Child Online Protection in the MENA Region

Egypt Country Report

August 2016

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CENTRE FOR JUSTICE
AND CRIME PREVENTION

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CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION IN THE MENA REGION

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ACCD	Arab Council of Childhood and Development
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
CJCP	Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention
COP	Child Online Protection
CRC	(UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSAM	Child Sexual Abuse Materials
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
GoE	Government of Egypt
GSMA	Groupe Speciale Mobile Association
ICMEC	International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INHOPE	International Association of Internet Hotlines
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
LAS	League of Arab States
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
MCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
MLAP	Mutual Legal Assistance Procedures
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCEMC	National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
NTRA	National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority

OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPSC	Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
TOT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VGTF	Virtual Global Task Force

CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION IN THE MENA REGION
EGYPT COUNTRY REPORT

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Egypt is located in North Africa and is classified as a country of "medium human development" by the 2015 *Human Development Report*.[1] Egypt's economy has seen moderate and uneven growth in the past three decades, with high poverty in rural Upper Egypt.[2] Egypt has a population of approximately 85.8 million, of which 28.5 million (33.2%) are under the age of 15.[3]

The unemployment rate across the population was 12.8% in the first quarter of 2015, and 38.9%, for youth aged 15-24,[4] compared with a regional average of 28-30%.[5] The literacy rate among those aged 15-24 is 74.9% with 93.3% enrollment rate in primary school and 85.4% enrollment in secondary-school.[6]

Mobile subscription rates are at 114 per 100 people., Internet adoption is 31.7%, with steady increases in the past ten years (from 13.7 per 100 people to 31.7).[7] Fixed line broadband subscribers represent 3.68 per 100 people in 2014 compared with .11 per 100 in 2004.[8] There were 5 secure Internet servers per one million people in Egypt in 2015, and this figure has remained relatively stable for the past 5 years.[9][10]

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[1] United Nations Development Programme (2015). *Human Development Report,* available at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/EGY.pdf

[2] World Bank (2016). Country overview, available at http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview#1

[3] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2015). *Country Profile: Egypt,* available at http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CoM/com2016/Country-Profiles/egypt2015_cp_eng_final.pdf

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] International Labour Organization (2015). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015.* http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_412015.pdf

[6] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2015). *Country Profile: Egypt,* available at http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CoM/com2016/Country-Profiles/egypt2015_cp_eng_final.pdf

[7] World Bank (2016). Country indicators, available at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2?locations=EG

[8] World Bank (2015). Country indicators, available at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.BBND.P2?locations=EG

[9] World Bank (2015). http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.SECR.P6

[10] Global map from WikiCommons

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are now an integral part of children's everyday lives. While much of the growth in the use of ICTs over the past decade has occurred in developed countries, there is exponential growth taking place in developing countries as more children, in particular, go online. Countries in the Global South, including the MENA region, have experienced exponential growth in the roll-out and access to mobile communications and the internet.

Surveys conducted in the past 10 years reveal that the majority of children in Egypt have access to the internet. Findings from Egypt's National E-Safety Working Group on Indicators in 2010 reported that 80% of children under 15 reported using the Internet within the previous year. The most common activities children reported using the internet for were playing games (26%), checking e-mail (18%), and chatting (18%). At the time, the least common activities reported were shopping (1.8%), sharing photos (1.6%), and viewing pornography (1.6%). Three-fourths of parents interviewed reported that they placed the computer in a public area of the house as a protective measure and 45% reported using filtering software. 92% of parents reported sitting with their child while he or she was on the internet at least some of the time. A Microsoft-funded study of international online bullying surveyed approximately 300 Egyptian children and found that in comparison to the worldwide average, Egyptian children's engagement in online bullying activities (as the victim or aggressor) was below average (Cross-Tab Marketing Services & Telecommunications Research Group, 2012).

In 2011-2012, Group Speciale Mobile Association (GSMA), in collaboration with Mobinil interviewed 1,059 children and their parents in Egypt as part of a comparative study that also included Chile, Japan, India, and Indonesia for a total of 4,574 child-parent pairs. The survey revealed that 91% of Egyptian children owned a mobile phone, the highest adoption rate of the countries studied (compared with Japan at 57% and India at 35%). Mobile phone ownership is occurring at ever younger ages: 60% of nine year old Egyptians reported owning a mobile phone. Nearly half of the youth who owned mobile phones used them to access social networking and micro-blogging sites, with entertainment apps found to be the most popular. Of young mobile phone users, 45% leave their social media profiles public, while only 16% report setting their profiles to private. The study also collected information about parental concerns and mobile safety. Nearly 80% of parents expressed concern about children's privacy and nearly two-thirds had established rules for their children's mobile phone use. A UNICEF study (2014) of children's digital media practices worldwide quoted a child in Egypt describing limited access to computers. Another expressed the belief that the government should play a role in increasing children's access to digital media. These two participants are not representative of Egyptian children as a whole, but their opinions provide a glimpse into the ways in which Egyptian children might perceive their access and rights related to internet use.

In 2015, the Information and Decision-Making Center of Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) found that a majority of internet users (89.4%) aged 6-18 used the internet for learning purposes, 49% reported playing online games, and a very small percentage engaged in online voice calls, 4.6%. Nearly half of youth internet users reported having a Facebook profile, seeing it as a means to create new friendships and maintain existing ones. Half of young Facebook users expressed concern that it reduced their social activities with family members and 23% report concerns about encountering false news and rumors.

