TO ZERO

Getting To Zero: A Review Of The Evidence To End Childhood Sexual Violence

April 2024

Acknowledgements

Contents

Executive Summary

This paper has four key objectives:

▶ to summarize what is known about three key aspects of ending childhood sexual violence. i.e., evidence, political will and funding;

▶ to integrate the insights of stakeholders engaged with To Zero, including the To Zero Champions Group and members of the Visioning Team;

▶ to incorporate the learning, approaches and key themes of thirty-nine strategies developed by organizations working to address this problem; and

▶ to suggest areas that require further thought, discussion and action to create a world free of childhood sexual violence.

> # " "
> ## It supports arguments for moving forward with effective interventions and supporting research on what works in LMICs, for specific groups of children and at scale.
> ## " "

While recognizing that various frameworks for evidence-informed strategies exist, the section on evidence begins with a focus on the INSPIRE framework, a set of seven broadly agreed strategies to end violence against children. It reviews how this framework applies to ending childhood sexual violence and highlights evidence on effective strategies, including the results of emerging research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The evidence section also highlights four specific issues related to ending childhood sexual violence, i.e., the links between violence against women and violence against children, sexual violence online, the situation of boys and preventing abuse behaviors. It supports arguments for moving forward with effective interventions and supporting research on what works in LMICs, for specific groups of children and at scale.

The next section of the report explores the dynamics of generating political will, both in other sectors and in relation to ending childhood sexual violence. It reviews what has been learned in this area and how those lessons might be applied to future action. It highlights stakeholder views on generating – and sustaining – political will, including promoting evidence-informed solutions, adopting more robust accountability measures, lifting up the voices and leadership of survivors and appealing to policymakers' sense of empathy and justice, i.e., making the issue personal to those with the power to act.

The section on funding reviews recent efforts to determine the costs of childhood sexual violence to children and to the communities and countries in which they live. While recognizing that the long-lasting impact of sexual violence on the children who experience it can never be reduced to a monetary value, this section supports the case for prevention over response. It also highlights funding trends at global and national levels and calls for more transparency in the funding from non-government sources. The views of stakeholders on funding trends and challenges are summarized.

The paper also incorporates key themes and approaches from 39 strategies developed by organizations working to end childhood sexual violence. The selected organizations are listed in **Annex 6**, with highlights incorporated throughout the document.

1. Introduction

Key objectives:

This paper has four key objectives:

▶ to summarize what is known on three key aspects of ending childhood sexual violence. i.e., evidence, political will and funding;

▶ to integrate the insights of stakeholders engaged with To Zero, including the To Zero Champions Group and members of the Visioning Team;

▶ to incorporate the learning, approaches and key themes of thirty-nine strategies developed by organizations working to address this problem; and

▶ to suggest areas that require further thought, discussion and action to create a world free of childhood sexual violence.

This paper does not cover prevalence, risks or root causes of childhood sexual violence, except in the context of specific interventions. These issues are explored in great depth in other reports and reviews, many of which served as background for this paper and are listed in **Annex 1**.

This paper adopts the following definition of childhood sexual violence: (a) engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence, and (b) engaging in sexual activities with a child sswho, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities (this does not apply to consensual sexual activities between minors).[1]

A list of the stakeholders interviewed for this paper is included in **Annex 2**, all of whom are members of the Champions Group and/or participated as members of the Visioning Team of To Zero. The group of stakeholders interviewed for this paper includes the following categories: 50% represent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working at global and national levels; 7% represent local civil society organizations (CSOs); 19% represent academic institutions and research organizations; and 4% represent intergovernmental organizations. Additionally, 65% of stakeholders interviewed represent organizations based in and/or serving the Global North, with 35% of stakeholders based in and/or serving the Global South.

The interview protocol (included in this paper as **Annex 3**) asked stakeholders for their views on: the aims and achievability of the To Zero Initiative; the most pressing challenges facing the sector; how greater political will might be generated; and ways to increase both the level and diversity of funding. These views helped shape this paper and are integrated throughout each section.

A complementary analysis was conducted to assess the alignment of the strategies of 39 organizations working to end childhood sexual violence with the INSPIRE framework, including many engaged in the To Zero collective visioning process (see *A Review of 39 Stakeholder Strategies to End Childhood Sexual Violence*, which complements this paper.) Out of the seven strategies of the INSPIRE framework, the strategies of these organizations focused most often on three of the INSPIRE interventions: implementation and enforcement of laws (72%); norms and values (54%); and education and life skills (51%). The strategies focused less often on four of the INSPIRE interventions: safe environments (41%); response and support services (38%); parent and caregiver support (28%); and income and economic strengthening (10%). Specific insights from this analysis are integrated throughout each section, and further discussion of the results are documented in a separate report

The first version of this paper was written as background for the To Zero Visioning Team meeting in October 2023. It was further developed and refined based on those discussions and the analysis of organizational strategies described above. While efforts to address childhood sexual violence will continue to evolve, this paper serves as a snapshot of collective knowledge, action and learning to date.
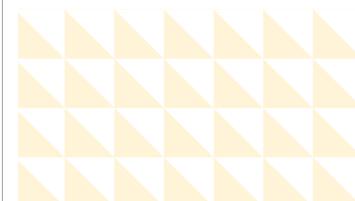
50%
interviewed for this paper represent non-governmental organisations

1 The terms 'sexual violence against children' or 'child sexual abuse and exploitation' include diverse acts of abuse, in different settings and relationships – situations where a child is sexually abused by a relative or carer at home; raped by an intimate partner; made to or left with no option but to sell sex in exchange for food, cash or favours; sexually assaulted on the way to, or at, school by an adult, a gang or a peer living in the community; sexually abused by an adult in a position of trust or authority such as a pastor, police officer, care worker or sports coach; groomed or sexually exploited online by an adult or older child; trafficked within or across borders for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sometimes by organized groups of child sex offenders; or raped by a combatant or peacekeeper in the context of war, displacement or disaster. Children and adolescents affected may not always recognize their experiences as sexual violence or abuse.

From UNICEF Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Review of the Evidence (2020).

2. The Evidence

Stakeholders interviewed for this paper are concerned about the availability and use of data and evidence to end childhood sexual violence. Some identify the lack of data and evidence as a major challenge facing the sector. They believe that more evidence would generate greater political will and funding. They fear that the evidence being collected is focused on high-income countries, not undertaken at scale and responds to the needs of external actors rather than local groups and researchers. Others acknowledge that there is a greater focus on evidence now than in the past but that important issues like sexual violence online, preventing abuse behaviors, and the needs of boys, children with disabilities and children living outside families are neglected. Stakeholders vary significantly in their knowledge of the evidence and the directions in which it is taking the sector.

There is no one agreed framework for evidence-informed strategies to end childhood sexual violence. There is, however, emerging consensus across the sector on a few such frameworks, including INSPIRE, RESPECT, and the model national response. This paper mentions all of these in various sections. It begins with a review of INSPIRE, i.e., what it is, what it has meant to broader efforts to end violence against children and how it applies specifically to ending childhood sexual violence. It also briefly reviews evidence beyond INSPIRE, focusing on the links between violence against women and violence against children, sexual violence online, the situation of boys and preventing abuse behaviors.
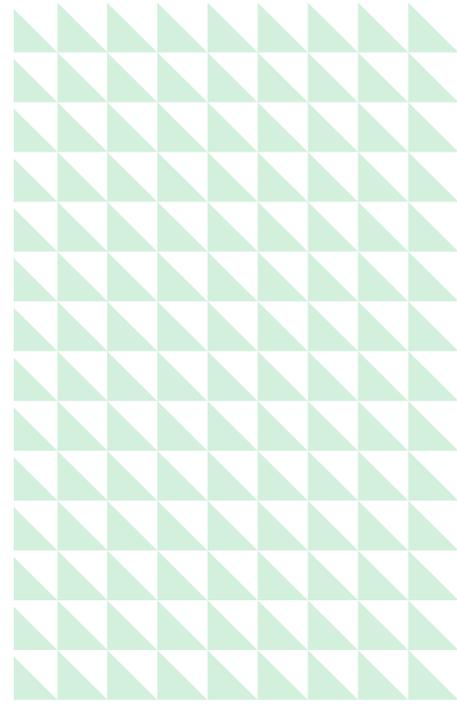
Building on INSPIRE

A significant breakthrough in understanding what works to end violence against children was the development of INSPIRE, a set of seven evidence-informed strategies for countries and communities working to eliminate this violence. Issued in 2016, INSPIRE represents an agreement on key strategies among ten agencies with a long history of child protection work.[2] Before INSPIRE was developed, each of these agencies had their own list of recommended interventions; while similar, these lists were different enough to fuel the widespread perception that ending violence against children was complicated and/or impossible to prevent. Creating one "consensus" list of strategies signaled confidence and unity and generated unprecedented interest in and action to end violence against children. The seven strategies include:

▶ implementing and enforcing laws that protect children against harmful practices, unsafe environments and abusers;

▶ addressing norms and values that target children of particular genders, ability level, age and other indicators;

▶ creating safe environments by addressing hotspots and halting the spread of violence in communities;

▶ engaging parents and caregivers through programs that support them to understand and adopt positive caregiving methods and to protect their children from harm;

▶ promoting income and economic strengthening, particularly at family level;

▶ advocating for effective counseling and therapeutic response services, including

▶ treatment programs for juvenile offenders and improved foster care systems; and

▶ ensuring safe and enabling school environments for both boys and girls, including through life skills and fostering positive interpersonal relationships.

INSPIRE has strong support among child-focused organizations. Shortly after its development, an INSPIRE Working Group was formed to promote implementation of the seven strategies. The Working Group now includes over 100 members, among them UN agencies, governments, international and national civil society organizations (CSOs), community groups and faith-based organizations. Itas issued an implementation handbook and a results framework to support their use. Broad acceptance of the framework also facilitated CSO collaboration to develop indicators for Target 16.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 16, which calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

> " **Before INSPIRE was developed, each of these agencies had their own list of recommended interventions** "

2 World Health Organization (WHO), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Together for Girls, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank.

In December 2021, a study was issued entitled *Using Data to Inform National Efforts to End Violence Against Children.*[3] Financed by USAID and supported by Together for Girls, the study lays out country experiences and lessons learned following Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS) in 21 countries. Based on a survey conducted among 177 users of VACS data, plus 49 key informant interviews, the study asserts that 85% of these users (including both survey respondents and key informants) feel that INSPIRE strategies are significantly influencing the development of national actions based on VACS. This far outweighs any other technical resource used at country level.

Since the issuing of INSPIRE, two reviews have been completed that explore in depth the relevance of the seven strategies for ending childhood sexual violence, i.e., one in 2019 by Together for Girls (referred to hereafter as the What Works Review) and the other in 2020 by UNICEF (referred to hereafter as the UNICEF Review).[4] There were concerted efforts to ensure that these two reviews complemented rather than duplicated one another. As a result, these reviews are largely reinforcing and share several characteristics:

▶ promoting a *holistic approach*, recognizing that sexual violence against children does not occur in isolation and often intersects with other forms of gender-based violence and violence against children;

▶ highlighting the *special nature of childhood sexual violence*, including that: it is often more hidden and stigmatizing than other forms of violence; has a unique set of drivers, risks and protective factors; perpetrators are more varied; there are gaps in knowledge and practice about protecting young children, boys, children who identify as non-binary and children with disabilities; and attention is required for the rapid evolution of technology-facilitated sexual violence against children;

▶ emphasizing the importance of *combined interventions*, given the high rates of poly-victimization and the need to understand better how the combined effect of various types of interventions can prevent one or multiple forms of violence; and

▶ adopting *rigorous methodologies* that draw on detailed reviews of hundreds of articles and documents as well as consultation with experts on every aspect of preventing and responding to sexual violence against children.

In addition, the two reviews identify similar *underlying principles for effective interventions*, namely: programs should integrate protection systems for children and adolescents in broader national responses; programs should be holistic and address the multiple factors that contribute to violence-supporting norms and behaviors; programs should be developmentally appropriate, and age- and gender-specific; and programs targeting children should be delivered over several sessions

3 Cravero, K, Whittaker, S, and Ski, S. Using Data to Inform National Efforts to End Violence Against Children: Country Experiences and Lessons following Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys. Prepared for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), University Research Company, LLC, Chevy Chase, Maryland, 2022.
4 Ligiero, D, Hart, C, Fulu, E, Thomas, A, Radford, L (2019). What works to prevent sexual violence against children: Evidence Review. Together for Girls.
UNICEF. Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Review of the Evidence (2020).

and be interactive and participatory. They also adopt similar categories to classify the interventions they highlight, i.e., effective, promising, prudent, conflicting (What Works Review), needs more research (UNICEF Review), ineffective (What Works Review) and harmful (UNICEF Review). **Annex 4** includes more detailed descriptions of all these categories.

