Safe. Seen. Heard.

Youth Fighting Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Countries of implementation: Norway and Quezon City, Philippines

Applicant organisations:

Mission Alliance

Stine Sofies Stiftelse

Local partners:

World Vision

Philippine Children's Ministries Network

Briefly about the applicant

Name of Norwegian applicant organization(s): Mission Alliance, Stine Sofies Foundation
Name of local partner organization(s): World Vision Philippines, Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN)
Theme of the program: Prevention of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children
Partner countries and geographical areas: Norway, Antipolo City and Quezon City, Philippines
Duration of the program: 3 years

Project Summary

Every day, children are sexually exploited online, and what happens to children in the Philippines is closely connected to choices made in countries like Norway. Mission Alliance and the Stine Sofie Foundation, together with World Vision Philippines and the Philippine Children's Ministries Network, are joining forces to stop online sexual abuse and exploitation of children by empowering youth themselves to lead the change. Norway and the Philippines will work together to raise awareness, create safe spaces and peer support, and push for stronger policies to protect children online. With Operation Dagsverk's support, this project will build a binational youth movement for digital safety, justice, and dignity, creating a world where every child is safe, seen, and heard.

Program description

Situation analysis

In a hyperconnected world, what happens to children online in the Philippines is closely tied to choices made in countries like Norway. While millions of youth in these countries use the internet daily, many face serious risks of online sexual abuse, often driven by international demand. This project empowers youth in both countries to speak up, lead change, and hold systems accountable by building a global movement to stop online exploitation before it starts.

Young people in both the Philippines and Norway are highly connected. In the Philippines, 95% of youth aged 12–17 go online (79% daily), while in Norway, almost every child over nine has a mobile phone (94%) and a computer (90%), giving them near-constant online access, but also increased exposure to risk.[1] While the internet provides opportunities for learning, connection, and fun, it also brings serious threats: one of the most urgent being online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). OSAEC is a global problem, affecting children and youth in many countries, including Norway. One in three Norwegian teenagers aged 13–18 have been sent or asked to send nude images, and 9% have shared such images in the past year. Of these, one in four had their photos spread further without consent. One in ten young people have been sexually approached by an adult, and about 27% of girls (compared to under 10% of boys) have faced unwanted requests to discuss sex online. Receiving unwanted nude images is also a widespread issue, affecting 24% of girls and 14% of boys. Contact with children under 14 is often initiated on popular social media platforms such as Snapchat (43%), followed by other sites (25%), Omegle (16%), TikTok (6%), Instagram (5%), and Discord (5%).

The Philippines is among the most severely affected, with alarming levels of abuse taking place online, most often through social media platforms like Facebook and Messenger. In 2022, a national study in the Philippines by UNICEF, ECPAT, and INTERPOL found that 1 in 5 internet using youth aged 12-17 had experienced serious forms of online abuse in just one year.[2] By the end of 2023, the number of reported cases of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC[3]) surged to 2.7 million, a sixfold increase since 2019, according to the Commission on Human Rights.[4]

This includes being blackmailed into sexual acts, having sexual images shared without their consent, or being pressured into sexual activities by promises of money or gifts. Survivors often face major psychological, social, and financial challenges, which can make it difficult for them to heal and rebuild their lives. Addressing this crisis requires bold, youth-centered solutions that prevent harm, support survivors, and challenge the systems and norms that allow this abuse to continue. Alarmingly, abuse is often facilitated by parents or close relatives. A widespread lack of understanding about the nature and harm of online abuse contributes to the problem. Misconceptions, such as the belief that "no physical contact means no harm", minimize the perceived severity of OSAEC and allow it to continue unchecked. In some communities, deep-rooted cultural norms that treat children as the property of their parents further enable this abuse, reinforcing the idea that families can profit from their children.