Data from the International Communications Union (ITU) show that one in three in the Arab States are online, and that 20.7% in Africa are online, with that number rising.[11] As ever younger children are going online in increasing numbers, their well-being and safety online is of growing concern. Yet, as more children go online and engage with the internet both as users and generators of content themselves, and as children start to reap the range of benefits that access to ICTs and the internet provide, so too is there a range of risks to which they are exposed, not least of which is online sexual exploitation.[12]

Recognising the risks faced by children, in December 2014 the UK Government convened the #WePROTECT Children Online Summit to mobilise relevant actors in strengthening global efforts to combat online sexual exploitation. It is within this context that the UNICEF Global Programme to build capacity for tackling online child sexual exploitation is being implemented in 17 countries across six regions, with both regional and global engagement.

In line with the work that has already been started, UNICEF MENARO commissioned a regional study to map and scope the child online protection landscape in five countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia), and to provide recommendations to government on how to strengthen detection and responses to any form of online sexual exploitation, including sexual abuse and exploitation, through their national child protection system. The study is intended to ultimately lead to a better understanding of children's experiences, risks and harms, and challenges faced online, as well as the opportunities available to them, within each country. This, in turn, will be used to inform concrete country-level policy and legislative recommendations. The research will also contribute to the development of a body of evidence on children's online usage, risks, and harms in the study countries and the region more broadly, leading to better evidence as a prerequisite for the development of future evidence-based policies.

1.1   METHODOLOGY

A standardized methodology was adopted for all five countries. A comprehensive literature review provided the conceptual framework for the study, a detailed analysis of child online protection literature, and on the regional and national frameworks, legislation and policies in each of the five countries. This literature review was followed by in-country missions. The country visit to Egypt was conducted between 20 and 25 March 2016.

Twenty-five participants representing a diverse range of ministries of the Government of Egypt were consulted and international and local non-governmental organisations (INGOs and NGOS,

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[11] Very dated research on broad level trends on access and usage are available through reports such as, for example, ECPAT International: *Global Monitoring Reports on the Status of Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Agenda for Action)/Jordan, available at http://www.ecpat.net/sites/default/files/Global_Monitoring_Report-JORDAN.pdf (accessed 21 November 2016), and similar (including data on Egypt*, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Israel, Kuwait, UAE, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Algeria and Tunisia. This data is however now extremely outdated and thus of limited relevance.

[12] Livingstone, S. and Helsper, E.J. (2010) Balancing opportunities and risks in teenagers' use of the internet: The role of online skills and internet self-efficacy. *New Media & Society*, 12(2): 309-329.

respectively). Participants were selected either on the basis of the relevance of their agency mandate and its possible inclusion of child online protection, or of their known activities in this area.[13]

The mode of inquiry was dynamic and combined focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. These were guided by an interview guide, which provided the departure point for discussions across all the study countries. The interview guide was based upon the #WEPROTECT Model National Response and sought to elicit an understanding of the systems response to child online sexual exploitation as well as child online safety more broadly.

1.2   LIMITATIONS

The duration of the full study was limited, and each research component was necessarily conducted over a very short space of time. With this in mind, the country visit to Egypt was conducted in six days and, as a result, the study presents an introduction to the approach adopted in Egypt to child online safety more broadly as well as the specific issue of child online sexual exploitation, but should not be considered comprehensive or conclusive.

Secondly, where possible national legal and policy documents were consulted in their original language and any quotations are based upon unofficial translations unless stated otherwise. Further, it is important to note that any evaluation or assessment as to the implementation of policies and initiatives is beyond the scope of this report.

2.   FRAMING CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION

The following section provides an overview of child online protection, the risks and opportunities associated with online activities, and the rights of children relating to the digital world.

2.1   CHILD ONLINE PROTECTION

Access to and use of ICTs and social media opens up a range of services to children, including education and health services. They become particularly valuable in areas and countries where access to these and other social services might be limited. The Special Rapporteur to the Secretary General on Violence Against Children has clearly stated that "connectivity is a fundamental human right since it enables children to learn, work, connect, experience cultural activities and become citizens of the world," thus recognising the range of rights and opportunities that ICTs and connectivity offer and facilitate.[14]

However, while ICTs and access to the internet have opened up a wealth of opportunities and possibilities for children, they come with increased exposure to different forms of risk. Care needs to be taken to ensure that in responding to the increased or new risks that the internet introduces to

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[13] A list of Departments, Ministries, and stakeholders consulted is included in the Appendix.

[14] SRSG on Violence Against Children, Ms Marta Santos Pais, at the side event on a Call for Empowering, Inclusive, Safe digital environment for children, 28th Session of the Human Rights Commission, Geneva, Monday 9 March 2015, available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Children/Pages/SafeDigitalEnvironment.aspx

children, the opportunities that exist through technology are not missed.[15] As the body of knowledge regarding online risks grows, there is worryingly little evidence on the harms that result from exposure to these risks, and indeed, a lack of consensus on what constitutes harm or how to measure harm.[16] This differentiation between online risks and harms is an essential one to make, and a greater understanding is required to ensure the development and application of appropriate policy and intervention responses. This consideration frames this analysis of the literature and the presentation of the study findings.

When considering the experience of children online in the context of sexual exploitation, a wide range of behaviours should be considered. These may range from experiences of sexualised cyberbullying (a term which encompasses sending nasty or threatening sexualised texts or messages, posting explicit messages online, outing, badmouthing, spreading rumours related to sexual behaviour, flaming, harassment, impersonation, or cyber-stalking), online grooming and recruitment, exposure to child sexual abuse materials or other unwanted sexual content, sexting, and live-streaming of sexual content.

Defining Online Child Sexual Exploitation

"While the term 'abuse' focuses more on the treatment of the child victim, 'exploitation' refers more to the benefit of the offender" (UNODC, 2014).