The reviews are organized somewhat differently, with the What Works Review exploring each INSPIRE strategy and the UNICEF Review focusing on primary prevention, identifying and protecting child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, perpetrators and victim support. The summary of interventions included in this paper – set out in **Annex 5** – uses the INSPIRE strategies as a starting point. It adopts the four categories used in both reviews to classify the interventions (i.e., effective, promising, prudent and ineffective). It combines the conflicting and needs more research categories into one, since the need for further study is the key characteristic of both. It should be noted that interventions in other categories may also require more research, although results to date are more conclusive.

The seven tables included in **Annex 5** can be summarized as follows:

▶ of the 35 interventions included in both the What Works and UNICEF reviews, seven are categorized as effective, eight as promising, fourteen as prudent, three as needing more research, two as harmful and one as having no effect;

▶ of the effective interventions, one falls under norms as values (community mobilization programs to change attitudes and behaviors that include direct interventions at community level), one under parent and caregiving support (parenting programs to prevent teen dating violence), three under response and support services (all having to do with specific counseling and therapy techniques) and four under education and life skills (programs that focus on adolescent intimate partner violence, dating relationships, bystander interventions and empowerment and self-defense training);

▶ among the 14 promising interventions, evidence suggests that these need to be embedded in broader prevention and support services, with more research needed among specific groups and/or countries;

▶ of the two interventions deemed ineffective or harmful, one relates to notification and sexual offender laws for juvenile sex offenders, and one specifies that crisis centers and shelters may pose greater risks than benefits for children; and

▶ general awareness raising, not embedded in broader interventions to change attitudes and behaviors, is deemed to have no effect.

Figure 1. Frequency of Alignment with INSPIRE Strategies from Organizational Activities (n=39)
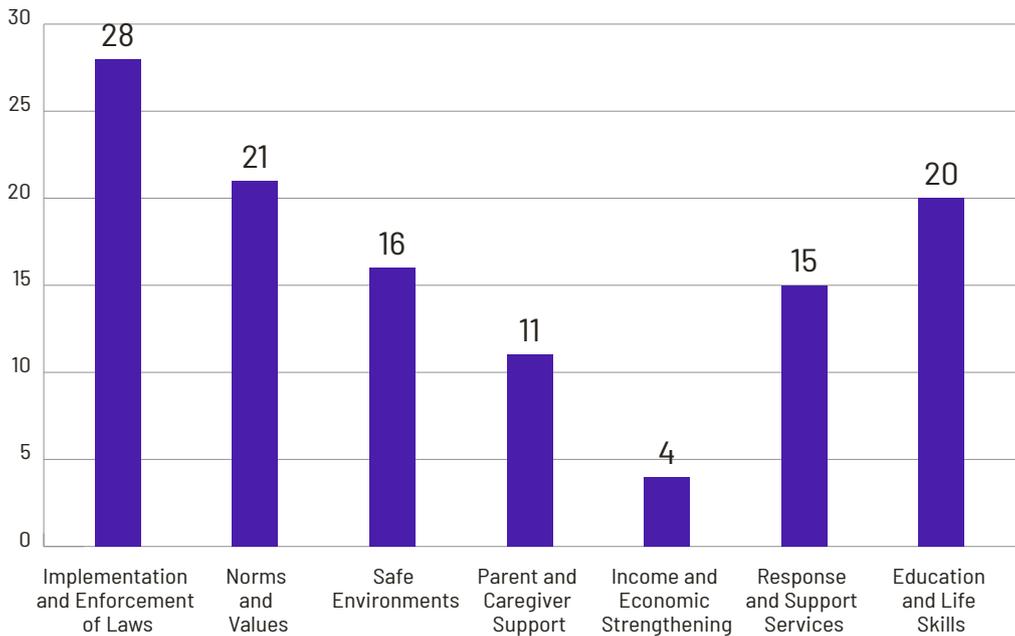
This paper also analyzes the strategies of 39 organizations in light of the evidence above **(Figure 1)**. A preliminary look at these strategies suggests that current efforts focus on: awareness raising at national and sub-national levels (the connection of which to other efforts is not always clear); programs to address harmful social norms; advocacy for improved laws, policies and increased funding; responses across a range of areas for victims of childhood sexual violence (without specification of particular therapies); and creating safe environments for children and families. There is less focus on data collection, parent and caregiver support, programs targeting the attitudes and behavior of adolescents (either school- or community-based), counseling and therapy for victims and survivors and income-related programs.

Evidence on INSPIRE from low- and middle-income countries

To date, most of the evidence used to analyze the impact of INSPIRE strategies, particularly on ending childhood sexual violence, has come from high-income countries. This situation is beginning to change as funders make strategic investments in research that tests interventions in other settings and at scale, particularly within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). While this body of evidence will take time to build, recent studies are already yielding interesting results. It is important to emphasize here that sexual violence is a universal problem – affecting children everywhere – and strengthening research in low-and middle-income countries should complement rather than replace research in high-income settings.

A systematic review of interventions in developing countries, published in January 2020, found eight studies that examined the efficacy of interventions aimed at changing knowledge, attitudes and practices related to ending childhood sexual

violence in developing countries (i.e., two from Africa, five from Asia and one from Latin America).[5] Most of the interventions used within the studies focused on improving children's knowledge of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior and inappropriate touching and self-efficacy to act (i.e., to speak up and seek help) if – hypothetically – they were exposed to abusive behavior. Many of these educational interventions included the use of storybooks and other developmentally appropriate materials. One study focused on improving self-defense capabilities in young people and three utilized intervention programs developed in high-income countries.

The review offers several insights, including:

▶ most of the studies focused on local level, in education settings for children in pre-school and primary school;

▶ only one study involved a large-scale government-led intervention; and

▶ evidence suggests that these programs did increase children's knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe but they do not measure whether that increased knowledge and skill leads to a decrease in sexual abuse victimization.

Based on these results, the authors call for more studies of larger, government-led programs, greater emphasis on behavior change vs. knowledge acquisition and cross-country program comparisons. These are in line with the findings of the What Works and UNICEF reviews, which point out that, to be effective, increasing children's knowledge must be complemented by other actions that support the application of knowledge and skills in "real time" (e.g., safer physical environments, improved school policies, etc.).

Another emerging body of evidence – led by Lucie Cluver of Oxford University in collaboration with the Accelerate Hub, the US Centers for Disease Control and Together for Girls – is demonstrating the power of combined interventions, also noted by the What Works and UNICEF reviews.[6] These studies involve larger-scale evaluations of interventions in eight African countries. In four of these, varying combinations of improved food security, positive gender norms and good parenting programs are leading to significant decreases in a range of important indicators, including sexual violence and other forms of violence against children, child marriage, early pregnancies and transactional sex. In other countries, microgrant programs backed up by mentoring and parenting support and safe schools are yielding similar results. A multi-country study on services for adolescent mothers further demonstrates the reinforcing power of improving food security and safe parenting at the same time vital supports like formal childcare and health clinics are strengthened.

The positive results of these studies are not surprising, based on the effective and promising interventions outlined in the What Works and UNICEF reviews. That said, this is the first time that their efficacy is being demonstrated through rigorous research techniques and at scale.

5 Russel, D, Higgins, D, and Posso, A. Preventing child sexual abuse: A systemic review of interventions and their efficacy in developing countries, Child Abuse and Neglect 102 (2020).
6 Cluver L. Oxford University, University of Cape Town, Accelerate Hub and Together for Girls, 2023. [in preparation]

Evidence beyond the INSPIRE strategies

This section looks beyond the INSPIRE strategies to four areas of priority concern to stakeholders: the links between violence against women and violence against children; sexual violence online; the situation of boys; and preventing abuse behaviors. The treatment of these issues is not exhaustive; it is offered as a starting point for discussion and input.

Links with preventing violence against women

Several stakeholders express the view that efforts to end childhood sexual violence should learn from and be linked with efforts to end violence against women. They highlight the success of the more rights-based, activist, evidence-informed approach taken by advocates in this area and the significant increase in political and donor interest over time.

There are, in fact, many similarities between the two sectors. In 2019, a group of agencies issued RESPECT, a framework for policymakers to guide the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs to end violence against women. While there are some differences in the RESPECT and INSPIRE strategies (e.g., RESPECT emphasizes women's empowerment and support to women's organizations), they reinforce each other in several ways. RESPECT specifically mentions, for example, the importance of preventing violence against children and adolescents, safe environments and changes in social norms.[7]

Ending violence against women and violence against children also overlap in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 5 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls (Target 5.2) as well as an end to harmful practices such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (Target 5.3). Goal 16 includes target 16.2, which calls for an end to abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture of children. Again, these goals have different areas of emphasis but are clearly reinforcing.

A global review published in 2015 and a summary document issued a year later[8] lay out the points of intersection between the two sectors. These are highlighted below.

▶ There are **shared risk factors** for violence against women and violence against children (e.g., gender inequality, male dominance of the household, weak legal sanctions, harmful use of alcohol and drugs).

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7 Guedes, A, Bott, S, Garcia-Moreno, G and Colombini, M. Bridging the gaps: a global review of intersections of violence against women and violence against children, Global Health Action 2016
   Guedes, A, Bott, S, Garcia-Moreno, G and Colombini, M. Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children – The Points of Intersection, PAHO and WHO 2016.
   Ramssmar, L, Ladbury, R and Jewkes, R. Research Uptake, lessons from a multi-country global programme: What Works to Prevent Violence against women and girls, Development in Practice 31:8, 1096–1108.
   UNICEF Programme Division (2020), Gender Dimensions of Violence Against Children and Adolescents (Discussion paper).
8 Guedes et al. Bridging the gaps (see footnote 12).
   Guedes et al., Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children – The Points of Intersection (see footnote 12).

- The **prevention of violence in childhood may be essential for long-term prevention of violence against women** and vice versa, given the associations between childhood exposure to violence and perpetuating violence later in life.

- Evidence that child maltreatment and intimate partner violence co-occur and produce **intergenerational effects** suggests a need for more integrated early intervention.

- **Parenting programs** in low- and middle-income countries could do more to address gender inequality (including son preference and discrimination against girls) and gender-related social norms, e.g., the expectations and stereotypes imposed on boys and on children of other gender identities and sexual orientation

- **Service providers** from all sectors should be prepared to recognize and respond to multiple forms of violence within families.

- Evidence that different forms of violence have **common and compounding consequences across the lifespan** suggests a need for greater collaboration or at least knowledge sharing among those who provide services for adult, adolescent and child survivors of abuse.

- **Child marriage** and the partner violence that occurs in those unions should concern both sectors.

- **Adolescence** falls between and within the traditional domains of both sectors and should be of interest to both. Adolescents are sometime overlooked by child protection agencies that concentrate on younger children and by researchers and programs that focus on women.

Despite these commonalities (i.e., risk factors, social norms, co-occurrence, inter-generational effects, consequences and concern for adolescents), there remains a reluctance to collaborate fully. The 2015 review and other reports attribute this to fears that protection will take precedence over empowerment, children's rights will overshadow women's safety and services will be tailored to children vs women or vice versa. Yet the conclusion of the review – and of most analyses of these intersections – is that these challenges deserve discussion but should not stop greater and more consistent collaboration when appropriate. Funders can incentivize this collaboration in a number of ways. Based on the interviews for this paper, stakeholders working on ending childhood sexual violence agree with this conclusion.

Of the 39 organizations reviewed:

13%

of their strategies demonstrate alignment with violence against women initiatives.

Examples include:

- SVRI's annual research grant on the intersection of VAW and VAC.

- ICRW's focus on upstream factors of CSV that may contribute to gender disparities and inequality.

