project, local authorities were not aware, and were even surprised to learn, that many of its children population had been victimized by the same perpetrator for many years. If any, barangay officials knew of only a handful of children who were victims of online sexual abuse by the perpetrator. Many other children victims had not disclosed their identity to the barangay, according to some of the parents and children reached through this project.

Aside from the children, parents and local officials approached by the project staff, other concerned members of the community served as reliable sources of information for identifying and reaching out to the children victims. These include construction workers and a computer repair man who has worked in the house of the perpetrator, as well as the children's peers or "barkada" in school and in the community.

Profile of Children Victims

The process of identifying children victims of online sexual exploitation in Angeles City took place over several months. Repeated incidents of online child sexual abuse by a single perpetrator and involving 31 children victims was documented during this process. From the findings of the study, we were able to build a profile of children victims of online sexual abuse.

Majority of children victims are currently in their late childhood, from 13 to 17 years old, but most were victimized when they were younger, between 6 to 12 years old. All of the children victims are of school-going age, 16 children are in elementary and 14 are attending high school. Only one victim is currently out of school.

Current Age

Early Childhood (0 to 5 years old)	Middle Childhood (6 to 12 years old)	Late Childhood (13 to 17 years old)	TOTAL
0	**9**	**22**	**31**

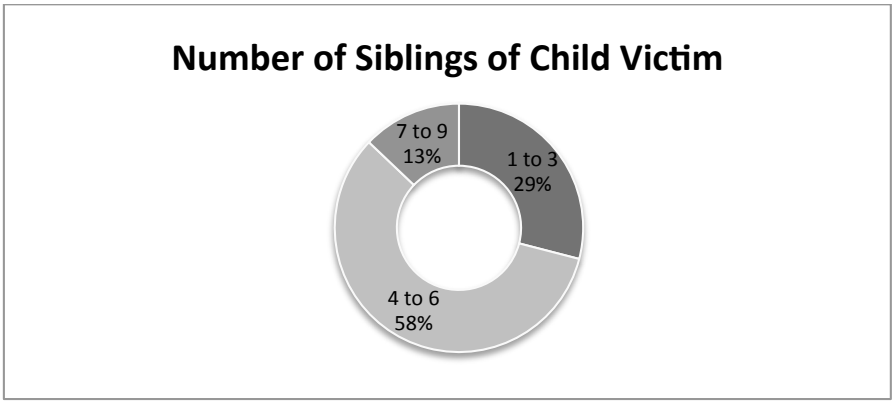
Age of Victimization

Early Childhood (0 to 5 years old)	Middle Childhood (6 to 12 years old)	Late Childhood (13 to 17 years old)	TOTAL
1	**20**	**10**	**31**

Education

Out of School	Elementary	High School	TOTAL
1	**16**	**14**	**31**

Nearly all victims were boys, except for 1 girl, but with a gender orientation of a boy. Majority of the children victims also came from large families, with over 70% having four or more siblings.



The incidence of online sexual abuse happened repeatedly for all, except one victim. Sixteen children experienced abuse between 2 to 5 times, while 14 victims were abused more than 6 times.

Child Porn Victim Fear Continuum

The behaviour of the 31 children survivors of online child sexual abuse unveiled a lot of emotions that need to be processed, either individually or in groups, through counselling and other psychosocial activities. Foremost of this emotion is **fear** which is continuing and becoming more intense as the child confronts the enduring effects of his victimization.

Fear, guilt, and shame were feelings expressed by the victims of online child sexual abuse. According to the children, they were all afraid and apprehensive at first to go to the house of the perpetrator. They were offered gifts such as chocolates, food, money and other forms of "grooming" to entice them to go to the perpetrator's house. The children decided to come in groups and invited other members of their "barkada" to go with them. The perpetrator also encouraged them to invite more of their friends to come to his house.

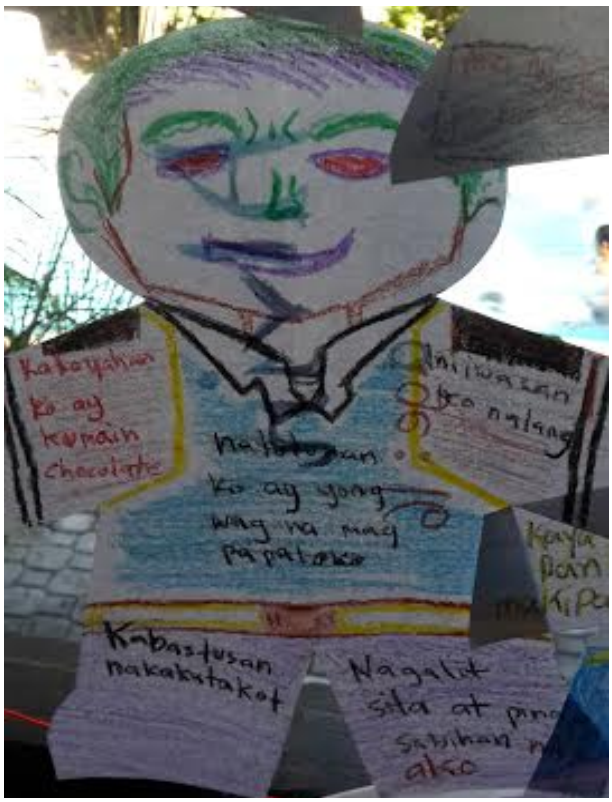
Over time, the children became more comfortable going to the perpetrator's house. Some were even brave enough to come alone to see the perpetrator. In particular, there were those whom the children referred to as the perpetrator's "favorite", who would receive more gifts like cell phones, bikes, shoes, basketball and money.