"The term 'online child sexual exploitation' refers to the use of the Internet as a *means* to exploit children sexually and includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that has, at some stage, a connection to the online environment. It includes any use of ICT which results in or causes a child to be sexually exploited or which results in or causes images or other material documenting such sexual exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed or transmitted. This notion can thus encompass (but is not limited to):

- Sexual exploitation that is carried out whilst the victim is online (such as enticing/manipulating/ threatening a child into performing sexual acts in front of a webcam);
- Identifying and/or grooming potential child victims online with a view to exploiting them sexually (whether the acts that follow are then carried out online or offline);
- The distribution, dissemination, importing, exporting, offering, selling, possession of, or knowingly obtaining access to, child sexual exploitation material online (even if the sexual abuse that is depicted in the material was carried out offline) [UNICEF internal, 2016].

Child sexual exploitation online, similar to offline, can involve several broad categories of abuse: Adult to child abuse; child to child abuse; and child to child where the action originated in a consensual activity. It must be noted, though, that **not all abuse is exploitative, while all exploitation is considered abuse.** First, adults often use online media to groom children for future contact abuse. This can include making first contact with the child and developing a relationship with them that

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[15] This dilemma is captured well in the report of the SRSG: Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence Against Children (2014), *Realising Children's Potential and Minimising Risk: ICTs, the internet, and violence against children*, New York.

[16] Slavtcheva-Petkova, Nash and Bulger, Evidence on the extent of harms experienced as a result of online risks: implications for policy and research, in *Information, Communication and Society*, 2014; Finkelhor

gradually becomes more sexualised, or it can involve adults known to the child who use online media to sexualise their relationship with that child. Increasingly child sexual abuse is documented by abusers and posted online either as photos, videos, or sometimes as live streamed sex shows. Often these child abuse materials are sold online, sometimes by the child's own parents.[17] Second, other children may use online media against their peers for cyberbullying. Third, children sometimes 'voluntarily' use online media to exchange sexual images of themselves (sexting) either with their peers, or with known or unknown adults. There is also an increasing phenomenon of children using online media to prostitute themselves in exchange for cash or consumable goods such as mobile phones or clothing.[18]

Just as it is important to recognise that not all abuse is exploitative, but all child exploitation is abuse, so is it equally important to acknowledge that exploitation *can* have commercial gain (for example the generation of income through live-streaming of content, or the sale of child abuse images), but not all exploitation is for commercial purposes.

Online experiences, including online child sexual exploitation, should not be considered in isolation from broader social dynamics and contexts. In their global review of children's internet use, Livingstone and Bulger found that the distinction between offline and online worlds is blurring and that those who are vulnerable offline are exceedingly vulnerable online.[19] It is thus important that prevention efforts targeting child online protection, and specifically online child sexual exploitation, be located within the broader child protection and violence prevention discourse and framework. The importance of this is further reflected in statements made by the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director in 2014:

"What happens in the online world is a reflection of society at large, as the dangers children face online are mirrored in the risks children face in their homes, schools and communities. Protecting children online is part of a growing global movement to keep children safe from violence, abuse and exploitation in virtual and physical life-settings everywhere."[20]

This relationship is further reflected in much of this report, as a number of nations globally lack online-specific legal provisions. Often existing and broader provisions are applied in ad hoc ways to online-specific crimes. However, the distinction between online and offline is becoming less and less easy to make, and it must also be recognized that crimes previously considered as 'offline' such as child trafficking, child marriage, child prostitution, and irregular migration for the purposes of exploitation, are increasingly being facilitated by the internet through the internet and social media. This has implications for the investigation process in terms of accessing, analyzing and preserving electronic evidence, and also for the court process when such evidence is presented before a judge. The online element also has implications for prevention. For example, in Egypt a current reported concern of the government is the irregular migration of Egyptian children to Europe, where they may become at risk of sexual exploitation. In a study carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in

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[17] http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/10/world/asia/widespread-child-sex-abuse-case-rocks-pakistan.html?_r=0
[18] A useful example of this is the recent scandal in Pakistan, where abusers were found to be blackmailing parents of children they abused, threatening to post sexual abuse recordings online?
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/10/world/asia/widespread-child-sex-abuse-case-rocks-pakistan.html?_r=0
[19] Livingstone & Bulger (2013). *A Global Agenda for Children's Rights in the Digital Age: Recommendations for Developing UNICEF's Research Strategy. Available at http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/702*
[20] UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Fatoumata Ndiaye. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_86244.html

2016, it was found that brokers who establish contact between children in rural Egypt and smuggling networks, publicise their contact details, prices, and schedules on social media platforms frequented by children[21]. It is recommended that Egypt's Inter-Ministerial National Coordinating Committee to Combat and Prevent Illegal Migration (NCCPIM) should work with the National Committee for Child Online Protection to address the use of the internet to facilitate the irregular migration of children from Egypt.

2.2   ONLINE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While much of the focus of those concerned with child well-being has tended to be on the risks and harms associated with the use of internet and online activities, there is a growing emphasis on the promotion of online opportunities, and a recognition that minimising risk does not have to come at the expense of negating or minimising opportunities. In fact, many of the risks that adults perceive are legitimately perceived by children as opportunities (contact with others sharing similar interests, self-initiated collaboration and learning, social networking).

For example, Plan International identifies seven benefits of youth internet use: interpersonal relationships (which can reduce isolation), further education and skill development, participation in governance and communities, developing technical skills for the workplace, building knowledge on topics such as HIV and AIDS that they might not otherwise know about, and building self-esteem.[22] The Government of Egypt has recognized many of these opportunities, and operationalized the opportunities for further educational and skills development, in particular, through its support for youth-led start-ups and tech entrepreneurs.