Sexual violence online

There is a high level of consensus among stakeholders that the boundaries between online and in-person sexual violence are blurred and that, in an increasingly digital world, online and offline (or in-person) distinctions lose their meaning. This is reflected in the definition of online sexual abuse adopted by major actors in this space (e.g., ECPAT, Disrupting Harm, Safe Online and WeProtect). For example, Disrupting Harm describes sexual violence online as: *situations involving digital, internet and communication technologies at some point during the continuum of abuse and exploitation. It can occur fully online or through a mix of online and in-person interactions between offenders and children.*[9] WeProtect has begun referring to sexual violence online (rather than online sexual violence) to emphasize its embeddedness in larger patterns of sexual abuse; for similar reasons, UNICEF is using the term *technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse and advocates working on ending violence against women refer to image-based abuse.*[10] Given the connections between online and offline – or in-person – abuse, many strategies – adapted to respond to technology risks – work for both, including the model national response (MNR) and INSPIRE framework.[11]

As ECPAT explains, until the beginning of the 2000s, the problem of online child sexual exploitation and abuse was mostly confined to the production, possession and distribution of child sexual abuse materials. This has rapidly evolved to a range of internet-facilitated practices such as live streaming of child sexual abuse, online grooming and online sexual extortion and coercion. The range of online perpetrators has also expanded, including those who seek online contact to connect with children for in-person abuse and "facilitators" who may not offend themselves but who make money by misusing technology to perpetuate sexual exploitation of children.[12] Yet, as Disrupting Harm Data Insight series confirms, in most cases of online sexual abuse, the abuser is someone known to the child.[11]

The speed at which technology evolves is one of the major challenges in this space. One study by the University of Manchester explores in depth the rapid development and mainstreaming of extended reality platforms, which pose new and dangerous risks as tools of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. The study calls for urgent attention from policymakers and industry to examine the regulation and moderation of immersive technologies and artificial intelligence (AI).[13] In addition to technology innovation, the scale of the problem is increasing exponentially, with a wide range of contextual variation. According to Safe Online, "...professionals from across sectors

9   UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti (2022). Children's Experiences of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in 12 Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. Disrupting Harm Insight 1 Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

10 ECPAT is leading the revision of the Luxembourg guidelines on terms and definitions related to sexual abuse and exploitation. It is now using the term technology-facilitated abuse. Many stakeholders are adopting the terms in-person or contact abuse to replace the concept of offline.)

11 Disrupting Harm Data Insights Series has a special issue on the connections between online and other forms of sexual abuse.

12 ECPAT International (2020) Summary Paper on Online Child Sexual Exploitation. Bangkok.

13 Pettifer, S, Barrett, E, Marsh, J, Hill, K, Turner, P, Flynn, S. The Future of eXtended Reality Technologies, and Implication for Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, University of Manchester (2022).

and countries continue to share alarming reports with data captured by organizations working on these issues."[14]

For the purposes of this paper, we reviewed the reports and documents of six of the major actors in the fight against child sexual exploitation and abuse online. They include: Disrupting Harm (a collaborative research project funded by the Safe Online Initiative/End Violence Fund), ECPAT International, Equality Now, the Safe Online Initiative, UNICEF and WeProtect. While they each have specific, slightly different perspectives, there is strong consensus on the following approaches.[15]

▶ **Responses should not exist in isolation**; they should be embedded within broader child protection systems. Effective action to tackle online child sexual exploitation and abuse must consider the underlying vulnerabilities and risk factors for childhood sexual violence. At the same time, there is a need to recognize its unique dynamics and develop specific interventions within those broader systems.

▶ **Comprehensive national legislation is key.** The model national response (MNR) provides sound guidance in this area and has been used by almost 50 countries to date. The MNR recommends legislation that is broad enough to cover a wide range of practices, nuanced enough to be used in new situations (e.g., when crimes are committed through computers with no hands-on contact abuse with the victims) and forward thinking enough to anticipate new tools of abuse (e.g., extended reality technology). There is a need to move beyond voluntary actions of industry and to strike a balance in legislation across all human rights (e.g., privacy and safety).

▶ **Global collaboration must be ramped up quickly.** "Borderless crimes" require borderless responses. Without a global approach, perpetrators will find "safe havens" in countries with more lenient legislation and/or slip through the cracks and onto the dark web. There is also a need to harmonize approaches to the sharing of information on child victims, develop standards for the use of data and adopt a single framework for a uniform classification of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, the lack of systematic and harmonized data collection and infrastructure for robust analysis of online risks and harms for children in the context of other forms of violence remains a critical barrier to securing a safe internet for children. These gaps impact the accurate identification of problems and needs and the effective measurement of progress. They also undermine investments and advocacy, resulting in limited political attention and financial resources allocated to the issue.[16]

14 Email from Safe Online, 6 December 2023.
15 Disrupting Harm (see footnote 6) ECPAT (see footnote 7).
   Equality Now, Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women and Girls: A Call for International Standards (2022).
   UNICEF (2021), Ending Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Lessons learned and promising practices in low- and middle-income countries, UNICEF New York.
   WeProtect Global Alliance, Framing the Future: How the Model National Response is supporting national efforts to end child sexual exploitation and abuse online (2022) Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Safe Online Knowledge Platform (2023).
16 Email from Safe Online, 6 December 2023.

▶ **The private sector must increase its engagement on all fronts**. This includes technology companies, digital service providers and platforms, online payment services, gaming companies and the financial sector. The private sector should increase industry cross-collaboration to co-create and deploy advanced technical solutions (including emerging "safe by design" and trust and safety – or T&S – techniques), cooperate with civil society and law enforcement and finance national and regional efforts to end online sexual violence. There is also a need for greater collaboration to address ongoing challenges such as end-to-end encryption, with technology companies urged to lead in developing and ensuring compliance with policies that respect both the safety *and* privacy of their users.

▶ **Victims and survivors need specialized and long-term support.** As some reports indicate, online child sexual abuse material "lasts forever". Material circulates online for years after the abuse has taken place, hindering both reporting by victims and action by law enforcement. While many of the counseling and therapy techniques for in-person child sexual violence work, online sexual violence presents unique impacts and traumas, which require adaptation of some therapies. Levels of secondary trauma are significant. Recent studies indicate that the harm of child sexual abuse material online goes beyond the children involved. Content moderators who work to take down this material from the internet, as well as other front-line responders, face on-going and long-term mental health consequences, which also need attention.[17]

▶ **Material and/or actions that are self-generated by young people** must be carefully identified. Harm occurs when self-generated material is developed through coercion and/or distributed or shared against the will of the children who created it. There is a danger, however, that attempts to protect children from this harm may run counter to respect for their individual agency. This is especially true for older children and adolescents. Thus far, responses in this area have focused on increasing children's knowledge about their bodies and what is or is not appropriate touching; some of these programs are promising, if complemented by other services, but their impact on behavior (as opposed to knowledge levels) is not yet clear. There is evidence for the positive impact of programs that focus on healthy relationships and safe dating among adolescents, although most of it comes from high-income countries. In addition, legislation and law enforcement must be able to separate out self-generated sexual content that is not criminal and handle it appropriately.

▶ More and better programs are needed to **strengthen the overall digital skills of children and their families**, including online safety. These programs should promote sexual health and development curricula for children and adolescents, including comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual education and notions of consent, privacy, power dynamics and potential abuse by peers and intimate partners. Research indicates that open communication between youth and their parents is protective against risky sexual behavior (such as early or unprotected intercourse). Children of parents who openly discuss internet use with their children – including undesirable and desirable aspects of such use – are at
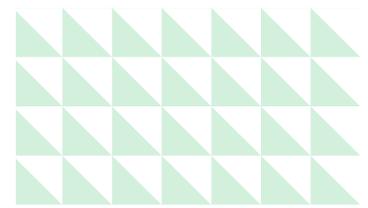
Of the 39 organizations reviewed:

38%

of their strategies have programs or initiatives to address childhood sexual violence online.

Examples include:

▪ $75 million invested in safe online projects by Safe Violence Fund

▪ THORN's Safer as a Solution for tech companies to detect, review & report child sexual abuse material

▪ UNICEF as a member of the Child Online Protection (COP) Initiative to update the Guidelines for Industry on Child Online Protection for safer and more secure use of Internet-based services and associated technology

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17 Invisible Risks: Content Moderators and the Trauma of Child Sexual Abuse Materials, a project of Middlesex University in the UK and INHOPE, funded by the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and the Technology Coalition, March 2022.

reduced risk of experiencing online harm. On the other hand, children whose parents engage in "restrictive mediation" (restricting or surveilling use of the internet) are at increased risk of harm.

## Sexual violence against boys

Stakeholders want to understand more fully the prevalence of sexual violence against boys and the implications of gender and social norms on the identification and prevention of as well as responses to this violence.

This paper does not provide a rigorous review of what is known about sexual violence against boys. It draws on stakeholder insights and on several recent studies about boys' experience of sexual violence to highlight points that might guide further discussion.[18]

Key issues are summarized below.

▶ There is a **lack of research on the prevalence of childhood sexual violence among boys** as well as the specific trajectories and challenges boys face in this regard. Underestimating prevalence among boys impacts understanding of the scale of the overall problem; in online settings, some studies suggest equal rates of abuse among boys and girls. Misconceptions can impact prevention efforts that meet boys' needs.

▶ The **gender and social norms that fuel childhood sexual violence also impact boys.** Boys are affected by taboos, norms and pressures that prevent them from seeking help or protecting themselves and, in some cases, facilitate aggressive sexual behavior toward others. For example, there is more same-sex perpetration among boys, making boys feel "feminized" by their abuse and subjecting them to stigma related to homosexuality. Stereotypes around masculinity, the expectation that boys are "strong" and the shame families feel around these events all magnify the trauma of sexual violence for boys. All this leads to lower levels of disclosure and help-seeking for boys, e.g., through services or formal mechanisms.

▶ In many situations, **law enforcement works against boys**. Often boys are subject to sexual violence because of risky behaviors driven by poverty or other factors. As a result, they are often perceived as criminals first and victims second. They end up being punished instead of supported in the aftermath of disclosure. This is evident in the continuing high number of boys survivors who are identified through justice and substance abuse programs rather than through child protection services.

18 ECPAT International and McMaster University (2021), A Global Review of Existing Literature on the Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Bangkok: ECPAT International.
ECPAT International (2023), Global Boys Summit Report: Forging Collective Solutions and Responses Towards the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Boys, Bangkok: ECPAT International
UNICEF Department of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (2020), Research on the Sexual Exploitation of Boys: Findings, Ethical Considerations and Methodological Challenges
Jossenhans, J, Kavenagh, M, Smith, S, Wekerle, C. Gender, rights and responsibilities: The need for a global analysis of the sexual exploitation of boys, Child Abuse and Neglect 110 (2020).
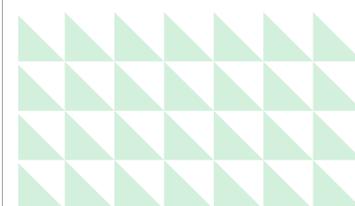
Of the 39 organizations reviewed:

8%

of their strategies have programs or initiatives focused on the intersectionality of boys and/or their perceptions of and responses to risk of sexual violence in childhood.

Examples include:

▪ Global Boys Initiative launched by ECPAT International

▪ Family for Every Child's Blue Umbrella Day initiative to draw attention for appropriate protection to boys to protect them from sexual violence

- **Efforts to reach boys should start early,** with specific messages and skills embedded in community and school-based programs to change norms and behaviors. These programs present opportunities to deconstruct rigid gender norms, impart skills for healthier relationships and promote a willingness to discuss sexuality in more open, honest ways. Developing safe spaces for boys at risk and survivors of sexual violence allow for the building of trust and establishing more equal power dynamics. Studies by ECPAT, UNICEF and others reveal boys' desire for these safe spaces.[19]

- **Services developed to support survivors of sexual violence should be trauma-informed and gender-sensitive.** Service providers should be helped to understand their own biases to ensure that boys feel safe, and that their emotional and psychological and physical needs are met. Service providers need ongoing training, guidance and technical support to improve their knowledge and skills to work with boy survivors.

Stakeholders believe that more research on boys' experience of sexual violence would be helpful. This would include research on the intersectionality of boy survivors with other issues, including boys' perceptions of and responses to risk and the impact of pornography on healthy sexual development. More work and research in this area would also help improve understanding of issues related to children of different gender identities.

Preventing abuse behaviors

There continues to be some tension between stakeholders who believe that the full force of collective efforts should be on survivors of childhood sexual violence and those who feel that more attention should be paid to preventing abuse behaviors. The former fear a shift in focus to preventing abuse behaviors while so much remains to be done to protect and support survivors. The latter point to a lack of evidence on what works to prevent perpetration of childhood sexual violence. They note that the sector overall seems reluctant to deal with this problem, despite its potential impact on reducing child sexual violence. The emphasis is often on victim support which, while important, limits the extent to which solutions aimed specifically at preventing abuse behaviors are developed, advocated with policymakers and implemented at scale. They highlight evidence that supports the links between perpetration prevention efforts and prevention in general.[20] There is, however, a growing consensus on the need for balance between these two perspectives.