Still, feelings of fear and shame persisted among the children victims who were abused by the perpetrator repeatedly and for a considerable period, like 1 to 2 years. Fear gripped their whole

being each time the perpetrator closed and locked the door at the back of his house, or when they see the perpetrator's gun at the sala and on his bed. According to the children there were CCTV cameras at the sala and in the comfort room, where they take a bath naked before going to the bedroom of the perpetrator, where another CCTV camera was installed. The children feared for their lives that they may not come out of that house alive.

The children's fears intensified when news spread that the house of the perpetrator was raided. The children were in panic realizing that, ultimately, they would have to disclose that they were victims of the perpetrator. At this point, mishandling of victims' disclosure about the abuse could bring more harm to the children.

Children victims feared that they would be identified after the raid and they were ashamed that they would be known in the community as victims of the perpetrator. They feared that they might be bullied in school, if their classmates would find out they had difficulty urinating in school comfort rooms. They were ashamed that their girlfriends would learn about the abuse, and that they may be infected with STD. They did not want their pictures to be seen on child pornography sites in the Internet.



There is a **"culture of fear and shame"** in reporting the abuse to the authorities. They feared that the DSWD or barangay will take them, or that their membership to the 4Ps program will be cancelled, or that their parents will be put to jail for not being able to protect them. They feared

that their parents will learn about the abuse and they feared what their parents might do to them because of this. They feared that the media, barangay and police are looking for them to gather information about the incident.

What the children have to say…

1. *"Nakakahiya man pong aminin pera pera lang po talaga"*
   (It may sound shameful, but it is really all for the money.)
2. *"Masarap kasi laging may pera at pagkain."*
   (It is good because you always had money.).
3. *"Nakakahiya pag nalaman ng girlfriend ko"*
   (I will be ashamed if my girlfriend will know about this.)
4. *"Binaboy po ako.. siya lang ang nakagawa sa akin non"*
   (I was treated like an animal… he was the only one who did that to me.)
5. *"Nakakatakot kasi baka hindi na ako makalabas ng buhay sa bahay na yon"*
   (I was afraid that I may not be able to come out alive in that house.)
6. *"sabi ko sa mama ko, nangalakal ako kaya ako may pera"*
   (I told my mother that I picked up garbage.. that is why I have money.)
7. *"Pag asa CR ako sa school, di ako sumasabay sa marami kasi baka mahalata nila na matagal at hirap akong maihi"*
   (When I am at the comfort room of the school, I do not join the other boys because they might notice that I am staying quite long and had difficulty urinating.)
8. *"Pinangbibili ko ng pagkain ng aking mga kaibigan at kinicomputer ko ang pera na galing sa foreigner"*
   (I bought food for me and my friends and we go to the computer shops to play games together with the money the foreigner gave me.)
9. *"takot po ako na baka malaman ng tatay ko"*
   (I am afraid that my father may learn about this.)
10. *"Takot na takot ako nung makita sa TV ang raid kasi baka kunin ako ng dswd o ng barangay"*
    (I was afraid when I saw at the TV that the foreigner's house was raided because I might be taken by the DSWD or the barangay.)
11. *"Sana po di na pagusapan ang tungkol sa nangyari"*
    (I wish that people will stop talking about the incident.)
12. *"tulungan na lang sana kami makalimutan ang nangyari at mamuhay ng normal"*
    (I wish that people will help us forget the incident and help us live normal lives again.)

Opening up about the abuse

The child victim's realization that online child sexual abuse is a crime, and the value a child places on this form of abuse differs from child to child. When interviewing the children, the project staff took caution in discerning the children's perception of the abuse, capturing their sentiments, and accepting their difficulty in disclosing about their experience of abuse.

Specifically, a child's **gender** and **age** influenced how they responded to the interviews. Bigger and older children were ashamed to talk about their experiences with the younger children listening in. They do not participate actively in the activities and, instead, would bully the younger boys.

Majority of the children victims were also boys who, understably so, had difficulty disclosing about the abuse because of their "male socialization" at home and in the community. The lone girl victim, who is a lesbian, could not say much about what the perpetrator did to her. The perpetrator is a gay foreigner who put lipstick on his lips as he kissed and embraced the children, which made it more difficult for the lesbian survivor to speak about the abuse. In such cases, it is helpful for children victims to have some psychosocial activities for them to loosen up and be at ease when discussing about the abuse.

Family and Community Values

In the course of project implementation, the project team observed certain family and community values regarded by the children and the community, where the case of online sexual abuse occurred. These concepts and perspectives form part and parcel of understanding, identifying and reaching out to children victims of online child sexual abuse. Victims' perceptions and understanding of their **"community"** matters in terms of their willingness to seek help regarding their victimization. The project staff exerted great effort in observing these perceptions, motivations, values and dynamics among the children victims, among the parents and the community as a whole. Observing these values is necessary so the project staff could fully understand the issues as well as identify the gaps in the implementation of the law in the community.

At the onset, it was evident that **safeguarding the children and family identity** is a **community value** and a *personal trust of the children and the family to the service provider*. The study took extra care in handling the issue of **"safety and security"** of the children since all reside in one community. News can easily spread within a small community and the identity of the children

and their security would be compromised. Even the provisions of care and support for the children and their families were done very discreetly and with much consideration for the **"trust"** the children gave to the workers.

When the news broke out, the **responses of the parents and the barangay were varied**. Four of the parents filed cases against the perpetrator, either alone or jointly with other parents. Twenty-seven (27) of the identified victims and their families preferred to remain silent for varied reasons such as fear, shame, guilt, lack of awareness on the issue, lack of knowledge on where to ask for help or lack of trust in authorities. Naturally, the parents also want to protect the identity of their children and their families.

Some parents expected immediate positive outcomes after they had reported the case, and were discouraged by the unavailability of programs and services for the children victims in the community. Some of the parents transferred residences and the schools of their children. Others allegedly received money from the perpetrator in exchange for not filing a case against him.