In the Philippines, significant efforts have been made to combat Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, including the passage of a comprehensive anti-OSAEC law in 2022. However, many young people simply don't know their rights or where to turn for help, and they often lack trust in the systems meant to support them. UNICEF found that between 30% and 40% of teenage victims didn't tell anyone about their abuse at all, and only 0–4% reported it to the police or a helpline: often because they felt ashamed, feared not being believed, or didn't know how to get help.

The perpetrators driving much of this abuse comes from outside the Philippines. Norway is one of the top countries per capita regarding demand for abusive content, including targeting Filipino children[5]. In 2023, police received over 13,000 tips about Norwegian IP addresses linked to abuse material, and between 400 and 2,000 Norwegians are believed to have purchased "on-demand" abuse that year. Investigations show that 84% of adults contacting children online went on to commit or attempt sexual offenses, with most offenders being men aged 18–64, many already known for sexual crimes against children. This demand drives new abuse, creating victims both in Norway and abroad. Kripos, the Norwegian National Criminal Investigation Service, even maintains a liaison officer in the Philippines to help track Norwegian offenders. But back in Norway, few people know about this issue or the role their country plays. Tackling the demand side means raising awareness at home and especially helping young people in Norway understand the impact and take action to stop it through better prevention and education, stronger legal protections, and tighter safeguards within technology platforms and financial systems. If these measures are not strengthened, children and youth will continue to face serious and long-lasting harm, both in Norway and in countries affected by international demand.

Change theory

This program is grounded in the belief that when young people are equipped with knowledge, skills, support networks, and opportunities to lead, they become powerful agents of change in preventing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). The program uses a three-pronged approach: prevention through youth-led advocacy (SAFE), strengthened peer and institutional support systems (SEEN), and meaningful participation in policy and safety planning (HEARD). [1]

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[1] UNICEF. *Disrupting Harm in the Philippines.*

[2] UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, ECPAT International, and INTERPOL. 2022. *Disrupting Harm in the Philippines: Evidence on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

[3] Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA) is the most common terminology and acronym in international research and legal sectors, while institutions in the Philippines, including the Department of Justice and National Police, use Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). The definition is the same.

[4] Commission on Human Rights. 2025. *Human Rights Situation Report: Addressing Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines*. Child Rights Center.

[5] Anti-Money Laundering Council. Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines. An Evaluation using STR Data. April 2023.

The logic of change is:

- If youth are informed about digital safety and their rights,
- and they are supported by trusted adults, safe spaces (youth hubs), and effective referral systems,
- and they are given opportunities to participate in shaping protective policies and practices,
- then they will be empowered to prevent abuse, support peers, and influence more protective communities and systems.

What is essential for success includes:

- Youth-friendly environments where young people feel safe to speak up and act.
- Supportive adult allies (e.g., teachers, parents, community leaders).
- Functioning referral and protection systems at school and community levels.
- Platforms for youth participation in civic and policy processes.
- Effective collaboration with media, tech platforms, and local governments.

This change is driven through a mix of structured activities, including:

- Capacity-building for peer leaders.
- Creation of youth-led campaigns and digital content.
- Strengthening school and community-based protection systems.
- Establishing youth hubs as safe peer spaces.
- Facilitating youth-led policy advocacy and cross-country exchanges.

Expected changes

Impact (Societal Level):

Children and youth in the Philippines and Norway are safer from online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSAEC) through strengthened prevention, protection, and participation mechanisms that are youth-led, community-supported, and institutionally embedded.