The opportunity to form relationships, to be 'connected,' while often conceptualised as risky – the risk of meeting strangers – are amongst the most common opportunities identified by children in some studies. In a recent study in South Africa, for example, young people most frequently identify inclusion and 'connectedness' as the key benefit of mobile phone use (this refers as much to the use of data services as voice services). A study of Egyptian youth found that of child mobile phone users, 71% reported communicating with new "friends" online.[23]

In considering both risks and harms, it is essential that there is an adequate understanding of what makes children vulnerable to harms, and what increases the chance of risks translating into actual harms. Much of the research on vulnerability had its origins in exploring the relationship between online and offline cyberbullying victimization and offender.[24] Similar to findings related to bullying, recent research has shown that not all children are at equal risk of harms relating to the internet.[25] Those children who are most susceptible to harm are those who have problems or difficulties in other

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[21] International Organisation for Migration (2016) 'Egyptian Unaccompanied Migrant Children: A case study on irregular migration'. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/egyptian_children.pdf?language=en
[22] Bachan, K., Stevenson, S., and van der Gaag, N. (2012). Girls in Cyberspace: Dangers and Opportunities. In Perisic, M., Komarecki, M., and Minujin, A. (Eds.)   *Adolescent Girls, Cornerstone of Society: Building Evidence and Policies for Inclusive Societies.* p. 119-137. Available at http://www.equityforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/P60151-AdolescentGirls_print.pdf
[23] NTT DOCOMO and GSMA (2013). *Children's use of mobile phones: An international comparison.* Japan: Mobile Society Research Institute, DOCOMO and GSMA.
[24] See for example Wolak, J.D., Mitchell, K.KJ., and Finkelhor, D. (2003, 2007) and Williams, K.R., and Guerra, N.G. (2007).
[25] See for example Palfrey et al (2008) and Guan S.S., Subrahmmanyam, K. and (2009).

areas of their lives. Similarly, some forms of online abuse predict or co-occur with other forms, and vulnerability to one form of abuse may predict vulnerability to other (often more serious) forms of abuse. Thus, for example, children who are at greater risk of offline sexual abuse or neglect are generally at greater risk of online child sexual abuse.[26]

Finally, in order to inform both policies and interventions, it is important that a thorough understanding of how children navigate these risks is illicited. International research shows, for example, that while large numbers of youth are engaging in risky online behaviours only a very small percentage experience sexual exploitation as a result of these behaviours.[27] While youth may not be aware of the breadth of dangers in the online space, they do have "some awareness of potential online dangers, and this awareness seems to increase or decrease depending on background."[28]

2.3   CONSIDERATION OF CHILD RIGHTS RELATING TO THE INTERNET

Due to the hidden nature of online child sexual exploitation and the unregulated setting where it takes place, policies to protect child users of ICTs from sexual exploitation should not merely be reactive. This is aligned with the rights to protection from abuse contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which Egypt was commendably the first signatory in the region. The aim should be to prevent the abuse before it takes place by building children's capacity to protect themselves when using ICTs. This approach is in line with Article 19 of the CRC, which emphasises States' obligation to implement, among other measures, educational initiatives to protect children from all forms of violence.

Also reflecting the rights of children detailed in the CRC, and of particular importance when considering child online protection, is the right to access justice and redress. Where children experience violations of their human rights, including sexual exploitation, they must have access to justice. The Committee on the Rights of the Child states "for rights to have meaning, effective remedies must be available to redress violations." States must therefore "ensur[e] that there are effective, child-sensitive procedures available to children and their representatives." This means ensuring that children have meaningful access to the judicial system – including "access to a readily available, prompt and effective remedy in the form of criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings" – and any other independent complaints procedures.

In ensuring that children's online safety becomes a reality, several different but complimentary approaches are likely to be required at a national level. These should ideally be framed not in isolation from wider (offline) child protection and safety initiatives and approaches, but rather in relation to these broader issues. The following list is not exhaustive but rather indicative of the complexity of the response required:

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[26] See for example, Burton, P., Ward, C.L., Artz, L., & Leoschut, L. (Forthcoming). The Optimus Study South Africa: A national study of child sexual victimization. CJCP Monograph series No 15, Cape Town, South Africa

[27] Mitchell, K. J., FInkelhor, D., Wolak, J., Ybarra, M.L., and Turner, H. (2010). Youth internet vicitimization in a broader victimization context. *Journal of Adolescent Health 48,* 128-134.

[28] See Bachan, et al. 2012.

- An appropriate and responsive policy and legislative environment
- Effective implementation of law and policy on the ground in both urban and rural areas and throughout plural legal systems
- Balancing risks and opportunities—finding ways to promote healthy, safe engagement while also protecting from potentially harmful content, contacts, and conduct[29]
- Raising awareness for parents, educators, and community members of effective protection and prevention[30]
- Involvement from industry leaders in prevention and building safety into design
- Effective detection and prosecution systems
- Appropriate response and support systems for kids

These aspects are reflected in the Model National Response, developed under the #WeProtect Initiative, and endorsed by member governments and international stakeholders.

This model provides a framework for all actors to prevent, identify, and respond to child online exploitation, and can serve as a country readiness assessment or diagnostic.[31] The MNR identified seven enablers of child protection:

1. Cross-sector, multi-disciplinary collaboration

2. Willingness to prosecute, functioning justice system, and rule of law

3. Supportive reporting environment

4. Aware and supportive public and professionals working with and for children

5. Sufficient financial and human resources

6. National legal and policy frameworks in accordance with the CRC and other international and regional standards

7. Data and evidence on CSEA

Significantly, the MNR moves the conceptualization of child online exploitation beyond a narrow child protection focus to consider the broader role of child safety, well-being, and health, recognising the roles of, and relationships between, a range of sectors other than pure child protection.[32]

3. EGYPT: INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL LEGAL CONTEXT

Egypt is a member of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It was one of the first States in the world to ratify the CRC and has since also ratified the

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[29] http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20I%20%282006-9%29/EU%20Kids%20Online%20I%20Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf

[30] It is particularly important that addressing stigmatization of sexual abuse victims is addressed, creating a safe space in which children can report abuse and feel safe and receive positive response and protection. This will be elucidated further in the study report

[31] The seven terms of the MNR are used in Section 4 below as just such a diagnostic for the four participating MENA countries.