19 See ECPAT series of case studies, which also document how working with boys can help transform gender norms and reduce violence in communities. https://ecpat.org/story/global-boys-initiative-case-studies/.

20 Fix, R.L., Newman, A.T. , Assini-Meytin, L.A, and Letourneau, E.J. The public's knowledge about child sexual abuse influences, its perceptions of prevention and associated policies. Child Abuse and Neglect, 146, 106447 (2023).
Letourneau, E.J., Schaeffer, C., Bradshaw, C., Ruuzicka, A., Assini-Meytin, L., Nair, R., and Thorne, E. Responsible Behavior with Younger Children: A pilot randomized evaluation of a school-based child sexual abuse perpetration program. Child Maltreatment (2022).
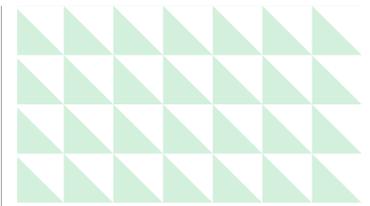Assini-Meytin, L., Fix, R.L., and Letourneau, E.J. Child sexual abuse: The need for a perpetration prevention focus. Journal of Child Sexual Abuse. 29(1), 22-40 (2020).

This paper does not attempt to provide a rigorous review of what is known about preventing abuse behaviors. Instead, by reviewing the recent documents of key actors working on issues related to preventing abuse behaviors,[21] it provides a few basic facts about what is known and where current and future research is moving.

▶ Most people who offend sexually against children, whether online or in-person, are **people within a child's circle of trust**, i.e., family and/or community members, teachers, and authority figures. Despite connections with unknown people that are made online, notions of "stranger danger" are misleading and not helpful to the development of effective preventive interventions. Adults convicted of sex crimes are unlikely to reoffend sexually, with recent large-scale studies finding lifetime recidivism rates between 10 and 20 percent. There is strong evidence for post-incarceration treatment and support reducing the recidivism rates among those adults who remain at high risk.[22]

▶ **A significant proportion of people who offend sexually against children are themselves children**, usually just a few years older than the victim. The proportion of offenses committed by children increases as the victim's age decreases. Incarceration, sex offender registration and public notification are known to be both ineffective and harmful for children who have offended sexually against other children (see the table on Implementation and Enforcement of Laws in Annex 5). On the other hand, appropriate interventions can prevent the onset of problem sexual behaviors among adolescents.

Moreover, the vast majority of youth adjudicated of sexual offenses – 97% – never reoffend sexually, indicating that simply being caught is a potential intervention. For youth who have been caught, there are well-validated family-based treatment programs that improve youth education and health outcomes, reduce recidivism and are cost-effective.[23]

Of the 39 organizations reviewed:

13%

of their strategies have initiatives or programs related to preventing abuse behaviors. An example includes the Global Perpetration Resource Center, being launched by the Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse at John Hopkins University, which aims to increase knowledge and action to prevent and respond to abuse behaviors.

21 Caldwell, Michael F, Quantifying the Decline in Juvenile Sexual Recidivism Rates, Psychology, Public Policy and Law, July 2016.
DiGioia, R and Beslay L, Helpseeker and Perpetrator Initiatives: Child Sex Abuse and Exploitation (2023).
Gewirtz-Medan and Finkelhor, D, Sexual Abuse and Assault in a Large National Sample of Children and Adolescents, Child Maltreatment (2020) Vol 25(2) 203-214.
Gannoni, A, Voce, A, Napier, S, Boxall, H, Thomsen, D. Preventing child sexual abuse material offending: An international review of initiatives, Australian Institute of Criminology Research Report 28 (2023).

22 Wilson, R., Cortoni, F., and McWhinnie, A.J. Circles of Support and Accountability: A Canadian National Replication of Outcome Findings. Sexual Abuse (21), 412-430. (2009).
Elliott, I.A. and Beech, A.R. A U.K. cost-benefit analysis of Circles of Support and Accountability interventions. Sexual Abuse (25), 211-229 (2018).
Duwe, G Can Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) significantly reduce sexual recidivism? Results from a randomized controlled trial in Minnesota. Journal of Experimental Criminology (14), 463-484. (2018).

23 Dopp, A., Borduin, C., Rothman, D. and Leourneau, E.J.. Evidence-based treatments for youths who engage in illegal sexual behaviors. Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (46), 631-646. (2017).

▶ There is a growing body of evidence that **online programs that reach out to people with a sexual attraction to children**, offering concrete strategies and tools to manage these feelings, can have positive impacts on preventing perpetration. The Help Wanted initiative developed by the Moore Center for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at Johns Hopkins University, a self-help intervention for people with a sexual attraction to children, is an example. A 2023 study on help-seeker and perpetrator prevention initiatives analyses several ongoing programs against 14 criteria. Studies like this are an important step in summarizing what we know works in a way that can inform future program development.

▶ While the criminalization of childhood sexual violence and the enforcement of laws against it are critical, particularly for adults, there are **some current practices in response to perpetration that seem driven more by politics than by evidence**. For example, there is no evidence to suggest that sex offender residency restrictions and notification schemes work. The usefulness of pharmacological treatments, online treatment programs and restorative justice approaches need more research.

Clearly more needs to be learned about preventing and responding to the abuse behaviors that drive childhood sexual violence. The Moore Center for Prevention of Child Abuse has recently received funding for a Global Perpetration Resource Center, which will work with public health experts to identify and provide information on rigorously tested and vetted programs to prevent child sexual abuse behaviors. This Center, and initiatives like it, will hopefully lead to much greater understanding of preventing abuse behaviors.

The views of stakeholders on evidence

Reviews of the literature, stakeholder interviews and an analysis of organizational strategies yield a range of views on evidence and its challenges. A number of these are summarized below.

▶ **While many evidence-informed strategies present challenges, some are more difficult to implement than others**, e.g., changing the social and cultural norms that facilitate childhood sexual violence. The "normalization of violence" in popular culture, negative stereotypes about adolescent girls, toxic notions of masculinity, "adultism" (leading to lack of respect for children) and the stigma placed on survivors are some of the examples cited. Many stakeholders mentioned the "culture of silence" that surrounds this issue, particularly on issues such as incest and sexual violence against boys.

▶ **More research is needed on what works across a range of settings.** While true for all countries, evidence is particularly scarce in low- and middle-income settings. Filling these gaps requires greater engagement of local experts and institutions in setting the research agenda. They also note that research to date tends to neglect both harder to reach geographic areas and, more importantly, harder to reach children (e.g., children with disabilities and children living outside of families). Furthermore, there is a dearth of evidence on prevention of and effective responses to sexual violence among children suffering intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression (e.g., children with different gender orientations and racial and ethnic minorities).

▶ **Measurement and data generation are key issues**, as lack of data on violence against children – and sexual violence in particular – fuels the notion that these are marginal phenomena affecting only certain groups of children. Data is necessary to improve prevalence estimates, monitor commitments, inform policies and programs and assess their effectiveness. The inclusion of specific measures and indicators for child sexual violence recently issued by UNICEF, in the International Classification of Violence Against Children, is considered a major step forward.[24] More needs to be done in this area.

▶ **More evidence is needed on how interventions work at scale**. Frustration exists on the lack of progress in this area, particularly the lack of funding for such research and the lack of investment in researchers and research institutions in low- and middle-income countries.

▶ **National governments need to lead in adapting effective strategies in their own contexts**. At present, national governments are more often the "consumers" of research done and/or strategies developed by external actors than the initiators or funders of this work.

24 United Nations Children's Fund, International Classification of Violence against Children. UNICEF: New York (2023).

3. Political Will

Through the literature, organizational strategies and stakeholder interviews, a strong consensus emerges on political will as an essential factor in ending childhood sexual violence. Political commitment is seen as a precondition for implementing evidence-informed solutions at scale, increasing funding (particularly at national level) and improving measurement of individual interventions as well as overall progress.

To stimulate further thought and discussion, this paper offers a definition of political will, suggests ways it can be generated and sustained and explores its dynamics related to ending violence against children.

Defining Political Will

Political will is a multifaceted concept that can be defined in several ways. In a seminal study published in 2010, entitled "Defining Political Will," the authors offer the following definition: *political will is the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem*.[25] This support depends in large part on the "distribution of preferences" (who wants what), "the authority, capacity and legitimacy of key decision-makers or reformers" (whether those who want an outcome have the power and means to achieve it) and "commitment to preferences" (how strongly held the preferences of key decision makers are). The authors also posit four key elements of political will. In brief, political will exists when (1) a sufficient set of decisions-makers (2) with a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda (3) is committed to supporting (4) a commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution.[26]

While many other definitions of political will exist, they all rest on concepts like those outlined above. Political will depends on *opinion* (framing an issue in a way that makes people care about it); *intensity* (how strongly people feel about an issue) and *saliency* (whether people feel that acting on an issue will make a difference in their lives or in the lives of the people to whom they feel accountable).[27]

25 Post, L, Raile, A and Raile, E. Defining Political Will, Politics and Policy 2010.
26 Roberts, D. What is political will anyway? Vox, December 2017.
27 Charney, C. Political Will: What is it? How is it measured?
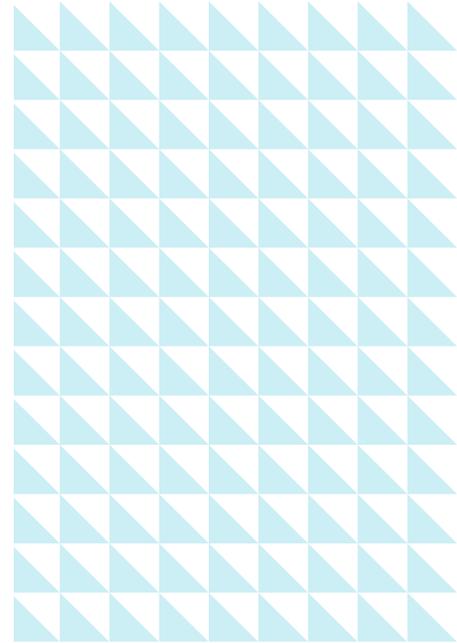
This last point is particularly important. Elected officials may believe strongly that an issue is important – and even be convinced that others care about it too – but if they do not feel that the issue looms large in voting decisions, their "will" to act is weak. As one analyst notes, if support is a mile wide but an inch deep, political will is shallow.[28]

What is known about generating political will?

Many other sectors grapple with the issue of political will. In a guide for its members, Transparency International lays out strategies for building political will to fight corruption. Defining political will as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors", the guide suggests how to measure political will and describes four key drivers, i.e., individual, organizational, relational and societal factors. It also outlines four strategies for building political will[29]:

▶ strengthening familiarity and trust between civil society and state actors (i.e., avoiding "them vs us" mentalities);

▶ seeking critical collaborations (i.e., reaching beyond "the usual suspects");

▶ demonstrating the clear benefits of the policies or solutions being advocated (i.e., marshalling the evidence); and

▶ lobbying and using policy reforms (i.e., rewarding positive action and holding people and/or institutions accountable).

Thus, political will seems to have at least two different, mutually reinforcing elements: create incentives for policy makers to act (e.g., by providing solutions and rewards for adopting them); and hold them accountable for "doing the right thing" (e.g., using lobbying, advocacy and mobilizing techniques). There is a growing body of literature on the latter. In an evaluation of a decade-long community action program in California, the Center for Evaluation Innovation distinguishes between approaches that are designed to achieve particular wins (e.g., the passage of a particular law at a specific point in time) and those that build power to influence and sustain longer-term change.[30] There are several other studies that explore how different social movements succeed over time, exploring their leadership approaches, campaign strategies and ground-level tactics. While they vary in emphasis and in the movements they study, the conclusion is clear: creating accountability mechanisms that are robust, politically savvy and led by the most affected communities is key to success.[31]

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28 (See footnote 16).
29 Martinez, R and Kukutschka, B. Building Political Will: Topic Guide.
     Transparency International (2014).
30 Coffman, J, Barsoum, G, Lopez, A and Brothe Gantz, M. Advocacy that Builds Power:
     Transforming Policies and Systems for Health and Racial Equity – A Report for the California
     Endowment. Center for Evaluation Innovation 2021.
31 Among many other references are the following:
     Crutchfield, L. How Change Happens: Why Some Social Movements Succeed While Others Don't
     Sunstein, CR. How Change Happens. The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA 2020.
     Green, D. How Change Happens. Oxford University Press: New York 2016.