SAFE.	*SEEN.*	*HEARD.*
GOAL ONE Youth-led Advocacy & Awareness (SAFE) *Norway and Philippines* Youth in the Philippines demonstrate increased knowledge, confidence, and leadership to promote digital safety, challenge harmful social norms, and prevent OSAEC in their communities and online spaces.	**GOAL TWO** Strengthened Peer and Institutional Support Systems for Survivors (SEEN). *Philippines* Youth have access to trusted peer mentors, supportive adults, and clear, youth-friendly referral pathways that ensure survivors of OSAEC are heard, supported, and connected to appropriate professional services.	**GOAL THREE** Youth Participation in Protection Policy and Planning (HEARD). *Philippines* Youth are empowered and supported to influence child protection policies and community safety plans, ensuring long-term solutions to OSAEC are informed by their lived experiences.
• Output 1.1 Youth-led digital safety campaign developed and implemented in the Philippines • Output 1.2 Youth trained as digital safety champions and peer leaders. • Output 1.3 Youth hubs established or strengthened as platforms for peer support and advocacy. • Output 1.4 Norwegian youth lead awareness and advocacy initiatives to address domestic demand for OSAEC and strengthen global solidarity.	• Output 2.1 Youth trained as peer mentors providing safe, basic psychosocial support. • Output 2.2 Clear, youth-friendly materials developed to explain referral pathways and support. • Output 2.3 Strengthened school and community protection systems • Output 2.4 Referral systems strengthened and harmonized with existing child protection structures.	• Output 3.1 Youth leaders engaged in local governance and advocacy. • Output 3.2 Youth-led policy engagement and innovation supported. • Output 3.3 Youth hubs contribute to policy innovation and digital safety advocacy
Main activities	**Main activities**	**Main activities**
• Launch and localize youth-led digital safety campaigns using creative media and influencers. • Train youth on digital rights, safe tech use, media literacy, and AI-related risks; facilitate peer-led sessions. • Strengthen and expand youth hubs, including digital “warriors” and out-of-school youth. • Support Norwegian youth advocacy, cross-country exchanges, and campaign alignment. • Engage platforms and financial actors to reduce demand and strengthen enforcement.	• Train youth as peer mentors in psychological first aid, trauma care, safeguarding, and hotline support. • Co-create and distribute youth-friendly referral guides (comics, videos, cards). • Train teachers, clergy, and youth leaders on child protection and online safety; roll out leadership training. • Map and strengthen referral systems, replicate tools, and conduct youth-led research.	• Train and engage youth in advocacy, policy influence, and local governance. • Support youth-led research, consultations, and proposal submissions to local governments. • Empower ICT-savvy youth to drive policy ideas and digital safety innovation. • Host a youth summit to share learnings, advocate for safer online spaces, and highlight youth-led solutions.

Mission Alliance Stine Sofies Stiftelse World Vision 25th Anniversary Philippine Children's Ministries Network

Audience

Main Target Group

The primary target group for the program is children and adolescents in the Philippines and Norway, with a particular focus on youth aged 12–19. These young people are both the key beneficiaries and drivers of the initiative. The program empowers them to prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) by equipping them with knowledge, leadership skills, and safe spaces to take action. Youth will play an active role in peer education, advocacy campaigns, content creation, and engagement with policy processes, making the program youth-led at every stage, from awareness raising to local safety planning.

Secondary Target Groups

The program also engages several key secondary stakeholders who play critical roles in supporting youth-led change and strengthening the broader protective environment:

- Parents and caregivers are involved in dialogues and community discussions aimed at building trust and increasing understanding of digital risks, especially in cultural contexts where adult resistance may limit youth disclosures or participation.
- Teachers and school staff are trained in basic psychosocial support and safe disclosure response, ensuring that schools are safe spaces where young people can seek help and support from peers.
- Community leaders, church staff, and local government officials participate in co-developing safety initiatives, reviewing referral systems, and embedding youth perspectives in local policies through existing mechanisms such as the Child Protection Councils.
- Tech platforms and media actors are engaged as stakeholders in advocacy efforts, especially in Norway, to challenge harmful norms and increase accountability for online harm.

Together, these secondary groups create an enabling environment that supports the safety, agency, and meaningful participation of youth at every stage of the project.