[32] The Model National Response is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam[33], and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution (OPSC). Egypt has also ratified the 2010 LAS Arab Convention on Combating Information Technology Offences, which requires States Parties to criminalise pornography in general, and to impose enhanced punishments in cases involving children. The Convention also requires States Parties to criminalise trafficking in persons by means of IT, and to commit to increasing the punishment for traditional crimes when they are committed by means of IT[34] [35]. Most recently Egypt has ratified the 2014 African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data which seeks to harmonises African cyber legislation on electronic commerce organization, personal data protection, cyber security promotion, and cybercrime control and to require criminalization of the production, distribution, and possession of CSAMs[36]. It defines 'child pornography' and places it within a broader framework of cyber security and personal data protection, including consent-based protections across the board (section I). The Convention requires States Parties to criminalises a number of acts related to CSAMs, including production, procurement, possession, and facilitation of access to CSAMs (article 29[3][1]). It requires that responsibility for the offences contained in the Convention is recognised in domestic law for all legal and natural persons (article 29[2]). On the basis of the Convention's explicit inclusion of private actors in the group of duty bearers, its Article 31 requires that sanctions for offenses are adapted according to the legal person that is being held liable, including for example, criminal fines. The Convention also provides for a monitoring mechanism at the African Union level (chapter IV).

At a regional level Egypt is also Party to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam. [37]

The government of **Egypt has a long history of leadership in terms of children's rights** – in 1990 Egypt was one of the organisers of the World Summit for Children, and subsequently saw two decades dedicated to the rights of the Egyptian child, during which time the rights and welfare of children were placed at the heart of government policy[38]. In 2011 the CRC Committee commended Egypt for its leadership role in efforts to prevent and eliminate offences related to the OPSC in the Middle East and North Africa.[39]

Egypt entered into the EU-Egypt Association Agreement in 2004, which forms the legal basis of governing relations between **Egypt and the EU**[40]. The preamble emphasizes the importance of the

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[33] Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), *Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam*, June 2005, OIC/9-IGGE/HRI/2004/Rep.Final, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/44eaf0e4a.html [accessed 11 July 2016]

[34] http://digitalwatch.giplatform.org/actors/arab-league

[35] It is suggested that this section be read in conjunction with the comprehensive literature review produced as a paralell deliverable to this report: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2016) Child Online Protection in the Middle East and North Africa, prepared for UNICEF MENA Regional Office.

[36] UNICEF (2014) 'Releasing Children's Potential and Minimising Risks'. Available at: http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications_final/icts/releasing_children_potential_and_minimising_risks_icts_the_internet_and_violence_against_children.pdf

[37] It is suggested that this section be read in conjunction with the comprehensive literature review produced as a parallel deliverable to this report: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2016) Child Online Protection in the Middle East and North Africa, prepared for UNICEF MENA Regional Office.

[38] Abiad & Mansoor (2010), *Criminal Law and the Rights of the Child in Muslim States*, British Institute of International and Comparative Law, MPG Books: London, P. 104

[39] Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011), Concluding Observations: Egypt, 21 July 2011, Para 7. (CRC/C/OPSC/EGY/CO/1)

[40] http://eeas.europa.eu/egypt/eu-egypt_agreement/index_en.htm

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principles of the UN Charter including the observance of human rights and democratic principles. The current agenda of EU-Egypt relations is detailed in the joint Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy, which includes action points related to the rights of children to protection from sexual exploitation and to freedom of expression as follows[41]:

- o Consolidate the rights of the child through the application of the CRC and consider revising existing legislation taking into account the recommendations of the CRC Committee
- o Support Egypt's efforts to promote gender equality and reinforce the right against discrimination and gender-based violence.
- o Further increase access to information for all citizens including by reviewing the legal and administrative frameworks
- o Promote the use of ICT in education.
- o Work together to fight cyber crime
- o Reinforce the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially women and children

Egypt is currently receiving European Union assistance to develop a database that will log details relating to both child victims and perpetrators of crime, including in cases involving cybercrime. The National Coordinating Committee on preventing and combating illegal migration is also working with the EU Project for Administration of Justice and Security to draft an integrated national strategy to deal with the issue of trafficking in persons, as well as conducting trainings for law enforcement in this regard.

Egyptian government stakeholders reported that they referred to the Council of Europe Budapest and Lanzarote Conventions as guidelines when drafting legislation with respect to prevention of online child sexual exploitation and cybercrime. They also referred to the more recent African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.[42]

In 2016 the Ministry of Justice organized a training workshop in collaboration with UNICEF to exchange experiences between Egypt and Sudan on children and the judicial system, and community-based alternatives to deprivation of liberty for child offenders. The Ministry of Justice has also participated in several regional child online protection workshops, the last of which was held in October 2015 in collaboration with the MCIT, and organized by the ITU under the auspices of the LAS. The Ministry of Justice has been working to ensure that Egyptian laws are consistent with international legislation regarding crimes committed using technological means, and specifically regarding the protection of children online.

Insert re relevant international & regional commitments.