A conspiracy of silence

Upon learning that the perpetrator's house was raided and when the news was broadcast in the media, many of the parents **became aware of the possibility** that their children could have been victims of online child sexual abuse, since they knew and consented to their children frequenting the house of the perpetrator.

The perpetrator lived in the community for 10 years, and all this time the children were seen going in and out of the foreigner's house, either in groups or alone. But it seems no one from the parents or from the barangay had ever asked the foreigner regarding the activities of the children in his house. Some parents had a **"complacent attitude"** and **did not take the matter seriously**, despite awareness of their children going to the house of the perpetrator a number of times.

Some of the parents approached barangay officials for help, but most kept silent about the abuse of their children. They feared that their children will be brought to the local DSWD office, or they will be put behind bars for not being able to protect their children. They were also afraid that their membership to the 4Ps program of the local DSWD will be cancelled.

The parents and the children who came forward about the abuse claimed that if a deeper and more exhaustive investigation was conducted, more children will be identified in the barangay since the perpetrator had lived in the community for 10 years. But with the majority of children and their parents opting to **remain silent and refusing to seek help**, the provisions and protocol

of RA 9775 for helping children victims/survivors of online child sexual abuse was not put to use. Local structures in the community, as provided by the law, were not able to protect the children and their parents, nor seek justice for them.

A **“conspiracy of silence”** about the incident persisted among the children and parents in the community.

FOCUS NOTE #1

Guidelines in Identifying and Reaching out to Children Victims of Online Child Sexual Abuse

1. **Detection and identification of children victims – gender, language and age considerations**

   Service providers should be equipped with skills in handling disclosures of boys and girls who are victims of online child sexual abuse. It is recommended that male and female service providers receive capacity building and skills training on gender orientation, including handling of gay and lesbian children victims of online child sexual abuse. The use of appropriate, empathetic and non-offensive language is also important to facilitate easy communication, connection and trust with the children. It is beneficial to group children with their peers, or other members of their "barkada" so they would be comfortable in discussing the issues. Grouping the children of similar ages is an enabling factor for the children to disclose their victimization. Activities during the detection and identification stages should be designed to fit to the ages of the children.

2. **Initial contact with the child victim**

   Children in the communities are "unwilling clients" and they do not self-refer themselves. The first contact with the child victim should not be focused on the details of the abuse. Rather, the initial conversation should focus on the child's needs, behavior and other practical concerns such as assessment of the child's safety, need for medical or legal assistance, or for a support system in the family or service providing agencies.

3. **Interview, case documentation and home visitation**

   Victims of online child sexual abuse expressed that they do not want to repeatedly discuss their abuse with different agencies. What they would like is for the perpetrator to be put to jail. Mechanisms for **one time interview and case documentation** must be put in place. The conduct of home visitation to solicit further information on the child's case should be done discreetly and should not put the child's identity and safety at risk. Extra caution must be taken to protect confidentiality particularly in community settings where news can spread quickly to other members of the community.

4. Conduct of psychosocial, play and recreational activities

Psychosocial activities are very important in helping children feel comfortable and at ease with the service providers and other participants in the activity. Play and other recreational activities may precede or conclude the sessions held with victims of online child sexual abuse. These activities lighten the feelings of the children and parents, and help to establish the trust and relationships of the children with the service providers.

Children should not be forced to talk if they are not prepared to disclose about their experience of abuse. The psychosocial activities should impress upon the children victims that they have the right to enjoy their childhood and live normal lives beyond the abuse.

As the children are able to freely discuss their experiences with the service providers, psychosocial activities also help to calm and pacify them after the disclosure.

5. Consultations with parents

Consultation activities with parents of children victims enable not only the parents but also their children to understand the intricacies and legal aspects of online child sexual abuse. These should be taken as opportunities to advise parents on how to handle their children, by understanding how they had been affected by the abuse, and how to make informed decisions on behalf of their children who had been victimized. The consultations also serve to deepen the trust of the parents and children to the service providers, and further enhance relationships that would support children survivors of online child sexual abuse.

6. Awareness of the issue of online child sexual abuse and recognizing red flags in the community

Discussion sessions on the issue of online child sexual abuse should focus on creating awareness about the issue, as well as informing the parents and their children about possible “red flags” that renders a community to be at “high risk for online child sexual abuse”. Some of these red flags include: grooming activities of a foreigner, such as giving money, food, bike and other material things to the children; making donations to the school for the construction of the fences; presence of lawless elements in the city; preference of foreigners to live in the area, etc.

PART TWO |
COMMUNITY-BASED HEALING AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

The issue of online child sexual abuse can be seen on a different perspective and context in the community. In this context, the **children are treated as victims** whose **rights had been violated**, and **has to be protected (legal remedies)**. The guilt and blame of being victimized should not be placed upon the children but to the abuser and other factors in the macro-environment—access to the Internet, poverty, including the pervading changes in family and community values that send mixed and confusing messages to the children. The children are victims of human and structural errors and should not be held liable, but instead should be the ones to demand for accountability.

As service providers, there is a need to integrate this new perspective on the issue of online child sexual abuse in order to identify who should be main actors for instituting changes and reform. There is a need to engage the community, as a whole, to install corrective measures to help children heal and recover from the abuse. This is the general direction of the Community-Based Healing and Recovery (CBHR) Program.

The CBHR Program was conceptualized out of the actual predicament, need and experiences of the 31 children identified as victims of online child sexual abuse in Barangay Amsic, Angeles City. With the **community as the site and the context of victimization**, the security and identity of the children and their families became the overarching consideration in the development of the CBHR program.

The process of developing this particular CBHR program gave rise to new perspectives and understanding of the intricacies of healing and recovery for children victims of online child sexual abuse. It illustrates the **stages, elements and the dynamics of abuse** experienced by children. It emphasizes on a need to provide programs, services and activities for children victims even prior to their identification or reporting of their cases to the authorities. It asserts that any effective CBHR program should be able to holistically respond to the distinctive healing and recovery needs of the children victims.