Number Reached: The project will engage youth across the Philippines and Norway through a combination of direct participation and broader awareness activities. In the Philippines, an estimated 8,000 youth will be reached directly, with over 220,000 benefiting indirectly through outreach and advocacy campaigns. In Norway, youth will participate in a national seminar, an expert panel for cross-cultural exchange on tackling online sexual abuse, and a countrywide awareness campaign targeting secondary schools, potentially reaching tens of thousands of Norwegian students and raising widespread awareness on preventing online sexual abuse and exploitation.

Youth participation

The design of the program was informed both by existing research and documented evidence on young people's experiences with online sexual abuse and exploitation in the Philippines, ongoing projects by partner institutions on the topic, as well as four focus group discussions with young people in the Philippines. These focus group discussions were held with youth leaders and were facilitated by partners who work with existing youth networks.

In addition, the project plans to establish a Youth Advisory Panel made up of youth from the Philippines and Norway. This group will provide ongoing input into project refinement during the implementation and ensure youth perspectives continually shape the program going forward.

Youth Led

Several components of the program are youth-led. The project includes:

- Youth-led advocacy campaigns in both the Philippines and Norway, designed and implemented by youth to raise awareness, challenge harmful norms, and prevent OSAEC. This includes a national launch event and youth summit in the Philippines, and a youth seminar in Norway.

- Youth hubs will be established or strengthened as spaces for peer engagement, learning, and mentoring. These hubs will serve as platforms for youth to co-develop and lead safety initiatives.
- Peer mentors will be trained to provide basic psychosocial support and refer peers to appropriate help.
- Young people will also co-create informational materials (e.g., videos, posters, social media campaigns) to promote digital safety and support-seeking behavior.

Youth acting as peer mentors will receive structured support through training in psychosocial skills, advocacy, and communication, including psychological first aid and trauma-informed approaches. They will be guided by local partner organizations, supported through debriefing sessions, ongoing supervision, and clear safeguarding protocols to ensure their well-being and minimize risk of secondary trauma.

Youth Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms

The Youth Advisory Panel will be actively involved throughout the program cycle, providing feedback on implementation and ensuring that youth perspectives are reflected in adaptations and learning. Additionally, the program includes youth-led research components, where young people will help identify protection gaps and present findings to decision-makers.

Youth will participate in regular dialogues, multiple focus groups, reflection sessions, and summits, where their feedback and insights will be documented and used to inform ongoing improvements. The youth will be kept informed through regular meetings, updates via the youth hubs, and direct communication with implementing partners.

Risk assessment

- **Digital platforms' limited cooperation or responsiveness** in addressing OSAEC may reduce the impact of youth-led campaigns. To mitigate this, the project will engage civil society networks with existing links to tech platforms, while youth advocacy will highlight public pressure and accountability mechanisms.
- **Cultural norms and stigma around reporting abuse,** particularly when perpetrators are family members, may discourage disclosure and engagement. Norms of shame, obedience, and gender roles remain strong barriers in many communities. To address this, the project will create safe, peer-led spaces (youth hubs), involve parents and community leaders in awareness efforts, and use relatable, youth-designed materials to reduce fear and normalize help-seeking behavior.
- **Inconsistent or weak protection systems at the local level,** such as inactive Local Government Units (LGU), Child Protection Committees, may limit survivors' access to support. The project will strengthen these structures through training, mapping of referral pathways, and collaboration with existing child protection networks.
- **Potential burnout or overextension of youth participants** is a risk in any youth-led project. The design includes ongoing mentorship, flexible involvement, and trauma-informed support to ensure participation remains empowering, not burdensome.
- **Coordination gaps among local actors** (schools, local government, NGOs, and government agencies) may weaken implementation or delay adoption of youth-led initiatives. Fragmented responsibilities and limited communication can result in overlapping efforts or inaction. To mitigate this, the project includes structured dialogue spaces that bring together youth, community leaders, and institutional actors to co-develop safety responses. It will also work through existing coordination mechanisms, such as Child Protection Committees and Youth Development Councils, to promote alignment, shared ownership, and pathways for long-term replication and scale-up.

