Preventable, not inevitable:

Prevention framework for technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse

Guiding Principles

Every child has the right to be safe from harm, including sexual exploitation and abuse.
Efforts to prevent technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse should:

- Uphold children's and survivors' rights and dignity and avoid increasing risks or causing further harm;
- Recognise that children are both at risk of being harmed and of engaging in behaviours that can harm other children;
- Centre the perspectives, needs, and preferences of children and survivors;

- Account for differences in children's ages, development, and other characteristics - such as gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability status, migrant status, economic and educational status – that can affect their needs and the risks they face.

Drivers of technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse

- Lack of protective mechanisms
- Financial motivations

- Weak governance and accountability
- Intersectional vulnerabilities

- Harmful social norms

Enablers of prevention

- Political will
- Strong digital governance and accountability at global, national, and local levels
- Harmonised terminology and data systems
- Global and cross-sector coordination
- Supportive social norms
- Trained child-facing professionals and providers
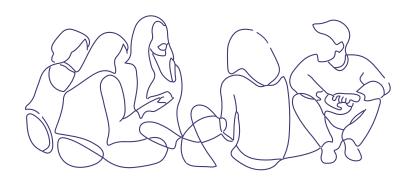- Strong child protection systems

Research and Data

- Use a public health approach to define the problem and prevalence, identify risk and protective factors, design and test interventions, and scale up what works.
- Prioritise research informed or led by children, youth, survivors, and marginalised populations.
- Develop knowledge and good practices in low- and middle-income countries and under-represented contexts
- Share data, knowledge, and good practices across regions and sectors, adapting evidence sensitively to new contexts.
- Conduct cost-benefit analyses to strengthen the case for funding prevention

Sustainable Financing

- Dedicated budget lines in national strategies
- Industry commitments
- Participation of multilateral institutions
- Flexible financing mechanisms
- Cross-sector funding
- Sustainable support for community-based organisations
- Funding for innovation and evidence generation

CHILD PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

Meaningfully involve children in defining the problems and shaping policies, programmes, and services that affect them.

Primary Prevention **PROACTIVELY PROTECT**	Secondary Prevention **DETECT AND DISRUPT**	Tertiary Prevention **SUPPORT AND RESPOND**
Co-design contextually sensitive education and awareness-raising initiatives with children that reflect how they use technology, whom they trust, and where they turn for help if they are harmed or have concerns about their own thoughts and behaviours.	Partner with child-led and survivor-led organisations to co-design, implement, and evaluate accessible, easy-to-use, and trusted reporting channels, including non-formal channels, such as trained peers.	Use insights and data from both child and adult survivors to improve the accessibility and quality of support services, justice systems, and redress mechanisms. Explore survivors' own concepts of harm, justice, and accountability, including non-formal and restorative justice approaches.

🔔 Consult children only when trained staff, safety measures, and support services are in place. Otherwise, consult youth and adults who can represent children's perspectives, including adult survivors.

Create safe, welcoming spaces - both online and offline - for children to share their views, and influence policies, programmes, and services.

Engage children across age groups, genders, and backgrounds, and address barriers to inclusion. Seek input from children who have experienced harm, as well as children who have caused harm.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Equip children, caregivers, and communities with the knowledge, skills, and tools to keep children safe and appropriately respond to risks and harms. Provide early interventions for children and adults at risk of causing harm.

Primary Prevention **PROACTIVELY PROTECT**	Secondary Prevention **DETECT AND DISRUPT**	Tertiary Prevention **SUPPORT AND RESPOND**
Implement and evaluate evidence-based education and awareness raising initiatives that promote digital safety, reporting, and help-seeking. Ensure they are accessible, available in multiple languages, and delivered across schools, communities, and digital platforms that children use.	Establish multiple accessible, child-friendly formal and non-formal reporting channels, including helplines, trained peers, and trusted adults who can provide early support and resources.	Support survivors and ensure they know their rights, options, available services, and actions they can take to protect themselves from further harm, request image removal, and seek justice.
Teach children how to keep themselves and others safe online and offline, where to seek help, safe adults they can turn to for help, and how to report concerns about their own or someone else's safety or behaviours.	Train peers, caregivers, educators, and service providers to help children stay safe online and offline, and respond appropriately to concerns or reports of harm.	Provide trauma-informed, survivor-centred services for both child and adult survivors that address both online and offline harms, promote safety and dignity, and prevent further harm. These should include legal, health, and mental health and psychosocial support services.
	Deliver evidence-based early interventions for children and adults at risk of causing or experiencing harm.	Provide evidence-based, non-carceral responses for children who have caused harm to rehabilitate and prevent re-offending.

DIGITAL SAFETY

Protect children by prioritising their safety, well-being, and rights in industry culture and the design and development of digital products, services, and infrastructure.

Primary Prevention **PROACTIVELY PROTECT**	Secondary Prevention **DETECT AND DISRUPT**	Tertiary Prevention **SUPPORT AND RESPOND**
Prioritise children's safety, rights, and well-being across all levels of company culture, decision-making, and workforce training. Make Safety by Design the default, integrating child rights impact assessments and due diligence in development processes. Consult children and youth to inform design choices, and ensure safety features are functional, accessible, and equitably available across all locations and languages in which a product or service is offered. Harmonise terminology and transparency reporting metrics to improve comparability across products and services.	Detect and disrupt harmful content and behaviours using real-time tools that respect users' privacy and rights (e.g., hash matching, warning pop-ups, redirection to support services, detection of grooming behaviours and risky financial transactions). Fund and provide mental health and psychosocial support for digital frontline responders.	Provide child-friendly, accessible in-platform reporting channels. These should directly link users to helplines and support services and provide timely feedback. Ensure safe, stigma-free processes for survivors to request takedown of their images. Strengthen transparency and accountability, disclosing material child rights impact of digital products and services in every country where they are available. Collect and share anonymised, disaggregated safety data to strengthen industry-wide and cross-sectoral learning. Collaborate across industry to take down CSAM and other harmful content.

LAW, POLICY & JUSTICE

Strengthen legal and regulatory systems to prevent abuse, secure justice, and hold duty-bearers accountable.

Primary Prevention **PROACTIVELY PROTECT**	Secondary Prevention **DETECT AND DISRUPT**	Tertiary Prevention **SUPPORT AND RESPOND**
Strengthen, harmonise, and enforce laws and regulations using universal terminology and defining clear duties and sanctions. Consult with survivors, child rights groups, industry, and other stakeholders to align legislation with child rights laws, evidence, and good practice, and enable responsible industry innovation. Design laws that recognise developmental differences between children and adults, emphasise rehabilitation of children who cause harm, and avoid criminalising mutually desired behaviours between close-in age peers. Establish national/regional regulators with the power, resources, and technical expertise to set standards, monitor compliance, and ensure strong industry oversight and accountability.	Establish proactive systems to detect, investigate, and respond to technology-facilitated CSEA, rather than relying solely on survivor reports. Require financial institutions to actively detect and report transactions linked to sexual exploitation of children. Establish accessible, child-friendly, trauma-informed reporting channels linked to support services, and provide clear information about where people should make reports or seek help in their country.	Train law enforcement, judiciary, and prosecutors in child-friendly, trauma-informed, survivor-centred processes that uphold children's rights, dignity, and best interests. Establish anonymised national victim databases to inform prevention and response. Use evidence-based monitoring and rehabilitation to prevent re-offending. Treat children in conflict with the law in line with international child justice standards. Use rehabilitation, diversion, and alternative sentencing. Avoid detention, registration, and notification.