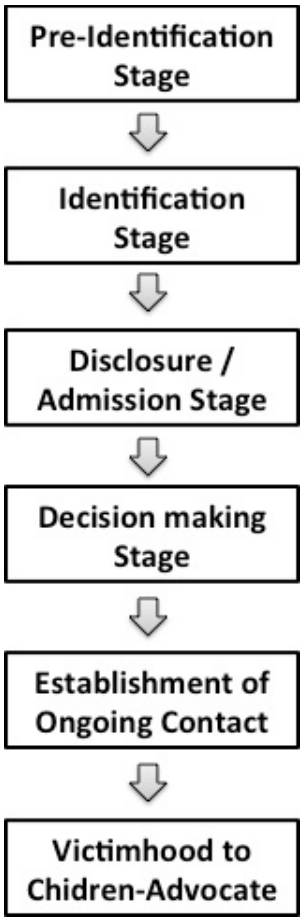
The CBHR will work on **four (4) pathways to healing and recovery** namely, **prevention, prosecution, provision and promotion of children rights**. Orientation on childrens' rights and various laws on children, and dissemination of information materials on online child sexual abuse will be conducted for the promotion of children's rights. Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities seek to prevent the occurrence of the abuse in the community, while safeguarding the most essential element of CBHR—seeking justice. Justice, as an element of children victims' healing and recovery, include various forms of legal assistance such as legal information, assistance in filing cases, case referrals, accompaniment in court and relevant agencies, etc. Other programs and services to be provided to children victims under CBHR include assistance in the education of the children, conduct of psychosocial and other therapeutic activities, livelihood, transportation and medical services.

In the main, the CBHR program shall consist of different programs, services, approaches and strategies that will ensure children victims of online child sexual abuse are able to live normal lives. It shall also function as a network of support agencies and stakeholders that creates a supportive environment in the community, so children could return to effective social functioning without fear, shame and discrimination for their experiences of abuse.

Stages in the implementation of the CBHR

Examining the context and dynamics of online child sexual abuse in the community helped to demonstrate the continuum of effects of the abuse on children victims. Guided by this understanding, the CBHR model was conceptualized to start the healing and the recovery process even in the early stages of the abuse, by reaching out to children and their families discreetly. Unlike other programs where intervention starts after reporting the case, the CBHR takes a more proactive stand in its approach.

Figure 7 | **Stages in CBHR implementation**



There are **six (6) stages or phases in the healing and recovery program**. It starts with the pre-identification phase where fear and other effects of the abuse are manifested in the behaviour of the children at home or in the school, and ends in the development of the child victim from victimhood to survivors and then to becoming a child advocate. The principles of confidentiality, issues of trust, protection of children and ensuring their safety in the community are also principal concerns in all stages of CBHR implementation.

1 | **Pre-Identification Stage**

The CBHR program will use the **Triangular Approach** by conducting three (3) simultaneous activities in the pre-identification phase—**community-education**, **capacity-building** and **direct community work**—when identifying children victims of online child sexual abuse. Community education sessions will be conducted among the youth, parents, barangay leaders and other stakeholders in the community. The content of the community education program shall focus on the issue of child pornography and its different forms, possible red flags in the community, and the law on child pornography. **Community education** sessions shall provide for an open forum wherein participants can ask questions about child pornography, and where to report suspected cases should they encounter it in their community.

The **direct community approach** is the more rigorous approach as service providers engage in direct, face-to-face interaction with the children and parents in the community. Simultaneous with these awareness-raising activities is the conduct of capacity-building. **Capacity-building** support will be directed to police personnel, social workers and other service providers, barangay officials and community leaders, and other stakeholders in the community, including women and youth groups.

In this pre-identification stage, the children are, essentially, already provided with services through consciousness-raising, education and campaign on child pornography. The children, their parents and the rest of the community are oriented on the issue, and provided information on where they could seek help, what services are being provided for victims, and how these services can be accessed.

2 | **Identification Stage**

The circumstances of how the children were identified as victims of online sexual abuse will matter in the way each child is handled, especially in the conduct of case management and provision of services. The manner at which the child has to be dealt with will vary with each particular case, such as during interviews and case documentation, and when providing support services for the child and his family.

For example the child who was identified through a report from a neighbor would require further assessment and verification. How to do this without compromising the identity and security of the child victim has to be done very carefully so as not to cause any more fear and harm on the child. A child who was identified by another victim as they were together during the abuse, or who was identified through one of the parents of another child victim, or a child who was identified during a police raid, will all have to be dealt with in different ways.

Process-wise, psychosocial activities were found effective in building the trust of the children and their parents, and in helping the children feel more comfortable and at ease to share their experiences of abuse. Parents and guardians must be interviewed in a safe environment for purposes of confidentiality and to ensure the safety of their children and families. It is possible to capitalize on a child's membership to a "barkada" or peer group with other children of similar interests, ages or gender. Children who were found to belong to certain groups will be more comfortable in disclosing or expressing themselves among their peers. This **grouping approach** enhances children victims' participation in group sessions or activities.

The value of **trust** is crucial in the identification phase. It will significantly impact the continuation of the child to the next level of the CBHR program. In this particular stage, it is important to allow the child to freely provide information regarding the abuse in his or her own pace and level of comfortability. A child victim's first interview in the identification phase must be brief and, if possible, should not be focused on the details of the abuse.

3 | **Disclosure/Admission Stage**

This is considered the **surrender stage** when children admit their "victimization" to their parents, or other individuals that they trust enough to disclose their story. In the identification stage, the children still have the liberty to deny the abuse or pretend it is not true. In the disclosure stage, however, the children take the risk to reveal what happened and accept whatever people might think of their victimization.