As well as commending Egypt for its work on child protection, the CRC Committee, in its 2011 OPSC Concluding Observations, recommended further action to implement the Protocol, including:

- Ensure that the new ten-year NPA for Children specifically targets all issues covered under the OPSC and provides adequate human, technical and financial resources for its implementation;

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[41] http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/action_plans/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf
[42] EX.CL/846(XXV). Available at:
http://pages.au.int/sites/default/files/en_AU%20Convention%20on%20CyberSecurity%20Pers%20Data%20Pr otec%20AUCyC%20adopted%20Malabo.pdf

- Ensure the NCCM is provided with the necessary resources to effectively coordinate and evaluate activities relating to the OPSC;
- Strengthen cooperation and coordination on the OPSC between the NCCM, the Ministry of Interior's General Department for Child Protection, and other relevant government entities and ensure the Child Protection Committees are sufficiently funded;
- Allocate adequate resources for multidisciplinary training programmes on all areas covered by the OPSC.
- Establish and implement an effective regulatory framework and take all necessary legislative, administrative, social and other measures to prevent and eliminate the exploitation of children in travel and tourism.
- Take steps to ensure that domestic legislation enables Egypt to establish and exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction, without the criterion of double criminality, and without the need for a bilateral treaty, over crimes under the OPSC.
- Establish mechanisms and procedures for the early identification of child victims of offences under the OPSC, including by establishing cooperation mechanisms between law enforcement agencies, relevant ministries and Child Protection Committees.
- Ensure child victims are not treated as offenders.
- Strengthen the capacity of the NCCM to ensure and coordinate assistance to child victims of offences under the OPSC, and guarantee that child victims have access to seek compensation for damages from those legally responsible or access to a state compensation fund.

The CRC Committee also made recommendations in 2011, in its CRC Concluding Observations, with regard to the child's right to freedom of expression and access to appropriate information in Egypt (CRC 2011)[43]. The CRC Committee found that children and adolescents have limited access to health information, in particular to information on reproductive health. The CRC Committee recommended that Egypt "take all necessary measures to strengthen access to information on the right to physical and mental health, on healthy lifestyles and behaviours, and on reproductive health". It must be noted that the Government of Egypt does utilize social media to engage with the population, with several Departments operating Facebook pages. **Notwithstanding this, it is recommended that the use of the internet and social media could be explored to further the aim of providing access to information, at the same time as providing information to children regarding child sexual exploitation and abuse.**

Egypt was due to report to the CRC Committee in March 2016 but has not yet done so.

3.1   NATIONAL LEGAL, POLICY, AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Egypt's legal system is monist, which means that international agreements ratified by the State are binding under domestic law, and therefore the OPSC and CRC have the force of law in Egypt, and under the Egyptian Constitution 2014 the courts are obliged to implement their provisions as domestic legislation (Egyptian Constitution Article 93).

Article 2 of the Egyptian Constitution provides that Islam is the state religion and Islamic Shari'a law is the main source of legislation. The interpretation and application of Shari'a law is confined to the Supreme Constitutional Court in the area of personal status laws (related to marriage, separation, child custody and inheritance law). Al-Azhar, an independent scientific Islamic institution, is mentioned as one of the social components of Egyptian society under Article 7 of the Constitution. Al-Azhar produced a guide to child protection under Islamic law, *Children in Islam* in partnership with UNICEF, in 2005[44]. The rights of the child in Egypt are outlined at Article 80 of the Constitution which

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[43] Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011), Concluding Observations: Egypt, 21 July 2011, (CRC/C/OPSC/EGY/CO/1)
[44] http://www.unicef.org/mena/Children_in_Islam_English.pdf

guarantees state care and protection for children from all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment and commercial and sexual exploitation. The best interest of the child principle is also to be applied to all measures taken by the state with regard to children.

3.2 KEY LAWS RELATED TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ONLINE IN EGYPT

As stated above, Egypt has already developed a number of laws of direct relevance to, and in some instances explicitly addressing, child online sexual exploitation. These include:

- **Prohibition of child sexual exploitation** (Child Law No.126 of 2008 Article 3; Article 80 Egyptian Constitution 2014 – rights of the child): the Constitution states that "*the state shall care for children and protect them from all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment and commercial and sexual exploitation*"[45]. The Child Law provides for the child's right to protection from *all forms of* violence, sexual abuse and exploitation. It is assumed that 'all forms of' includes *online* forms of abuse.

- **Prohibition of CSAMs online** (Child Law Article 116 bis-a): The Child Law criminalises the use of ICTs to produce, distribute, or exploit children in pornographic activities, or defame them or sell them. It is also a crime to use ICTs to attempt to induce children into commiting immoral acts even if the crime did not occur.

- **Prohibition of sexual extortion of children online** (Penal Code Article 327): The Penal Code prohibits blackmail in terms of threatening another, in writing, with commiting a crime against their soul or property, or with divulging issues or attributing matters outraging their honor, where the threat is accompanied by a demand or instruction for something. The relevant section of the Penal Code does not specifically refer to children, and was written before the internet was widely used in Egypt, but it nonetheless appears to be applicable to the sexual extortion of children online.

- **Prohibition of sexual harassment of children online** (Penal Code Articles 306(a) & 306(b): includes confronting others in a public or private space with sexual or pornographic insinuations by words or action and by any means including wired and wirless communication methods. Enhanced punishments are given for repeat offending (Section 306a). If the sexual harassment is for the purposes of receiving a sexual benefit then the punishment is increased further (Section 306b). These sections of the Penal Code cover online sexual harassment, although no enhanced sentence is given for cases involving child victims.

- **Prohibition of trafficking in children & sale of children** (Penal Code, Article 291; Child Law No.64 on Combating Trafficking in Persons, 2010): Following changes to the Child Law, Article 291 was added to the Penal Code which now criminalises child trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and provides for the right of the child to awareness and empowerment to address such risks; the same article also criminalises the sale of children for sexual purposes, even if the crime is committed transnationally, and attempt of such crimes is also criminalized.

- **Prohibition of corruption of children** (Child Law Article 89): The Child Law 2008 prohibits showing or circulating any printed material, audio, or visual productions to children that 'addresses basic instincts or beautified behavior contrary to the society values, or leads them to delinquency'. This Article appears to criminalise cases in which adults force children to view pornographic materials.