Applicant organizations

Local partners

The four applicant organizations include two Norwegian organizations, Mission Alliance and Stine Sofies Stiftelse, and two in the Philippines, World Vision Development Foundation and The Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN). Mission Alliance has worked in the Philippines since 1976 and will coordinate the project and Norway-Philippines cross country collaboration. Stine Sofies Stiftelse will lead the project activities in Norway, including awareness and advocacy efforts. World Vision will lead two components of the project in the Philippines, the youth led advocacy and awareness and the youth participation in policy efforts. PCMN will lead on strengthening peer and institutional support systems.

World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF) is an advocacy, development, and relief organization dedicated to improving the lives of children, families, and communities so they may experience life in all its fullness. In 2024, World Vision reached 55,863 children and 3,185 adults through child protection and participation interventions. They engaged 54,447 children, adolescents, and youth in activities supporting the campaign to end violence against children. Furthermore, they oriented and/or trained 3,549 individuals on child rights, protection protocols, reporting and referral mechanisms, and addressed the worst forms of child labor including online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

Directly related to OSAEC, World Vision has contributed to the passage of several acts: the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022, which holds internet and financial intermediaries accountable in promoting trafficking in persons, and the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act. This was made possible through World Vision's active participation in the Child Rights Network working groups that lobbied for these landmark policies. World Vision significantly contributed to 76 local policies in 2024, benefiting at least 2 million vulnerable children. Moreover, World Vision is an NGO representative of both the Department of Justice's Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and the National Coordination Center against Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material.

Currently, World Vision is implementing a grant project funded by the OAK Foundation, which mobilizes stakeholders to influence government action and increase public investment in addressing Sexual Violence Against Children in the Philippines. Another project is Child Labour Effective Awareness and Response, an EU-funded project which supports national efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor including OSAEC and violations of acceptable working conditions, implemented in 3 provinces in Northern Philippines.
World Vision were selected for their comprehensive experience in child protection, advocacy, and policy influence, including their proven track record in addressing online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and engaging large numbers of youth and stakeholders in meaningful, rights-based interventions.

The Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN) is a national network of churches and faith-based organizations working to protect children at risk. It collaborates with government and civil society groups on child protection and anti-trafficking efforts. While PCMN is faith-based, it works inclusively with children, youth, and communities of all backgrounds and beliefs, ensuring its programs are non-discriminatory and accessible to all.

Since 2018, PCMN has focused on online safety through its Youth for Safety program, where over 900 young people (ages 15–24) are trained as advocates who raise awareness in schools and communities. PCMN also runs exchange programs with Viva Denmark, enabling Filipino and Danish youth to learn from each other and campaign against online child exploitation.

PCMN further works on prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation of children affected by online sexual abuse, in partnership with local governments, police, lawyers, and residential care centers. In 2023, it helped push for the national Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children law and continues to develop training materials and advocate for stronger child protection nationwide.

PCMN were selected as partners for their extensive national network, proven experience in training youth advocates on online safety, and strong track record in child protection, policy advocacy, and cross-cultural exchange programs that effectively engage communities and authorities in preventing and addressing online sexual abuse of children.

Norwegian Applicant Organizations

Mission Alliance is a Norwegian non-profit organization founded in 1901. With operations in nine countries, we focus on economic inclusion, child protection, and strengthening safe, resilient communities. While our Christian values guide a strong commitment to serving vulnerable people, we work globally with partners and communities of all faiths and beliefs, ensuring that our programs and partnerships are inclusive, non-discriminatory, and locally driven. Supported by Norad through Digni, we draw on more than a century of experience to work with local partners and empower communities to take charge of their own futures.

Mission Alliance has worked in the Philippines since 1976, implementing community-based projects that strengthen local capacities. We collaborate with public authorities, including the Norwegian National Criminal Investigation Unit, *Kripos* and the Norwegian Embassy in Manila, private organizations, local partners, youth groups, and schools to ensure programs are delivered effectively and have meaningful impact.