One thing though, the parents find out later that some of the things disclosed to them by their children were not consistent with what they told the police investigator or the social workers. It seems apparent that the children also filter the information they tell their parents and the service providers who interview them.

The disclosure stage is a period of reflection and remorse for children victims. Their disclosure solicit diverse reactions and responses from their parents. Punitive responses are common. Oftentimes, they are no longer allowed to go out at night, or are barred from meeting their friends. Sometimes, their disclosure lead to lead to victim-blaming, or worse, violence.

The parents said they tried to be caring and understanding towards their children during this stage so that the children will not be disconcerted when telling their stories. Most of the children disclosed about the abuse "to their mothers first", and then the mothers were the ones who informed their husbands and other children.

Psychosocial activities are helpful at this point, to enable both the children and their parents to accept the truths about the victimization. Openness and acceptance of the children's disclosure

lead to careful consideration of risks and other factors, which would guide the victims' families in making informed decisions about the abuse.

4 | **Decision-Making Stage**

This is the **crossroads stage** in CBHR, and one that will define the choice of **response** and the point of **intervention** for healing and recovery of the children and the family. There are two possible recourse for the family to take—one is to keep silent about the abuse and treat it as a family secret, while the alternative is to report the abuse to authorities.

Of the 31 children identified, four (4) of these cases have been reported to authorities, including the DSWD, barangay, police and Public Attorney's Office (PAO). The remainder chose to keep silent about the abuse, keeping it "within the family" or otherwise known as the **"close book decision"**. Either way, the family takes a strong position for the children to remain quiet and discreet after their victimization.

However, it is very important to listen to the children's voices at this stage, to understand their perception of the abuse and the way they would like to deal with their victimization. Activities for the children should enable them to speak, freely and without fear, about the abuse and their victimization, whether they decide to seek legal support or other forms of intervention.

5 | **Establishment of Ongoing Contact**

The decision-making stage opens possibilities for children to be able to communicate about their experience of abuse, and recognize the responses and actions that can be taken by their families. At this point, the need to be physically and emotionally present with the child is very important as the child reflects back at his experience of abuse. There is a need to establish ongoing contact, provide guidance and continuous care and affirmation, to assure the child that he has a strong support system during this difficult moment in his life. The service provider should maintain contact with the child and his family and, from time to time, engage the child in psychosocial activities preferably held outside the community.

For children victims who did not seek legal action, follow-up visits at home should be conducted (with the consent of the children and their parents) without compromising the safety, security and identity of the children and the families in the community.

For children who sought help, it is important to inform them of the intricacies of the legal process and to avoid giving false hopes to the children and parents. They should be engaged in all stages of the intervention, such as in the filing of cases against the perpetrator, following up on the status of their cases, and in the preparation of case documents.

6 | **Development of Children Victims to Children Advocates**

The ultimate goal of the CBHR is to enable the children **victims** of online child sexual abuse to recover from the abuse and become **survivors**. The children themselves define being "survivors" as being "socially functional and living normal lives in the community without fear, shame and discrimination." From being a victim of abuse, to a survivor of abuse, children will be encouraged to become **child rights advocates**. As children advocates, they can join activities that promote children's rights and help other children who may also be at risk of becoming victims of online child sexual abuse.

Elements of the Community-Based Healing and Recovery Program

The **effects** of the abuse and the **needs** expressed by the children to be able to heal and recover from the abuse generally shaped the nature, objectives and elements of the CBHR program.

What we found to be essential elements of an effective CBHR program include justice, education, normal child functioning, psychosocial activities, and livelihood programs. It could be noted that some of the elements mentioned may appear like "intervention programs" or components of social development programs and services for children victims and their families. While this may be true, these elements are intended to address the needs of children victims of online child sexual abuse to be able **to heal and recover from the abuse in a community setting** or context. These needs, while seemingly very basic from a developmental standpoint, are in fact **essential** in the attainment of true healing and recovery from the abuse. Some other elements may be identified and added to this list in the future, but in the context of the specific community and children victims of online child sexual abuse in Angeles City that is the focus of this project, these were identified as the essential elements of CBHR.

1 | **Justice**

The children had all expressed their fear, shame and anger at the abuse they have experienced from the perpetrator. Everyone wanted the perpetrator to be put in jail. Hence, **legal assistance and other legal remedies** becomes an essential element of the CBHR program in the community. This does not mean, however, that justice equates to healing and recovery, but putting the perpetrator behind bars could enhance the victims' attainment of CBHR.

2 | **Education**

This need to continue with their education is among the primary requests of children victims of online child sexual abuse. The children placed much **value on education**, with their parents supporting them on this request. Those parents who were not yet members of the 4Ps program have openly requested to be included in the said program of the DSWD because of the assistance provided for the education of the children, even if it there is minimal support and only for five (5) years. Education was found to be a huge **motivation** for the children in their efforts to heal and recover from the abuse.

3 | **Normal child functioning**

When the children were asked what it means for them "**to live like normal children**", below were their answers:

a. *"Tulungan kaming makalimutan ang nangyari sa amin."* (Help us forget what happened to us.)
b. *"Tulungang maalis ang takot at hiya na humarap sa tao."* (Help us overcome our fear and shame in facing people.)
c. *"Huwag ng interview-hin ng paulit-ulit sa nangyari sa amin."* (Do not interview us over and over about what happened to us.)
d. *"Huwag na kaming tuksuhin at tawaging "Doughlas".* (Stop teasing us and calling us "Doughlas"). Doughlas is the first name of the perpetrator.

4 | **Psychosocial activities**

In the course of identifying children victims during the earlier part of project implementation, the children and their parents were made to attend and participate in psychosocial activities. These activities enabled the children to play like normal kids, free from fears and bullying in the community. The children found the activities enjoyable and relaxing. Further, these enhanced the children's relationships with one another and with their parents. As an element of CBHR, psychosocial activities should be designed according to gender, age and interests of the children, and should take into consideration certain observed group dynamics, such as being with their

preferred set of friends or "*barkada*". The "peer to peer" or **"child to child" approach** will be useful in carrying out the psychosocial program.