In an article in the American Journal of Public Health in 2007, Jeremy Shifman explored how some of the principles behind generating political will could be applied to public health issues. He conducted case studies on the political priority given to maternal mortality reduction in five countries: Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia and Nigeria.[32] He identified nine factors that shaped the degree to which maternal mortality reduction emerged on the national policy agenda of each of these countries. The nine factors fall into three broad categories:

▶ transnational influences, i.e., the ways in which international advocates and organizations put safe motherhood on the global agenda and then worked to influence national political systems to embrace the cause (through norm provision and resources provision, among other strategies);

▶ domestic advocacy, i.e., the means through which these international cues are translated at national level (through policy community cohesion, political entrepreneurship, the development of indicators, clear policy alternatives); and

▶ national political environments, i.e., aspects of the political and social environments over which domestic advocates have limited control (such as political transitions and competing health priorities).

Applying what is known to ending childhood sexual violence

More than a decade later, Shiffman and Yusra Ribhi Shawar apply similarly rigorous research techniques to explore how ending violence against children might become a global political priority.[33] Through a series of interviews with experts across the world, they identify a number of reasons why ending violence against children is not rising on the global political agenda despite its high global prevalence, relationship to a wide range of other problems and condemnation in most societies. These reasons include:

▶ **the wide variety of forms** that violence against children can take, with an equally wide array of perpetrators;

▶ **children lack power** to sway decision makers and gain access to protective structures;

▶ there is **inadequate data on the problem**, despite improvements in the last several years based on the results of Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (e.g., which have been completed or are underway in 24 countries);

▶ there is **a lack of consensus on solutions**, which are often complex and lack sufficient evidence on effectiveness;

▶ there is **unease among some stakeholders with the focus on violence against children** as opposed to more general child protection issues;

32 Shiffman, J. Generating Political Priority for Maternal Mortality Reduction in 5 Developing Countries, American Journal of Public Health (May 2007).
33 Shawar, Y and Shiffman, J. A Global Political Priority: addressing violence against children. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2021;99:414-421.

- these **framing and solution debates are discouraging for policy makers**, fueling suspicions that this is not a solvable problem;

- there are many networks working on different aspects of the issue, resulting in **uneasy collaboration**; and

- **coalition-building has been slow and uneven** with other, more powerful and well-funded sectors.

The authors analyze these challenges in some depth and articulate three key challenges that must be met to move the issue forward: strengthening global governance in a way that brings stakeholders together while still recognizing their unique contributions; finding opportunities to link the issue with other agendas already prioritized in the SDGs; and reversing the perception of many policy makers concerning the intractability of the problem.

In 2022, Shiffman and Shawaz extended their analysis to explore how child sexual abuse emerged as a political priority in the United Kingdom.[34] They apply a "multiple streams model" to child sexual abuse, which posits that issues emerge on the policy agenda when three streams – problems, policies and politics – come together. The *problem stream* refers to how some problems rise to the top of the flow of broad conditions that face societies (e.g., through indicators of an issue's severity, pressure on policy makers to improve existing policies and/or events that focus their attention on a problem), the *policy stream* refers to the set of alternatives that are developed to address these problems (e.g., clear and convincing solutions) and the *politics stream* consists of large-scale developments and political influences (e.g., elections and national mood) that arise largely independent of developments surrounding the policy problem at hand.

In their analysis, Shiffman and Shawaz demonstrate how these three streams converged in the United Kingdom. In the problem stream, proponents worked to re-frame public understanding of survivors away from the idea that they are culpable and toward the idea that they are children who deserve support. They also publicized the prevalence of the problem, drawing attention to a few high-profile scandals to make the point. In the policy stream, persistent and well-connected proponents advanced evidence-informed and politically feasible solutions, backed by strong collaboration and agreement on approaches. In the politics stream, full advantage was taken of the Prime Minister's personal interest in the issue, which resulted in the engagement of more powerful institutions and greater levels of funding for national programs.

Based on this analysis, three recommendations are made: (1) proponents need to re-frame culpability in child sexual abuse cases, including by advancing new ideas around child safeguarding and protection that are survivor-centered; (2) proponents must be ready with politically and technically feasible solutions around which there are high levels of consensus; and (3) proponents must seek allies among political elites and other leaders at national and sub-national levels.

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34 Shawar, Y, Truong, P, and Shiffman, J. The emergence of political priority for addressing child sexual abuse in the United Kingdom. Child Abuse and Neglect 128 (2022).

Shiffman and Shawaz are now looking at these same questions in five other countries, spread across four continents. Their findings will help refine understanding and action related to building political will to end childhood sexual violence at national level.

A theme emerging from the work of Shiffman and Shawaz – and from the studies on social change cited earlier – is the need for strategic communications about a problem and its solutions. In an article published in *Child Abuse and Neglect* two years ago, the authors point out the gap that exists between what experts in the field of ending child sexual violence *know* (i.e., that it is preventable) and what policy makers and the public *believe* (i.e., that it is inevitable). They outline a three-step approach to develop and test communication strategies that align public with expert perspectives.[35] Other studies emphasize the need to connect more strategic communications with campaign approaches, to activate the public for change, which will, in turn, activate those with political power. This requires combining technical expertise with campaigning know-how, a rare combination for the sector to date. It requires sophisticated opposition research, strong and nimble digital approaches, experience in the timing and prioritization of campaign actions and flexible funding. Many stakeholders express a desire to learn more in this area.

The views of stakeholders on political will

In the research, interviews and analysis of organizational strategies undertaken for this paper, a range of insights are expressed related to political will. The main themes of these insights are summarized below:

▶ **Link ending child sexual violence with other sectors**, particularly those that already have higher levels of political will and funding. Potential models include areas such as women's rights, sexual and reproductive health, LGBTQI+ issues (e.g., the acceptance of same-sex marriage), HIV/AIDS (e.g., availability of drugs), changing norms around smoking, acceptance of seat belts and baby seats in cars and advocacy around climate change. In addition, the prevention of online sexual abuse connects to efforts to address cybersecurity and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

▶ **Provide evidence-informed solutions** and demonstrate what works. Emphasize solutions that will work at scale. Stress interventions with high levels of support, backed up by rigorous, convincing research, e.g., some of those emerging from the INSPIRE strategies.

▶ **Hold politicians to account through robust mechanisms** like campaigns and mass mobilization of constituencies. "Make more noise"; link action to political election and budget cycles and make the consequences of inaction clear. Use strategic communications to get the public "on side" with transformative change in this area.

35 Fix, R, Busso, D, Mendeson, T, and Letourneau, E. Changing the paradigm: Using strategic communications to promote recognition of child sexual abuse as a preventable public health problem. Child Abuse and Neglect; 117 (July 2021).

▶ **Put survivors front and center**. Support survivor-led and survivor-centered groups at all levels. Advocate for funding of these groups and the need for them to set priorities in their own communities and contexts.

▶ **Make it personal** – appeal to policy makers as human beings, parents and caregivers. Help them to understand root causes, convince them that the problem is solvable and give them ways they can contribute to solutions.

▶ **Tailor approaches to different contexts**, choosing tactics, messages and champions that are appropriate for each context.

Political will is an issue that stakeholders in the sector care deeply about. They want to do more and do better. They are ready to adopt more robust accountability measures. More evidence is emerging about what works and there is greater consensus on the need for a united front. There is an openness to working with other sectors, from which much can be learned. There is commitment to supporting survivors – and children and young people – to lead in advocacy and accountability efforts. In other words, many of the limitations noted by Shifman, Shawaz and others may be receding, opening new opportunities for progress in ending childhood sexual violence.

4. Funding

There is broad consensus in the literature and among stakeholders that funding for ending childhood sexual violence is inadequate, short-term and not fit for purpose. This section looks at what is known about funding and summarizes views about what is needed to move forward.

Most analyses of funding trends address ending violence against children as opposed to childhood sexual violence specifically. This is a problem, since costing childhood sexual violence requires unique strategies that are not captured in more general efforts. The costing studies that exist cover two main aspects of funding: the costs of violence against children to individuals, communities and nations; and funding patterns and trends.

The costs of violence against children

It is important to note that the costing of violence against children – and of child sexual abuse – is complex and presents sensitive challenges. The impacts of violence on victims and survivors go above and beyond what can be quantified or assigned a monetary value and cannot (and should not) be calculated in this way. Nonetheless, credible estimates of the costs to individuals – and the communities and countries in which they live – are necessary to highlight the cost-effectiveness of prevention efforts and underline the gap between what is needed and what is available. It is in this spirit that this section reviews a few of the more recent attempts to estimate these costs.

In 2015 the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Child Fund Alliance issued a study entitled *The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence Against Children*.[36] The study includes the costs of sexual, physical and psychological violence, hazardous child labor and children associated with armed groups – to individuals, communities, governments and economies. Still considered one of the most rigorous, comprehensive efforts to calculate these costs, it provides a summary of available evidence from different countries, estimates of the global costs of violence and exploitation against children, trends in government spending and a series of policy recommendations. The study takes a productivity loss approach in it is analysis.[37] It estimates, for example, the productivity lost from victims and survivors who are

36   ODI and Child Fund Alliance. The Costs and Economic Impact of Violence Against Children (2015).
37   Pierce A. Productivity Losses and how they are calculated. CREST, University of Sydney (2016).
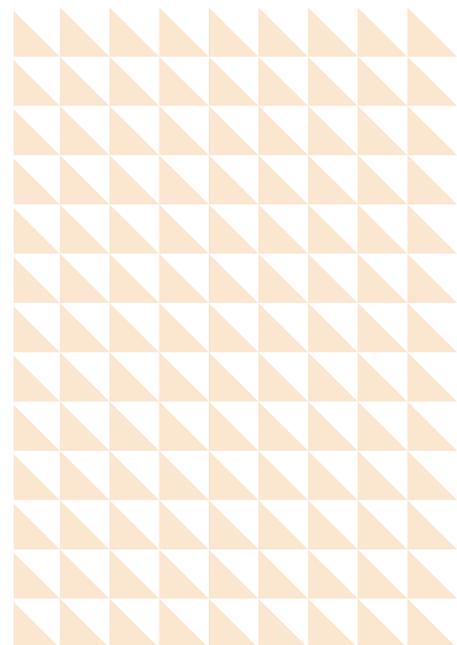
unable to contribute fully to economic labor across the life span, the costs of hospital resources required to support these individuals, premature death of children due to abuse and the costs of legal support and proceedings, among other factors. Its results indicate that the global costs of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children are significant. In the lower estimates, the global costs amount to 2% of global GDP, and in the highest scenario it goes up to 8% of global GDP. The global impacts and costs resulting from the consequences of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children can be as high as USD 7 trillion, considerably more than the investment required to prevent such violence.

There have also been country-specific studies of the economic costs of childhood sexual violence. This paper will mention three. The first is a Canadian study that measures the economic burden of child sexual abuse.[38] It utilizes a prevalence-based method to estimate the impact of child sexual abuse in Canada in 1998. Cost categories include mental and physical health, social and public services, justice, education/employment, mortality and work loss. Annual losses are estimated at approximately CAN dollars 3.70 billion. The second is a 2018 study of the economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States. The costs of child sexual abuse are measured from the societal perspective using an incidence-based approach. It includes health care costs (child and adult, including physical and mental health), productivity losses, child welfare costs, violence/crime costs (including costs associated with assault, robbery, burglary and theft), special education costs, and suicide death costs and (separately) quality-adjusted life year (QALY) losses.[39] The study highlights the average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child sexual abuse as well as the average lifetime cost per victim of fatal child maltreatment. Using a rigorous methodology, the study concludes that in 2015 the total economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States was approximately USD 9.3 billion.

By presenting credible estimates of the fiscal toll of child sexual abuse, the authors hope to inspire policy makers to invest in evidence-based prevention measures rather than in after-the-fact approaches.