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[45] International IDEA, 'Egypt's Constitution of 2014', constituteproject.org. Available at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

- **Prohibition of exploitation of children in prostitution** (Suppression of Prostitution Act No. 10 of 1961): Exploitation of children and young people in prostitution aged under 21 involves a higher fine and length of prison sentence than in cases of exploitation of adults (Article 1 & 2). Working in prostitution is criminalized under the Suppression of Prostitution Act, and it is not clear whether children would also be criminalized if they are found to be voluntarily participating in prostitution. This law may apply to cases of offline prostitution that are facilitated by the internet in some way (e.g. through online advertisements or through email preparatory communication).

- **Prohibition of child marriage** (Law no.143 of 1994 on Civil Status, as amended in 2008, Article 31-bis): Egypt withdrew its reservation to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2015, which sets the legal age for marriage at 18, and Egyptian national law now sets the legal age for marriage at 18 for men and women. The government recently introduced new regulations regarding 'temporary marriages', which are anyway illegal for children under the age of 18. This law may apply to cases of temporary marraige that are facilitated by the internet in some way (e.g. through online advertisements or through email preparatory communication).

- **Prohibition of exploitation of children in travel and tourism** (Charter of Honor for Tourism): There is a national *Charter of Honour for Tourism* which contains standards and guidelines on preventing offences under the OPSC. This law may apply to cases of temporary marraige that are facilitated by the internet in some way (e.g. through online communication).

- **Child victim of SEC Online's right to child-friendly justice procedures**: (Article 80 Egyptian Constitution 2014 – rights of the child; Child Law 2008 116bis(d)): the Egyptian Constitution provides that the state shall establish a judicial system for child victims and witnesses which includes the provision of legal aid to children, and ensuring that child offenders are detained separate from adults[46]. The Child Law also provides for the rights of child victims and witnesses of crime, and victims are allowed to ask for a restraining order to protect themselves from offenders[47]. The Child Law states that child victims of crime have rights in accordance with the UN Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime.

- **Child victim of SEC Online's right to recovery:** (Child Law Article 7-bis) Egyptian children have the right to access health and social care services.

- **Child victim of SEC Online's right to redress:** (Child Law Article 98bis) any person knowing that a child is at risk must provide immediate assistance to the child under the Child Law.

- **Monitoring online communications**: (Article 95 of Law 150 of 1950 Code of Criminal Procedure). This law allows magistrates to monitor wired or wireless conversations for the purposes of providing evidence in a delony or misdemeanor. This law can be used to monitor possible perpetrators of SEC Online.

Key laws related to access to information, privacy, and freedom of expression include:

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[46] International IDEA, 'Egypt's Constitution of 2014', constituteproject.org. Available at:
https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf
[47] NGO Group for the CRC (2011), State Party Examination of Egypt's Initial Periodic report on the OPSC, 30 May – 17 June 2011

- o **Access to information and freedom of expression** (Child Law Article 3): Children who are able to form their own opinions have the right to access information which empowers them to form and express their opinions, and to be heard in all matters related to them, including in judicial and administrative procedures.

- o **Privacy** (Constitution 2014, Article 57): private life in Egypt is inviolable, safeguarded and may not be infringed upon. Electronic correspondence and other forms of communication are guaranteed confidentiality except for by judicial order for a limited period of time in cases specified by the law.

Egypt has undergone a period of significant law reform in the area of children's rights in the past ten years, and has put in place substantial protections against child sexual exploitation in the national legal framework. In 2007, Egypt established a Child Trafficking Unit under the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (CRC OPSC 2011). The Child Law 2006 was significantly amended in 2008 along with the Penal Code, to strengthen the legal protection against offences under the OPSC and under the Palermo Protocol, including offences related to CSAMs (CRC OPSC 2011).

Although not aimed only at child protection, in 2014 the government further amended the Penal Code to bring in new offences related to sexual harassment which apply to children as well as to adults. These provisions also specifically apply to *online* harassment, and coupled with Penal Code provisions that address blackmail, these new amendments seem to make it possible to prosecute offenders in a wide variety of cases of sexual harassment and extortion of children online. As of 2016, the National Committee for Child Online Protection is carrying out a legislative review, and has submitted suggested amendments to be made to existing laws to the NCCM. This review process is planned to be concluded by the end of 2016. The Ministry of Justice has also drafted a new law related to ISP regulation, which is before parliament for consideration as of 2016.

Anecdotal evidence from other countries included in this study in the MENA region indicates that many cases of sexual harassment or sexual extortion of children carried out online are carried out by the child's peers, rather than by adults. Under Egyptian law, in cases involving peer to peer abuse, in which the perpetrator is also aged under 18, the perpetrator should be dealt with more leniently than an adult offender, and if they are prosecuted their case should be heard in a special children's court. The age of criminal responsibility is 12 in Egypt, with progressively more lenient penalties prescribed depending on the age of the child (lower penalties and more rehabilitation for children aged under 18 and lower still for children aged under 15)[48]. Under the Child Law (as amended in 2008) cases involving suspected child offenders should be heard in the specialised Child Court however if the child is aged above 15 and has an accomplice who is an adult the case may be heard in the Criminal Court (Article 122). Suspected child offenders have the right to a lawyer, although this right is not extended to child victims (Article 125). The Ministry of Justice advised that the new Child Court is piloting the use of video testimony in court. This allows children's testimony to be recorded, meaning that they do not have to attend court, or to give multiple testimonies, which could go some way to addressing access issues for children outside of Cairo. **It is recommended that steps are taken to ensure that child victims of sexual exploitation online are given the right to legal assistance, whether under legal aid, or via pro bono legal services.**