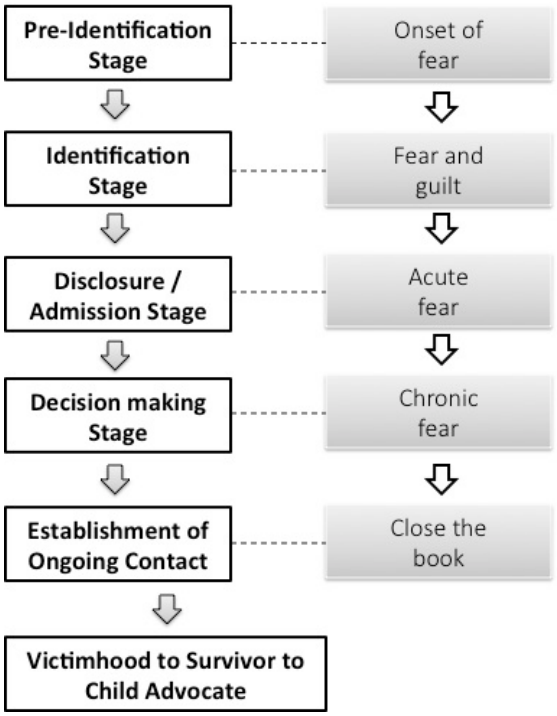
5 | **Livelihood program**

The children repeatedly mentioned it was mostly because of the money, and the gifts and the food given to them that kept them going back to the house of the perpetrator again and again and over several months or even years (*"pera pera lang po talaga, kasama na ang regalo, pagkain at konting pera na ibinibigay ng foreigner"*). This explains the guilt and self-blaming attitude of the children, because they always knew that what they were doing was wrong. The poor economic condition of the children and their families is a major risk factor which needs to be addressed by the CBHR. This is the purpose of including livelihood improvement as an essential element in the CBHR program.

The Fear Continuum in Victims' Healing and Recovery

Analyzing the situation, experiences and resulting behavior of the 31 victims of online child sexual abuse documented in this project highlighted the children's fears—which was found to be continuing and becoming more intense as the child confronts the enduring effects of his victimization.

Figure 8 | **CBHR Stages and the Fear Continuum**



Understanding the "Child Porn Victim Fear Continuum" at every stage of the CBHR program will enable service providers to methodically process the effects of the abuse on the children, and, at the same time, respect each child's pace and predisposition for processing, healing and recovery. This can guide service providers in designing programs and activities for individuals or groups to effectively process and work through the issues related to online child sexual abuse.

It is important to note that the manifestation of the effects of the abuse on children necessitates the development of trauma-informed care programs and approaches for children victims. There is a need to consult a qualified child expert to assess further the effects of the Fear Continuum to the development of the child, either in his early or later adulthood stage.

Figure 9 | Schematic representation of Community-based Healing and Recovery

Stages of CBHR *(Child Porn Victim Fear Continuum)*	**Essential Elements of CBHR** *(Pathways to Healing and Recovery)*				
	Justice	**Education**	**Normal Child Functioning**	**Psychosocial Activities**	**Livelihood Program**
	(Prosecution)	*(Provision, Prevention, Promotion)*	*(Promotion, Provision, Prevention)*	*(Provision, Promotion)*	*(Provision)*
Pre-identification *(Onset of Fear)*	- Surveillance and investigation	- Conduct ComEd and distribute IEC materials in school on risk behaviors of children online and offline - Highlight importance of reporting in ComEds and IECs/ ensure ecpat has measures that ensure their protection and privacy when they disclose	- Design activities for children that consider their developmental stage and evolving capacities (eg. camps, movie/film viewing, theater production)	- Conduct activities that raise the awareness of children on their rights and knowledge on child protection issues	- Profiling of socio-economic status of the community (families)
Identification phase *(Feelings of fear and guilt)*	- Consultation with the child on how he wants to be assisted - Home visits - Study community situation on how best to approach the child/family discreetly without compromising their safety	- Consultation with school officers on the handling of victims studying in the school, (eg. on issues of confidentiality and security of the children, bullying) - Training on handling disclosure	- Rapport and trust building - Consult with the parents on how the child victim wants to be handled or treated, and inquire about the child's behavior for needed action or response	- Provision of services needed by the child victim (eg. counseling, temporary shelter)	- Networking with relevant government agencies /organizations for the conduct of feasibility studies for target beneficiaries .
Disclosure phase *(Fear escalates as child is confronted and admits to being a victim)*	- Consultation and preparation of the child and family members/support system in legal process	- Informing and educating parents about the abuse - Involving the CPQRTs	- Interactive educational activities that will encourage the child's interest - Parent-child consultation	- Understanding concepts of victimization counseling - Conduct of Psychological Evaluation/ Assessment	- Livelihood training for parents (eg.TESDA, DOST, DA, etc.) - Available training for children and youth
Decision-making phase *(Acute fear)*	- Facilitating activities for decision-making related to pursuing cases in Court discussion of the legal case and its processes - Kids Court	- Consultation with parents and stakeholders (CPQRTs)	- Encourage to participate in a group activities in consultation with the child, parents or guardian as support system	- Art sessions like dance, music, painting, drama therapy	- Livelihood or income generating activities agreed upon by famiies/parents of the child victims
Establishment of ongoing contact *(Whatever decision the child and the family undertakes, if not properly handled, fear will go unabated)*	- Provision of legal assistance, if needed - Provide/facilitate access to protection programs offered by the government - Assist in claiming compensation for victims	- Continuing community education and raising awareness of the community	- Provision of necessary assistance to the victims and the family - Regular home visit - Monitoring by the barangay or CPQRTs - Continuing counseling/therapy	- Peer to peer activities - Counseling and series of dialogue with the parents or family of the child victims	- Identifying family situation and to address factors of viitimization. - Identifying livelihood opportunities for family, if needed
Transformation from victimhood to survivor to child advocate		- The children (survivors) can join in facilitating community and school education with proper guidance of the staff	- Capacity building / enhancing knowledge and skills - Encouraging to join children's activities and groups in school and community	- Peer to peer activities	- Monitoring and evaluation of livelihood programs to the direct beneficiaries