In 2021, the United Kingdom Home Office issued a report on the economic and social costs of contact child sexual abuse in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2019.[40] The report builds on two previous pieces of work looking at the cost of child sexual abuse in the United Kingdom, in 2014 and 2017 respectively. It considers a range of costs, including expenditures: *in anticipation of child sexual abuse*, such as protective and preventative measures related to education and training; *as a consequence of* child sexual abuse, such as lost economic input and costs to health and victims' services; and *in response to* child sexual abuse, such costs to thepolice and criminal justice system and the cost of safeguarding victims. It includes financial costs (direct cash and budget costs associated with child sexual abuse) and non-financial costs (costs which use notional, non-market values which estimate harm in monetary terms). Together these costs are estimated to be 10.1 billion British pounds (2018/2019 prices), with physical and emotional harm accounting for nearly

38 Hankivsky,O, and Draker, D. The Economic Costs of Child Sexual Abuse in Canada: A Preliminary Analysis. Journal of Health and Social Policy (2008).
39 Letouneau, E, Brown, D, Fang, X, Hassan, A, and Mercy, j. The Economic Burden of Child Sexual Abuse in the United States. Child Abuse and Neglect (2018), 413-422.
40 Radakin, F, Scholes, A, Soloman, K, Thomas-Lacroix, C and Davies, D. The Economic and Social Cost of Child Sexual Abuse, United Kingdom Home Office (2021).

two-thirds (64%) of this total. Victims and survivors bear most of these costs, with the Government and the voluntary sector also heavily impacted.

These studies use different definitions and methodologies and are tied to national contexts. The point is not to compare their analyses or conclusions. Rather, it is to note that, in all these studies, the costs of childhood sexual violence to children and to the societies in which they live are significant and long-lasting. They impact every aspect of a child's future life. These studies make a compelling case for prevention at every level and in every country.

Funding levels and trends

Official Development Assistance

Counting Pennies 3 is the third in a series of reports investigating the state of Official Development Assistance (ODA) investment to end violence against children.[41] The first report establishes a baseline for investment in ending violence against children after the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The second takes stock of how investment changed in the first three years of SDG implementation, adding analysis of spending on the different INSPIRE strategies and each SDG. The third report examines investment in ending violence against children in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing initial data on how it has influenced donor investments.

The key findings of the third report include:

▶ **ODA investment to end violence against children has decreased** by 10% since 2018. Spending on projects that solely address violence against children is 50% lower in 2020 compared with 2018. In some other areas, this decline in ODA has been replaced in part by investments from international financial institutions (IFIs). This has not been the case for ending violence against children, which receives very little funding from IFIs, i.e., less than 0.35% of total ODA investment in 2020.

▶ **The vast majority of ODA for ending violence against children comes from just 10 donors**, who account for over four-fifths (86%) of total investment.[42] These 10 donors tend to direct funding towards addressing violence against children in association with other objectives rather than adopting it as a standalone funding priority.

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41 Counting Pennies 3: Assessment of Official Development Assistance to end violence against children (2022).
Definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA) – page 3: ODA is defined as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Its calculation and reporting is defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Data collected by the DAC is the principal measure used in most aid targets and assessments of aid performance. For any expenditure or other transfer of resources to qualify as ODA, it must (1) benefit countries on the Development Assistance Committee list of ODA recipients, (2) be provided by official agencies, (3) be aimed at promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries, and (4) be concessional in character.
42 [36] The 10 donors include: Canada, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, UNICEF, UN Peacebuilding Fund, Spain, Ireland, Norway, and Belgium.

- Donors' investment decisions continue to be largely driven by humanitarian crises. In 2020, nearly **36% of the ODA investment to end violence against children went towards nine conflict-affected and fragile countries** in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

- In 2020, there was a 12% increase in child protection-specific funding from 2018, but **the scope of identified needs covered dropped from 42% to 24%** compared with 2018. This demonstrates further how investment in ending violence is lagging behind the massive increase in children's protection needs.

- In 2020, **10% of total ODA designated for ending violence against children included response to the COVID 19 pandemic**, ranging from 2% to 24.5% of ODA among the top 10 donors. It is estimated that only a small percentage of this funding went toward interventions specifically designed to end violence against children.

- **ODA in pathfinding countries[43] remains unchanged** at slightly over 11% of total ODA funding related to ending violence against children. This suggests that donors are yet to ramp up support for countries that have prioritized ending violence against children in their implementation of the SDGs.

- An analysis of **investment in INSPIRE-related strategies** shows that 50% of funding related to violence against children goes to evidence-informed solutions. Almost 20% of ODA in this area is invested in education-related interventions.

Counting Pennies 3 makes three main recommendations: ODA funding to ending violence against children should be increased; there should be standardized methodology developed for tracking donor investments in this area; and there is a need for further research in the trends identified in the report.

In 2022 the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children developed an "investment case" to encourage greater funding to end childhood sexual violence.[44] It asks for an initial USD 1 billion for the End Violence Fund to support three main areas of work, i.e., the creation of enabling environments, strengthening of society wide services and improving services for children and families. The funding would flow to a range of actors – among them grassroots and survivor-led organizations – and would prevent over 22 million children from experiencing sexual violence.

The investment case lays out a series of targets that would be facilitated by this funding, including school enrollments, health care benefits, and economic gains.

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43 Since its launch in July of 2016, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children has promoted the concept of Pathfinding, which aims to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, galvanize action, and establish a standard of national violence prevention throughout the world. Pathfinding countries are those whose government leaders: (1) make a formal, public commitment to comprehensive action to end all forms of violence against children and (2) request to become a pathfinder within the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Within 18 months of pathfinding status being confirmed by the End Violence Secretariat, pathfinding country governments are expected to appoint a senior government focal point to lead the in-country process; convene and support a multi-stakeholder group; collect, structure and analyze data on violence against children; develop an evidence-based and costed national action plan that sets commitments for three to five years, and a related resource mobilization plan; and consult with children and adhere to partnership standards on child participation. Today, 38 countries have joined the partnership as Pathfinders, spreading the initiative's reach to every continent.

44 Tackling Childhood Sexual Violence Investment Case: An Introduction. Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. (December 2022).

National funding

In September 2023 a report was issued that studied the levels and types of national funding allocated to prevent and respond to sexual abuse against children across 20 high-, middle- and low-income countries across Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific.[45] Entitled *Safeguarding Childhood: An Assessment of Funding to Prevent and End Child Sexual Abuse*, the report builds on the *Out of the Shadows Index*, which provides global benchmarks for how countries are addressing child exploitation and abuse.[46] The *Safeguarding Childhood* report draws on range of data sources and the advice of an expert advisory group, which provided guidance on the choice of countries and the analysis.

Key takeaways from the report include:

▶ Even as recognition of child sexual abuse grows – and despite the promulgation of laws and policies to prevent and respond to its occurrence – **programs and initiatives remain perennially underfunded**.

▶ **Where national plans and laws exist, they often lack budgetary commitments to meet their goals**. These plans and laws are further undermined by lack of government enforcement, lack of public awareness, and legal loopholes that enable impunity even when enforcement is pursued.

▶ **Prevention remains underprioritized and underfunded**. Increased investment in what is already known to work must be promoted even as research continues to measure prevention and take interventions to scale.

▶ **Child sexual abuse is often lumped together with other budgeting priorities** (e.g., child protection or gender-based violence). While this can have benefits, it can also obscure funding commitments specific to child sexual abuse.

▶ **Budget clarity and transparency are not necessarily correlated with the macroeconomic status** of a country, i.e., whether it is high-, medium- or low-income.

Furthermore, sociopolitical or fiscal upheaval – for example driven by COViD-19 or other crises – imperils funding for child sexual abuse.

The report offers several policy recommendations, including that: governments should improve budgetary transparency; national plans should be funded; harmful social norms should be addressed; civil society groups and private companies need to collaborate and invest in data collection; policymakers and technology companies need to communicate and collaborate toend child sexual abuse in the digital realm; and researchers have a role to play in independently monitoring, evaluating and reporting on resources to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse.

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45 Safeguarding Childhood: As Assessment of Funding to Prevent and End Child Sexual Abuse. FP Analytics and World Vision International. 2023.

46 The Out of the Shadows Index benchmarks how 60 countries (home to approximately 85% of the global population of children) are preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Accessed through https://outoftheshadows.global/data.

Funding beyond ODA and national governments

Funding flows to end childhood sexual violence from sources other than governments are difficult to track. This includes private philanthropy, the private sector and campaign-generated (and/or crowd-sourced) funds. While there is a sense that funding from these sources is increasing – and has the potential to be less restrictive and longer-term than what is offered through government channels – there is a lack of certainty about the sources, amounts and directions of this funding.

A few smaller, more flexible funds are available to local organizations for research, innovative projects, network building and/or campaign-style initiatives. Among the ones mentioned during the stakeholder interviews are the funds of the Brave Movement, the Out of the Shadows Index, Ignite Philanthropy and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative. These funds are appreciated for their flexibility, their respect for local leaders and priorities and their speed.

The views of stakeholders on funding

In the literature reviewed and interviews conducted for this paper, there were, not surprisingly, strong views about funding. These are summarized below.

▶ At this point, **funders are often part of the problem rather than the solution**. While money is sorely needed, funders tend to approach this area with attitudes and practices that are unhelpful. For example, funders: have a hard time with the complexity of the issues and the fact that progress will be uneven and take time; tend to want to fund what interests them instead of what needs to be done, which can exacerbate silos (e.g., between online and in-person efforts); provide short-term, "projectized" funding; and are reluctant (or unable) to fund local groups, despite their track record and achievements.

▶ **The sector needs to shed its "resource-poor" mindset**. There need to be bolder demands for funds – at substantially higher levels – backed up by the campaigning and mobilization techniques that have worked in other areas.

▶ **There is a willingness to "follow the money"**, i.e., link demands for funding for ending childhood sexual violence with those of other sectors. The education and health sectors are mentioned often in this context. There is a belief that working more closely with better funded sectors will increase political will as well as funding levels.

▶ **Stakeholders are aware that national governments are reluctant to "own" this issue** and that, even when national plans are developed, they go unfunded. Some believe this is due in part to the interest of external donors in this area, who have "set the agenda and then funded it" in several countries. Strategies for tackling this reluctance (which some refer to as an "abdication of responsibility") will be critical if levels of external funding continue to decline.

▶ **There is a felt need for less restricted, longer-term support**, preferably in the form of funds that are managed by people and groups closer to the ground. Some call for a movement builders fund, a campaign support fund and/or a special fund for survivor leaders and organizations.
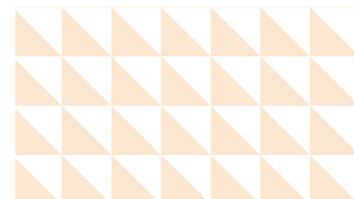
Of the 39 organizations reviewed:

46%

of their strategies include some references to the costs of implementation. Of the strategies that included costing estimates, the majority (78%) indicate their primary or secondary source of funding comes from private or philanthropic donations.

5. The Path Forward

As stated at the outset, this paper summarizes what is known in three key areas, i.e., evidence on effective interventions, political will and funding. It reviews the literature and integrates stakeholder views on each one, including insights gained through in-depth interviews and discussions at the To Zero visioning workshop in October 2023. In addition, the paper incorporates a review of the strategies of 39 organizations working to end childhood sexual violence. While this paper does not outline all the elements of a strategy – or vision – to end childhood sexual violence, it does highlight fault lines, areas of consensus and critical strategic issues. As such, it provides a "snapshot" of the field at the end of 2023 as we embark on a collective, potentially game-changing effort to create a world in which children live free from the fear of sexual violence.

A summary of key observations is summarized below.

▶ **Shared purpose.** Success in ending childhood sexual violence will depend on a broad coalition of stakeholders working together, bringing their diverse knowledge, expertise and experience to bear to achieve a common goal. While embracing their diversity, stakeholders need to create a shared identity, terminology and enterprise; this will strengthen the collective response and push back against the fatalism and neglect surrounding this issue. Stakeholders should ensure that all voices are heard and all contributions are recognized and supported. Collective goals must be set equitably, sensitive to geography, inter-generational dynamics, multiple cultures and power imbalances.