Stine Sofies Stiftelse is a Norwegian non-profit organization established by Ada Sofie Austegard following the tragic loss of her daughter Stine Sofie (8) and her friend Lena (10) to violent sexual crimes in Kristiansand in 2000. The foundation's vision is that all children should have a childhood free from violence and abuse. Today, it has around 65 employees and implements programs to prevent violence and sexual abuse, detect incidents, provide follow-up and support for affected children, and strengthen children's legal rights. The foundation runs national initiatives to protect children, improve legal safeguards, and generate evidence for effective interventions, including the Triple S research project in partnership with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, which examines the long-term consequences of violence and abuse for children and families.

The program activities will directly engage lower and upper secondary school pupils in Norway through a nationwide school campaign on online sexual abuse and exploitation. This campaign will use age-appropriate teaching modules, reflection exercises, and structured activities to build knowledge and confidence, helping students recognize and safely respond to abuse, while measuring learning outcomes through targeted surveys.

Competence, experience and willingness to strengthen youth participation

All four organizations in this project bring substantial expertise in youth participation. Stine Sofies Stiftelse engages youth through an annual seminar and a unique expert panel of former residents of

the Stine Sofie Center, whose input is central to shaping and improving program quality. Mission Alliance empowers children and youth globally by building skills in leadership, resilience, and community engagement, ensuring that young people's voices inform program design and decision-making through local partners and structures. PCMN focuses on online safety through its Youth for Safety program, training young advocates to raise awareness and mobilize peers in schools and communities. World Vision Philippines equips youth leaders to participate in governance through summits, local council partnerships, and initiatives such as Project ACE and peacebuilding programs, consistently creating platforms for youth to influence policy and collaborate with authorities on child protection and community development. Together, these partners combine deep experience and proven approaches in working alongside young people to ensure they play an active and meaningful role in shaping programs that affect them.

Expected challenges with youth participation include overcoming cultural stigma and fear around reporting abuse, which may limit engagement, and ensuring youth are not overburdened or exposed to secondary trauma. The project will address these by creating safe, peer-led spaces, providing mentorship and flexible involvement, and designing youth-led activities that are supportive, empowering, and integrated with existing communities and institutional structures.

Routines for follow-up and control

Mission Alliance has over 30 years of experience reporting to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), which has shaped strong and reliable routines for both program and financial follow-up. Program activities are monitored through structured reporting, regular field visits, and systematic reviews against agreed goals. Financial follow-up is fully integrated into this process, with continuous budget monitoring to ensure funds are used as planned.

To prevent financial misuse, we apply strict internal control routines such as spot checks, verification of vouchers and suppliers, and clear separation of responsibilities. All expenses require two levels of approval to avoid conflicts of interest. In addition, our partner and project manual sets standards for sound financial management. Oversight is strengthened by quarterly internal audits and independent external audits by Deloitte, who conduct both mid-year and annual audits. Financial and program performance are reported to donors and our Board of Directors, and results are published on our website for full transparency.

Mission Alliance also has a whistleblowing policy and reporting mechanism known to all partners, and a system for handling deviations when they occur. We maintain a quality system with updated documents, policies, procedures, and templates to guide our work. Before starting cooperation, we carry out thorough partner assessments covering financial management, program follow-up, HR, and other organizational aspects. Our country offices take the lead in day-to-day follow-up, while the headquarters ensures that country offices follow the routines and requirements. The organization's procurement policy is based on Norad's guidelines, but strengthened further to guarantee transparency, integrity, and fair competition. With decades of proven capacity, systematic control routines, independent oversight, and a commitment to transparency, Mission Alliance gives donors confidence that funds are safeguarded and managed responsibly.

Our joint commitment

Mission Alliance and Stine Sofie Stiftelsen invite OD to support a project that empowers youth in Norway and the Philippines to act against online sexual abuse. With OD's support, we can inspire a binational youth movement aimed at creating a world where every child is SAFE, SEEN, and HEARD.