CONCLUSION |
KEY POINTS OF INTERVENTION IN HELPING CHILDREN VICTIMS OF ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE

Identifying the risk factors in the victimization of children, knowing the profile of children victims, and understanding the dynamics of online child sexual abuse were key to developing community-based strategies and constructive forms of healing and recovery for children victims through the CBHR program. Given the increasing number of children victims of online child sexual abuse in the community, there is a need to mainstream new perspectives on the victimization of children, as well as new approaches to confront the dynamics of abuse experienced by children victims of online child sexual abuse.

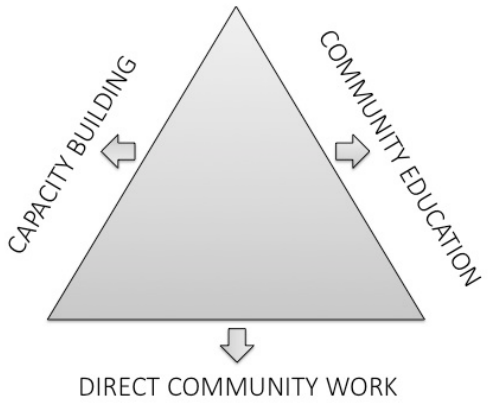
Mainstreaming CBHR will utilize the following approaches and strategies in the communtiy:

1 | **Triangular approach**

The CBHR program is not just focused on the healing and recovery of the children in the community per se. While the children victims are of primary concern, there is the need to involve other sectors, stakeholders and groups—the family, barangay and other local institutions—as **partners and support system** of children in their healing and recovery journey.

These partners and support groups need to be reached out to, educated and engaged in the CBHR program. The Triangular Approach, which involves the simultaneous conduct of **community education**, **capacity-building** and **direct community work**, will be used to enable simultaneous and holistic healing and recovery of the children, and other sectors and institutions in the community.

Figure 10 | **The Triangular Approach**



2 | **Grouping approach**

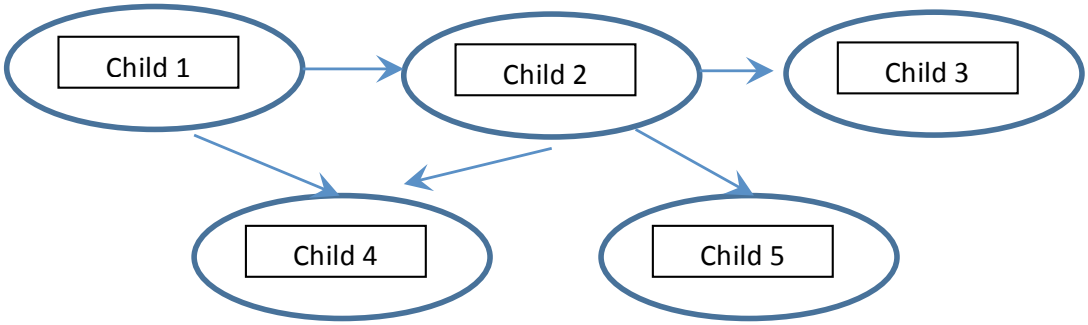
The activities in this project provided various opportunities to observe and contextualize the behavior and actions of children victims, and how these are influenced by particular social groups within the community. Certain grouping tendencies were recognized among members of the same community on various situations. Employing grouping approaches were found to be enabling factors not only for the identification of victims, but also for efficiently delivering certain components of the CBHR program.

"Child to child" and **"parent to parent"** grouping approaches may be used during the conduct of activities for children and families involved in cases of online child sexual abuse in the community.

a. Child to child grouping approach

This approach, which surfaced during the identification of children victims, was found effective in terms of encouraging children's participation in psychosocial activities and interview sessions. The child to child grouping approach leverages on children's similarities in age, gender, hobbies and interests, to ensure collective participation in the CBHR program and activities.

Figure 11 | **Child to child grouping approach**

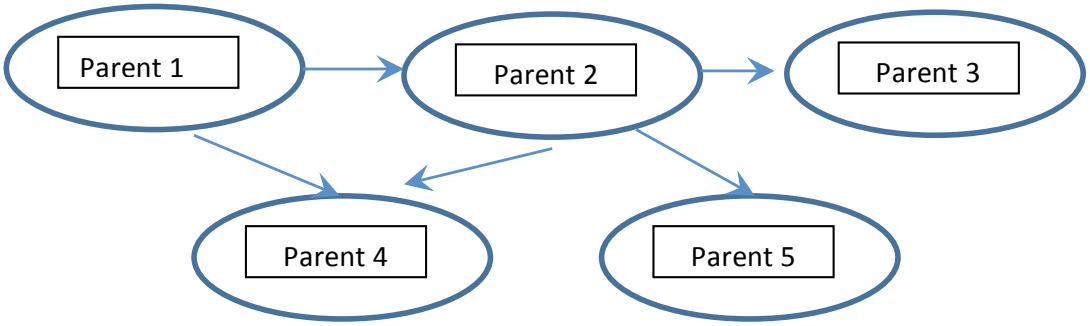


b. Parent to parent grouping approach

The parent to parent approach was elected as an intervention strategy in the CBHR because of certain grouping tendencies or alliances observed from some of the parents in the community. It became apparent that parents of children victims also thrived in their own **"safe groups"** in the community where they feel comfortable and at ease in articulating their ideas and needs.