▶ **Evidence.** In the last several years, much has been learned about effective interventions to end childhood sexual violence. For example, of 35 interventions highlighted in the What Works and UNICEF reviews, almost half are identified as effective or promising. Similarly, more is known about sexual violence online, preventing abuse behaviors and the situation of boys. Moving forward, stakeholders believe that the following points should be emphasized: evidence that informs scalability and sustainability should be prioritized to "de-risk" investment, particularly in relation to prevention; there should be strong connections between evidence and practice, i.e., link evidence-gathering to real-world interventions; and evidence must be presented to national government decision-makers in ways that inspire confidence and action.
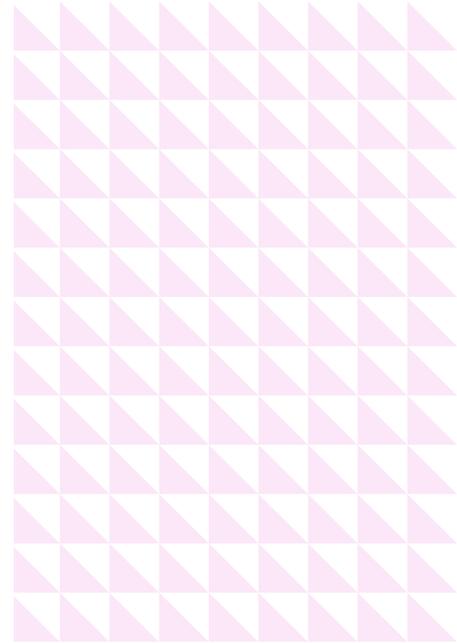
▶ **Research.** There is promising research emerging, particularly about what works in low- and middle-income countries. Yet clearly more needs to be done. There is a need for more research on successful combinations of interventions, the dynamics of scaling up, on interventions that work for the most marginalized children and in areas in which new, innovative research is showing promise, e.g., preventing abuse behaviors, in order to drive down recidivism and first offences. Building the capacities of researchers and research institutions in low- and middle-income countries is also imperative. In addition, stakeholders call for greater transparency, visibility and international accessibility of data; they would welcome platforms and services that would make this possible.

▶ **Other sectors.** There is increasing awareness that linking ending childhood sexual violence with other sectors has many advantages. It would likely increase both political attention and funding flows. It would underline the intersectionality of sexual violence, highlighting its relationship to poverty, marginalization, gender, education and health. Child sexual violence happens in every culture and country; it is a central tenet of the global "polycrisis" and should be positioned in this way. At present, the relationships among those working to end childhood sexual violence and those in key allied sectors (e.g., ending violence against women, human rights) are erratic and/or competitive rather than mutually reinforcing. Break through success in ending childhood sexual violence requires this to change. Connections with other sectors should be actively pursued.

▶ **Social and Cultural Norms.** Stakeholders agree that entrenched social and cultural norms help drive child sexual violence. These norms must be challenged. They include, among others: the shame and stigma placed on the victims of childhood sexual violence; the belief that such violence is unpreventable and inevitable; toxic masculinities and patriarchy; harmful practices linked to religion and culture; and negative perceptions about girls, leading to restrictions on their behavior and opportunities. It is also necessary to address the norms that expect children to be silent and obedient in the face of sexual violence. Rather, children and young people must be supported and empowered with the knowledge, language and tools to participate fully in preventing and responding to childhood sexual violence. Changing these norms is key to prevention which, since services to victims can never be scaled up sufficiently, is the only sustainable path to ending childhood sexual violence.

▶ **Transformative justice.** Stakeholders believe that justice – and robust systems of accountability – are context-specific. Approaches should adapt to individual, community and national settings. That said, all approaches to justice and accountability should: end impunity for those who have the power to prevent child sexual violence but who fail to act; hold all elements of society accountable, including commercial, institutional and state perpetrators (or enablers) of such violence; be backed up by comprehensive and enforceable laws; and be open to new models and restorative justice. For many survivors, justice and healing are linked; thus, justice must be pursued with sensitivity and in collaboration with survivors and their families.

▶ **Political will.** Despite growing awareness of the prevalence and life-long impact of childhood sexual violence, political will is difficult to generate and even harder to sustain. Knowledge is increasing about what it takes to raise this issue on political agendas; within 12-18 months, lessons will be available from national case studies across the globe. It is already clear, however, that generating political will must be at the heart of prevention and response strategies rather than an add-on. This requires greater emphasis on strategic communications, more robust mechanisms of accountability and targeted advocacy that builds power to effect long-term change.

▶ **Movement-building and campaigning.** The adoption of campaign and movement-building approaches will require changes in how the sector and its allies and funders work, both individually and collectively. These approaches require speed, flexibility and a sense of urgency that does not currently exist. They require state-of-the-art communications and campaigning skills. They also require leaders who understand the differences and connections between campaigns and movements. At present, the sector seems to lack the infrastructure to build and sustain these new, fast-evolving techniques. It needs to learn from other sectors for which campaigns are a vital part, e.g., #MeToo, childhood mental health, racial justice and women's rights.

Donors will need to trust the leaders of these movements, be willing to take risks and help build the infrastructure. There are models for the flexible, decentralized, participatory funds that have worked in other sectors.

▶ **Survivors.** There is widespread support for stronger survivor leadership at all levels. Shifting the stigma from victims to those who allow sexual violence to continue is a rallying cry among stakeholders. This includes survivors among hidden and neglected groups, e.g., children with special education needs, disabilities, in conflict zones or victims of incest. More discussion is needed on providing survivor-led and survivor-centered organizations with the support they need to drive positive and sustained change. At the same time, a model of shared leadership, with survivors of all ages and backgrounds working alongside practitioners and other allies, should be developed. In strengthening their confidence and capacity to lead, it should also be recognized that survivors need care, support, and access to justice; they need safe, supportive and non-judgemental spaces to heal, learn and grow.

▶ **Funding.** There is a desire for a radical increase and democratization of funding. This exists despite the knowledge that overseas development assistance (ODA) to ending violence against children is declining and national funding flows are disappointing, even where national plans exist. Private philanthropy and private sector funding are seen as promising but hard to track. Many stakeholders are keen to escape the current "resource poor" mindset and, collectively, make bolder demands for change. Specifically, they want to see: a greater commitment from national governments, leading to less reliance on external funders; a shift from short-term, projectized funding to more flexible, multi-year mechanisms and a willingness to cover the infrastructure costs necessary to deliver quality programs; a diversity of funding to grass roots and regional/global actors; and greater accountability and transparency among funders, i.e., more collaborative programming.

To paraphrase one stakeholder: "This stuff is hard." Indeed, it is. It is hardest for the children whose lives and futures are shattered by the unimaginable, often perpetrated by those they are taught to trust. It is also challenging for those who commit themselves to helping these children and to ensuring that it happens to no one else. The obstacles can seem insurmountable – yet, as this paper demonstrates, progress is being made on many fronts. The To Zero initiative is a testament to this progress and to the potential to achieve more by working collectively. Once again, this progress also proves what Nelson Mandela repeated often: *It is always impossible until it's done.*

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Annex 2.
Visioning Team Key Informant Interviews Included (V1)

Note – the participants at the Visioning Workshop in the UK in October 2023 will differ from the interview list below as some interviewees were subsequently unable to attend the event, and additional attendees registered beyond the interview period.

Visioning Team Member	Organizational Affiliation	Global South / Global North
Lopa Bhattacharjee	Family for Every Child	Global South
Rute Caldeira	Ignite Philanthropy	Global North
Steve Crump	Deaf Kidz International	Global North
Sendrine Constant	ECPAT	Global North
Elizabeth Dartnall	Sexual Violence Research Institute	Global South
Brisa DeAngulo	A Breeze of Hope	Global South
Iain Drennan	WeProtect Global Alliance	Global North
Alessandra Guedes	UNICEF	Global North
Jacqui Hunt	Equality Now	Global North
Matthias Katsch	ECKIGER TISCH	Global North
Elizabeth Letourneau	Moore Center	Global North
Bernadette Madrid	Child Protection Network	Global South
Marija Manojlovic	End Violence Against Children	Global North
Joanna Maranhão	Sport and Rights Alliance	Global South
Nikita Mitchell	Survivor Society	Global North
Mohamed Osman	Spring Impact	Global North
Kanga Rasi	Brave Movement	Global South
Leo Ratledge	Child Rights International Network	Global North
Rosalia Rivera	CONSENTparenting	Global South
Joanna Rubinstein	World Childhood Foundation USA	Global North
Payal Shah	Physicians for Human Rights	Global North
Yusra Shawar	Johns Hopkins University	Global North
Tamara Tutnjevic	World Vision International	Global North
Ravi Verma	International Center for Research on Women	Global South

Visioning Team Member	Organizational Affiliation	Global South / Global North
Joyce Wamoyi	National Institute for Medical Research	Global South
Paul Zeitz	#unify	Global North
Pooja Taparia	Arpan	Global South
Dalia Hashad	Parents Together Action	Global North
Faith Mwangi-Powell	Girls Not Brides	Global South
Naja Carina Steenholdt	Centre for Public Health, Greenland	Global North
Lucie Cluver	Oxford University & University of Cape Town	Global North
Daniela Ligiero	Together for Girls	Global North
Soma Sara	Everyone's Invited	Global North
Cornelius Williams		Global South

Annex 3.
Key informant interview guide

PANORAMA · OAK FOUNDATION

v7 20th July 2023

Introduction/Purpose of interview

Thank you for your time today. I'm a researcher from the To Zero initiative.

We're conducting interviews with a range of stakeholders from within the child protection sector, collecting your **thoughts and expertise** and using it to develop the initiative. We're particularly interested in hearing:

- your **perceptions on the initiative itself**,
- your views on how others may react to it,
- explore any other, relevant issues that are live within the sector that we should be aware of.

These insights from our call with you and other stakeholders will **inform further development of the initiative** and **help us communicate** about the vision and future aspirations of the initiative.

Housekeeping:

- We have up to 45 minutes today
- No right or wrong, opinion only
- I'd like to acknowledge the potential sensitivities around this subject matter and reassure you that that everything you say will remain **anonymous**, unless you say something that makes me concerned for your or someone's else's safety, in which case I'll let you know and refer to relevant authority.
- and if it becomes too difficult to talk at any point let me know, we can take a break at any time. If you'd like to reconvene at another time please feel free to let me know and we can arrange that.
- If possible, I would like to record so I can concentrate on speaking with you – are you happy with that? It will remain anonymous.

Questions:

1. Let's begin with a quick discussion about in about two or three minutes: could you describe how you are working to end sexual violence against children in your current role? How long have you worked on ending sexual violence against children, what drew you to it etc?

Initiative focused questions...

Recapping on the aims of the initiative:

- *To develop a collective vision to end sexual violence against children; and,*
- *To encourage additional private funding of high impact solutions and new innovations.*

2. What are your first impressions of the initiative?

3. To what extent does the initiative feel achievable?

4. To what extent does it feel like developing a vision is necessary to being able to make more progress on ending CSV?

5. As we've said before, the goal of this initiative is to end sexual violence against children in this generation within the current body of stakeholders. Given this objective, what might some of the barriers to engaging with **this initiative**? *Cultural, psychological, familial, societal sensitivities? Reactions specific to 'survivors'?*

6. What do you feel are the initiative's biggest opportunities for engaging other stakeholders? What about biggest points of resistance?

7. What's the key thing/ message that the initiative needs to communicate about to get others involved with ending sexual violence against children? What will people want and /or need to see? What do you think might cause people to feel reluctant to engage with the initiative?

   - *Anything to avoid?*

8. When thinking about the initiative, are there any stakeholders you've worked with that you think it's particularly important we include in our outreach activities?

Now we're going to move towards talking more about the issue itself and ask some questions that will help kick start the visioning process...

9. What are some of the biggest challenges the sector faces at the moment? How might that vary on a global level and where are they felt most acutely?

10. Thinking now about funding What do you think are the greatest barriers to increasing funding for ending sexual violence against children?

11. Does your organization get any unrestricted funding for ending sexual violence against children?

12. Thinking now about **political will**, In your view, what are 1–2 ways that we can make policy-makers care more and/or do more to end sexual violence against children?

    - Can you give an example of how this happens?/ How this may have happened for another social issue?
    - In your view, how important is mobilising political will to end sexual violence against children?

13. What are the interventions/ approaches that are successful already and should be kept?/ i.e what's working and what do you wish the whole world would do?

    - What are the areas related to ending sexual violence against children that you believe need funding the most?

14. What are the interventions/approaches that are not fit/failing? i.e. what should the sector do less of? *(Alternative wording suggestion for non-champions)* What doesn't work – what do you wish people would do less of?

15. What values, cultures, laws, events have led to the status quo approach to fighting CSV? What are the underlying mindsets, values? And how did we get here?

16. I want to invite you now to use your imagination. If you look 15 years into the future: What are your hopes and dreams for a sector fighting CSV that is – in your perception – transformed in the best possible way? i.e. what would that look like?

