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Implementation
Summit 2023
9–11 October
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#42 - Self-generated sexual content involving young people in Thailand: Researching and piloting a protective intervention.

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Objectives/aims
The main objectives of the project are threefold: to explore young people's perspectives on self-generated sexual content, to develop targeted curricula that reflect their needs, and to evaluate the impact of the training interventions. By centring the voices of young people and considering the socio-cultural context, the project aims to address the complexities and risks associated with self-generated sexual content involving children. To do this, the project plans to undertake a quantitative survey of 2000 young people in Northern Thailand in 2024 to better understand the knowledge, attitudes, and practices impacting self-generated sexual content involving young people. The research findings will then be used to develop a harm reduction training program that will be piloted and refined with representatives of the sampled population.

Child online protection risks are generally addressed from within 'protection' frameworks. Young people's perspectives on how and why self-generated sexual content is occurring, and the perceived risks and impacts (positive or negative) are rarely part of the dialogue. This project will immediately apply the research findings to develop an intervention – together with young people – that aims to minimize harms but is unlikely to be framed in terms of 'protection'. Instead, topics like negotiating consent, socio-cultural pressures, and modern relationships are expected – rather than concentrating on warnings about risk that is frequently the norm.

Methods
A quantitative survey (adapted for two age cohorts) will survey a convenience sample of 1000 young people aged 9-12 and 1000 young people aged 13-16. Alongside these

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surveys, we will conduct approximately 20 qualitative interviews with key informants such as social service providers, police, and survivors who have experienced child sexual exploitation as a consequence of non-consensually shared self-generated sexual content.

An intervention development phase will follow the research over 18 months that includes using the data to design facilitated discussions with young people. Factors such as methods for engaging young people (of different ages) on these sensitive topics, and event identifying ideal profiles for facilitators will be explored in two rounds of piloting and feedback.

Main findings

The project is anticipated to answer critical questions about a complex and sensitive topic with a deeply evidence-informed perspective. It tackles questions about the types of self-generated sexual content involving young people, their understanding of consent, the contributing factors to such behaviors, and the social and contextual factors influencing their online experiences. The evidence-informed perspective will maximise engagement by young people with the intervention and therefore effectiveness from a harm minimisation perspective as it will be built from data reflecting young people's perspectives of the issue (rather than focus only on risks). The project's impact will extend beyond the initial research phase, as preparations for scaling and sustainability involve key government and technical stakeholders, with the potential to reach a broader population of Thai children in the future. At the time of the conference the project will yet have data to present, however the opportunity exists to describe the design and initial delivery of an evidence-based harm-minimisation intervention for young people on a significant threat posed by technology that is impacting young people, families and communities around the world. Additionally, the project allows to display the importance of translating evidence and adapting solutions to diverse systems and cultures to achieve real-world impact.