Using this approach, parents with common sentiments or position about the abuse, for instance parents who want to file a case against the perpetrator, may be grouped together so they could receive appropriate legal assistance. While those who do not wish to file any case but are interested in the therapy of their children can make up another group. Service providers should take advantage of these natural alliances of parents when engaging them in the CBHR program.

Figure 12 | **Parent to parent grouping approach**



3 | **Children Protection Quick Reaction Team**

The Children Protection Quick Reaction Team (CPQRT) will be the primary mechanism in the community to weave all approaches in implementing the CBHR program. The CPQRT is a community-based multidisciplinary body tasked to take immediate action or response on cases of children victims of online child sexual abuse. The need for the creation of the CPQRT at the community level was prompted by several factors:

- the increasing number of children victims of online child sexual abuse in the community
- the emergency character of the abuse in terms of numbers and effects
- the lack of organized community response on the issue, and
- the need to provide services and support to the children victims identified and those who remain unidentified[1].

[1] *According to the parents interviewed, the 31 children victims in the community will be much higher if all the children will decide to come out.*

Guidelines for the Establishment of the Children Protection Quick Reaction Team

Rationale

Many parents and children in communities are not aware of the issue of online child sexual abuse. They have no means to identify possible "red flags" indicating the presence of possible perpetrators of abuse in their community. Moreover, children who are victims of online child sexual abuse are afraid to disclose this to their families or report the case to authorities for varied reasons.

It is against this backdrop that the **Children Protection Quick Reaction Team** will be organized in the community to respond immediately to cases of online child sexual abuse, and provide specialized protection and support to children victims.

Nature of the CPQRT

The CPQRT is a multi-disciplinary body or mechanism in the community that will provide immediate assistance and aftercare response to sustain the healing and recovery of child victims of online child sexual abuse in the community. This body will provide **systematic**, **organized**, **gender-based** and **age-based responses** to cases of online child sexual abuse in the community.

Regular and Special CPQRT

The CPQRT will be of two kinds—the Regular CPQRT and the Special CPQRT. The **Regular CPQRT** is a community-based body whose members include representatives from various local government offices, such as the barangay, police, social welfare and development, education and health offices. The Regular CPQRT convenes regularly to respond to cases of online child sexual abuse occurring in the community as well as to reports of suspected cases received in the barangay.

The **Special CPQRT** is convened in response to a specific situation in the community that requires emergency action. Emergency cases, which may require the formation of a Special CPQRT, include the following:

- a large number of children were victimized prompting the community to seek support from other agencies and individuals to be able to respond to the situation
- the perpetrator/s of online child sexual abuse have built strong connections or influence in the community, to the point of being very powerful and "untouchable"
- the community is paralized with panic and fear of the perpetrator/s in the community, eg. because of his guns, goons or connections in the community.

Convening a Special CPQRT will be on a case to case basis, and is similar to declaring a state of calamity duiring a disaster situation, but in this case, the disaster emergency is the massive number of children victimized in the community, which necessitates the outsourcing of additional support in order to alleviate the situation.

Composition of the CPQRT

Members of the Regular CPQRT will come from various local and barangay offices, such as the BCPC, MSWDO, VAW desk, school, health, and police offices. For members of the Regular CPQRT who are government officials/employees, their roles and functions will be maintained as set forth in the Protocol for Case Management of Child Victims of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation. For example, social workers will be the primary member of the CPQRT who will conduct the intake interview and act as case manager, while the primary role of the PNP is to secure the child and his family, etc. They may, however, include and assume other functions and tasks in the CPQRT depending on what was agreed upon by the body, and if called for under the specific situation or case in point.

The **Special CPQRT** is an expanded Regular CPQRT and can have independent members from outside of the community, such as advocates, and other government and non-government agencies who want to help in the community. It is also open to invite consultants on specialized needs of children, such as child psychologists or therapists. The Special CPQRT may be based outside of the community and conduct its functions independent of the local barangay structure.

Because the Regular and Special CPQRTs have similar tasks and functions, the Special CPQRT may be dissolved once the **situation becomes normal**—the children are safe, services have been provide to victims, the perpetrator is out of the community, or has been arrested and charges have been filed against him.

Requirements for CPQRT members

1. Has no case of child abuse filed in court, past or present;
2. Willing to sign a child protection agreement as members of the CPQRT;
3. For those who are not government employees, their membership will be voluntary and will be considered as " community volunteers" or "children community advocates";
4. Shall be bound under oath to keep the identity of the children;
5. In no way will they jeopardize the administration and process of justice for the children as victims of online child sexual abuse;
6. Any other requirements the body may agree on in their meetings.

Tasks/Functions of the CPQRT

1. Provides a one-stop shop immediate response to children victims of online child sexual abuse;
2. Detects, monitors, identifies, and reports child victims and potential perpetrators of online child sexual abuse in the community;
3. Recommends policies, memos or resolutions in the barangay to protect the children from possible victimization;
4. Creates a gender-sensitive and child-friendly reporting and complaints mechanism to protect the identity and safety of the children victims at the community level;
5. Coordinates with other agencies to help children access resources and services they need as victims of abuse;
6. Calls for a community assembly to inform and warn residents on the issue of online child sexual abuse in the community;
7. Strengthens community-based referral networks for early detection, intervention and response to protect children at risk for online child sexual abuse;
8. Conducts campaigns, awareness sessions, and activities among children and parents to prevent the occurrence of online child sexual abuse in the community;
9. Designs programs for the youth in the community that can divert their attention from indulging in computer games and excessive access to the Internet;
10. Monitors the implementation of the CBHR for child victims of online child sexual abuse.