Annex 4.
Classification of Evidence Criteria

Classification of Evidence Criteria Developed Within the "What Works to Prevent Sexual Violence Against Children: Evidence Review," Adapted from the INSPIRE Framework

Classification	Definition
Effective	At least two high- or moderate-quality impact studies using randomized controlled trial and/or high-quality quasi-experimental designs have found favorable, statistically significant impacts in one or more sexual violence against children domains (e.g., child sexual abuse (CSA), intimate partner/dating violence); the intervention is deemed recommended based on high-quality meta-analyses and systematic reviews of findings from evaluations of multiple interventions.
Promising	At least one quality quasi-experimental study has found favorable, statistically significant impacts in one or more sexual violence against children domains (e.g., CSA, intimate partner/dating violence); at least one high- or moderate-quality impact study using randomized controlled trial and/or high-quality quasi-experimental designs has found favorable, statistically significant impacts for one or more risk or protective factors for sexual violence against children (such as positive parenting skills, communication between parents and children about effective strategies for avoiding exposure to violence, increased disclosure, increased knowledge of protective behaviors).
Prudent	Clinical experience, descriptive studies, reports of expert committees, respected authorities, or global treaties/resolutions have determined the intervention as critical for preventing sexual violence against children.
Conflicting	Evidence from different high-quality studies shows conflicting results on one or more sexual violence against children domains (e.g., some are found to be effective and some are found to have no effect, cause harm, or increase risk). Evidence is drawn from two comparable studies (where studies meet one of the above criteria).
No Effect	At least two high- or moderate-quality impact studies using randomized controlled trial and/or high-quality quasi-experimental designs have not found statistically significant impacts in one or more sexual violence against children's domains.
Harmful	Evidence from at least two high- or moderate-quality studies shows that this intervention can cause unintended harm or increase risk.

* The classification of Needs More Research is present in the UNICEF "Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation" article that we have considered in line with the current Conflicting classification. Similarly, we have considered the Ineffective classification from the UNICEF report has been applied with the Harmful classification above. Both of these classifications are described in the below tables. In Annex 5, the application of intervention review are considered interchangeably in the designation and displayed together.

Classification	Definition
Needs More Research	Programs that have a limited evidence base because (a) they are new and evidence is just emerging (e.g., online prevention education programs); (b) they are programs where evaluation may be difficult but there is some data that can be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes (e.g., helplines). Classifying a program as needing more research allows us to recognize what is being done in the field, particularly in settings where resources/possibilities for evaluation may be severely lacking and where nothing may have been done before. Including such programs helps to identify areas where there is practice experience indicating that research is clearly needed.
Ineffective	Where the research shows no positive impactor there are findings of harmful consequences.

Annex 5.
Evaluation of Interventions with Established Classification of Evidence Criteria

Implementation and Enforcement of Laws:

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Ratifying international treaties, frameworks and legislation	Prudent	These can help guide domestic legislation but are often not enforced.
Implementing and enforcing laws that criminalize various forms of sexual violence against children and adults	Prudent	These create an enabling environment for prevention and can act as a deterrent, but measuring their effectiveness as preventive measures remains challenging.
Establishing victim-centered standards and specialized services for policing and justice	Prudent	These can minimize retraumatization of victims and provide an essential building block for prevention. The UNICEF Review found that investigative child interview protocols were promising, since they usually improve evidence collection for older children and adolescents.
Laws that limit alcohol abuse	Prudent	These can address risk factors associated with sexual violence victimization and perpetration.
Eliminating statute of limitations for sexual violence crimes	Prudent	This can lead to greater reporting and increased convictions but there is considerable variation across countries and statutes.
Harmonized global and domestic implementation and enforcement of laws specific to online sexual exploitation and abuse	Prudent	This can serve as an important foundation for effective prevention and response but when investigating online sexual abuse, there is a delicate balance between privacy and crime prevention.
Implementing and enforcing laws that mandate reporting of sexual violence against young children by designated professionals	Prudent	This can increase reporting and substantiating of cases but its effectiveness as a preventive measure is hard to measure and the increased number of reports must be matched with increased service provision.
Implementing and enforcing laws that mandate reporting of sexual violence against adolescence by designated professionals	Conflicting / Needs More Research	These laws may increase reporting of cases but can also create barriers for accessing safe, confidential sexual and reproductive services.

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Notification and sex offender registration for adult sex offenders	Conflicting	This is not shown to deter recidivism.
	Needs More Research	
Notification and sex offender laws for juveniles who sexually offend	Ineffective	This is not shown to reduce recidivism and increases the risk of suicide and sexual victimization.
	Harmful	

Norms and values:

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Community mobilization programs to change attitudes, norms, and behaviors with direct intervention at the community level	Effective	These programs contribute to reductions in intimate partner violence, sexual violence in dating relationships and shifts in attitudes toward violence more broadly – benefits for children are evident, although more research is needed.
Working with men and boys to challenge stereotypes, toxic masculinity and norms that justify violence	Promising	These programs foster respectful, non-violent relationships among boys and help reduce dating violence. Further research needed on the impact of these programs on different age groups and on targeting both girls and boys.
Awareness raising campaigns at national level	No Effect	These efforts can increase knowledge and contribute to increased reporting when combined with targeted support services and outreach. There is as yet no evidence to support ongoing or sustained behavior change on their own.

Safe Environments

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Manipulations of physical environment in school settings (e.g., safe spaces to play, monitoring of hotspots)	Promising	These programs have been shown to decrease risk of sexual victimization (dating violence and sexual harassment) and reduce prevalence and frequency. They must be complemented by policy change and behavior change programs.
Adoption of policies and practices to prevent sexual violence in schools (e.g., adoption of zero-tolerance policies for sexual violence, anti-harassment training)	Promising	This can moderate peer-reported victimization, self-reported aggression and aggressive bystander behaviors. These efforts need to be complemented by active social change in the school environment.

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Adoption of safeguarding policies and procedures for child and youth-serving organizations (mandatory background checks, codes of conduct)	Prudent	There is limited evidence on the impact of safeguarding to prevent sexual violence of children.
Awareness-raising of online child sexual abuse and exploitation for students, parents and teachers	Prudent	There is a need for additional evidence on the impact and effectiveness of this approach.
Manipulation of physical environments in humanitarian settings (e.g., lighting, latrines, child-friendly spaces for play)	Prudent	There is consensus that modifications to the physical environment help keep women and children safer but lack of strong evidence to document the impact of this strategy on reducing childhood sexual violence.

Parent and Caregiver support

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Parenting programs to prevent teen dating violence	Effective	Evidence suggests that multicomponent education programs delivered to staff, students and their parents on sexual health, risky behaviors and healthy relationships are effective.
Home visiting programs	Promising	Studies in the US indicate that these programs contribute to lower childhood injuries and unplanned pregnancies and an increase in parents' awareness of child sexual violence. There is limited research on the impact of these programs on preventing sexual abuse and evidence suggests that quality of implementation makes a significant difference in impact. More research is needed on impact in low- and middle-income countries.
Parenting programs to improve parent-child communication	Promising	These programs raise awareness and knowledge levels; their impact on reductions in sexual violence requires more research.

Income and Economic Strengthening

Intervention	Result	Explanation
Cash transfers	Promising	Cash transfers can empower women and girls economically, promote school enrolment and reduce sexual debut, child marriage and forced sex. More research is needed on impact on children and adolescents.
Comprehensive programs that include mentoring and microfinance training (e.g., information on rights, conflict resolution and sexual and reproductive health and financial literacy)	Promising	Multifaceted programs affect multiple outcomes, including employment, child marriage and early pregnancy. Because of their comprehensive nature it is difficult to ascertain the direct impact of the economic empowerment interventions in isolation of the other components.

Response and Support Services

Intervention	Results	Explanation
Counseling and therapeutic approaches for survivors	Effective	These approaches reduce symptoms associated with traumatic events, including the disclosure of sexual violence. They need to be implemented with other responses and support services.
Multisystemic therapy for child/youth offenders	Effective	Addresses the child's views and perspectives on age-appropriate sexual experiences and relationships, as well as the attitudes that contribute to the offending. These therapies need to be implemented in conjunction with other services.
Cognitive behavioral therapy and eye movement desensitization and processing (EMDR)	Effective	Evidence suggests that these therapies are effective in older children and adolescents. More research needed on impact in low- and middle-income countries.
Child protection systems and appropriate response systems	Prudent	Accessible, comprehensive social services can help break cycles of violence. They need to be embedded in a broader set of strategies that include prevention.
Foster care interventions, including social welfare services	Prudent	Alternative care programs can improve outcomes for children is implemented in conjunction with other services.
Screening in health care settings	Conflicting / Needs More Research	This can increase identification of victims and access to treatment when combined with follow up interventions. This should be done as part of a clinical inquiry and combined with effective interventions when screening is positive.

Intervention	Results	Explanation
Crisis centers and shelters	Ineffective	Crisis centers and shelters show positive impacts for adult women's safety but residential care for children and adolescents can bring additional risks of harm. More research is needed in low- and middle-income countries.
	Harmful	

Education and Life Skills

Intervention	Results	Explanation
Adolescent intimate partner violence prevention programs that focus on healthy relationships	Effective	These programs are most effective if they are interactive, delivered over multiple sessions, use local data on sexual violence and culturally specific and relevant information in the curriculum and aim to change attitudes rather than just provide information. Additional research is needed to examine the long-term impacts on behavioral change.
School-based safe dating programs	Effective	These programs are effective in reducing peer victimization, sexual violence and disrupting violence-supporting norms. To be effective they must be age- and culture-specific and address both boys and girls.
School-based behavior change programs focused on bystander interventions	Effective	These programs result in lower incidences of sexual victimization, harassment and stalking, including in LMICs. There is currently no evidence to support ongoing or sustained behavior change.
Empowerment and self-defense training	Effective	These programs show reductions in sexual violence following completion. Additional research is needed on impact in a range of contexts (UNICEF Review categorizes this intervention as promising).
School-based education programs to prevent child sexual abuse	Promising	These programs appear to increase children's knowledge of abuse and protective behaviors. Additional research is needed to assess the impact on prevalence and incidence, different age groups and disclosure of different types of abuse.
Safe and enabling school environments (whole-of-school approaches) to ensure that school policies and protocols are in place	Prudent	These programs promote equitable school policies and protocols, engage school leadership and develop curriculum that are sensitive to social and gender inequalities. Additional evidence is needed to assess impact on preventing sexual violence (UNICEF Review categorizes this intervention as promising).

Intervention	Results	Explanation
Education and awareness raising for adults who interact with children	Prudent	These programs help raise awareness about child sexual abuse, therefore increasing recognition and intervention behaviors by adults. Additional evidence is needed to assess the impact on the prevention of sexual abuse.

* Please note: Interventions that are listed in categories that indicate that they are effective should only be considered effective if the interventions and implementation plans are evidence-based specific to their geographic and cultural context. The use of a successful intervention type without leveraging the available evidence may not yield successful results in the field.

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Annex 6.
39 Organizational Strategies to End Child Sexual Violence Reviewed

Identified Organization/Partnership	Name of Organizational Strategy Reviewed
A Breeze of Hope	2022 Annual Report
Army of Survivors	2022-2024 Strategic Plan
Arpan	Annual Report 2021-2022
Canadian Center for Child Protection (C3P)	Framework for the Protection and Rights of Children
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)	The CRIN Code
Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Solutions Hub	-
Childlight	Creating a Brighter Path for Children: Data Strategy 2023
CONSENT Parenting	-
Deaf Kidz International	Strategic Plan 2020-23
ECKIGER TISCH	-
ECPAT	ECPAT Strategic Framework 2021-2025
Ending Clergy Abuse	-
End Violence Against Children	End Violence Partnership Strategy 2022-24
Equality Now	Future Proofing Equality: A Just World for Women and Girls
European Union	EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse
Everyone's Invited	-
Family for Every Child	Harnessing our wisdom to transform children's lives: Our 2021-25 strategy
Girls Not Brides	Partnership Strategy 2022-2025
Global Parenting Initative	-
Ignite Philanthropy	Ignite Philanthropy 2024-2029 Strategy
International Center for Research on Women	Women at the Center: 2021 Annual Report
Keep Kids Safe	US National Blueprint to End Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents
Marie Collins	5 Year Strategy (2022-2027)
Me Too.	Annual Report 2022

Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse	Celebrating a Decade of Prevent10n: 2022 Annual Report
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Our 2022 Impact
Parents Together Action	-
Program on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones (Physicians for Human Rights)	Prosecuting Sexual Violence in Conflict: A medical approach
Save the Children (Sierra Leone)	Country Strategic Plan for 2019-2022
Safe Online Fund	Annual Report 2022
Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)	Strategic Plan 2020-2024
Spring Impact	-
Sports and Rights Alliance (SRA)	-
THORN	2022 Impact Report
UNICEF	Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
WeProtect Global Alliance	WeProtect Global Alliance – Strategy 2023-2025
World Childhood Foundation USA	-
World Vision International	It Takes a World (to end violence against children) Campaign: 2022 Progress Report

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