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[48] Abiad & Mansoor (2010), 'Criminal Law and the Rights of the Child in Muslim States: A Comparative and Analytical Perspective', British Institute of International and Comparative Law, UK

In relation to CSAMs online, and the exploitation of children in travel and tourism - which the latest evidence suggests is often facilitated by the internet (ECPAT 2016) – the crimes involved are often committed across national borders. In some cases the perpetrator may stay at home and abuse children online over the internet, while the victims are in another country. In other cases the perpetrator may travel to another country to abuse children. Furthermore such cases may involve Egyptian perpetrators and foreign children, or foreign perpetrators and Egyptian children. These kind of crimes call for laws that provide for extra territorial jurisdiction. The CRC Committee raised concerns in 2011 that although the new Article 291 of the Egyptian Penal Code establishes extraterritorial jurisdiction for all of the offences contained within the Penal Code, it does not explicitly provide for jurisdiction over transnational cases when (a) the alleged offender is an Egyptian or someone who is habitually resident in Egypt who offends abroad; or (b) when the victim is Egyptian but the crime takes place abroad. The Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure currently requires a bilateral treaty to be in place before extradition can be granted. This study concurs with the CRC Committee's recommendation that **Egypt should consider amending Egyptian law so that the OPSC constitutes a legal basis for extradition, without requiring a bilateral agreement between every country which may be involved in such cases. It is suggested that it may be possible for an Egyptian judge to interpret existing law in accordance with this recommendation, and to rely on the precedent set by jurisprudence to decide future cases, if this would be easier than changing the law (CRC OPSC Para.26).**

Egypt has legislation which is specific to child pornography, but 'child pornography' is not defined, which is a requirement under the OPSC. Egypt's laws cover both computer-facilitated offences and simple possession of child pornography. However, ISP reporting and data retention are not currently addressed under Egyptian law. In order for ISPs to report CSAMs online to the government, CSAMs (or 'child pornography') must be defined in law, so that the scope of what is illegal is made clear. **This study concurs with ICMEC's recommendation that all countries clearly define the meaning of 'child pornography' in law (and preferably refer to it as child sex abuse materials), and ensure that ISPs are legally required to report CSAMs they come across to the police, and to retain data[49].** (ICMEC 2016)

Of crucial importance to the effective implementation of national laws related to child protection online is the development of comprehensive secondary legislation such as Standard Operating Procedures, and clear and explicit referral procedures, and other implementing regulations. **It is recommended that the National Committee for Child Online Protection works to create multi-agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) which specify clear referrals pathways (with reference to Chapter 8 of the Child Law) and allocate explicit responsibilities in cases involving child sexual exploitation online. Separate SOPs are advised for cases involving CSAMs, and for cases involving other forms of SEC Online. There should also be clear accountability mechanisms for the implementation of the SOPs.**

3.3 KEY POLICY & REGULATIONS RELATED TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ONLINE IN EGYPT

ICT Industry Regulation

The ICT industry in Egypt is regulated by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) pursuant to the Law No. 10 of 2003 Telecommunication Regulation Law. Under current law

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[49] ICMEC (2016), 'Child Pornography: Model Legislation & Global Review, 8th Edition, 2016.

ISPs are not required to report CSAMs to the police when they come across them, and they are not required to retain any data (ICMEC 2016), but measures may be implemented to address these two points in a new law that is pending before parliament.

In 2008 the government established The Economic Courts which have jurisdiction over criminal cases related to ICTs, including online crimes. The MCIT has organized several specialized trainings for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with cybercrime and child safety experts, including a workshop for judges on 'cybercrime and child abuse', and courses about electronic criminal evidence. ICT companies have also provided numerous courses to the Ministry of Justice over the past five years (MCIT 2016).[50]

A draft Cybercrime Bill currently before parliament has been met with some civil society opposition on the grounds of freedom of expression. This draft Bill reportedly can be used to combat the use of personal photos and videos online for blackmail, as well as to regulate social media including Facebook and Twitter, although the degree to which social media can and should be regulated is reportedly controversial.[51]

It is recommended that any legislation addressing child sexual exploitation online should be separated from otherwise potentially controversial issues, which means incorporating provisions related to child protection in child-specific legislation (such as the Child Law), rather than in general legislation aimed at regulating cybercrime in general, or at regulating pornography in general.

National policy related to SEC Online

Government stakeholders reported that Egypt is in the process of renewing its National Strategy on Child Online Safety, which is informed by UNICEF's Framework for Action on Online Child Protection[52]. The Framework for Action emphasizes the need to "balance the right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation with the right to information, freedom of expression and association, privacy and non-discrimination". The government supports giving life skills training and including online child protection within existing policies which aim to communicate with children and adolescents. UNICEF is working with the NCCM to promote children's right to use the internet as a safe platform for child and youth civic engagement. This involves encouraging children and young people to be proactive and participate in exchanges, express their opinions, and take part in activities online. Stakeholders reported that the National Strategy will also encourage industry to follow the UNICEF and ITU Guidelines for Industry[53], and will call on companies to fulfil their respect for children's civil and political rights by ensuring that technology, legislation and policies developed to protect children from online harm do not have the unintended consequences of suppressing their right to participation and expression or preventing them from accessing information that is important for their well-being.

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[50] http://www.mcit.gov.eg/Digital_Citizenship/Internet_Safety/Legislative_Framework
[51] http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-s-draft-cybercrime-law-undermines-freedom-of-expression;
http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/egypt-law-regulate-facebook-parliament-oppsoition.html
[52] https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-cop/Documents/UNICEF-%20ITU%209%20Oct%202013.pdf
[53] http://www.unicef.org/csr/css/COP_Guidelines_Industry.PDF

In 2007, Egypt established a National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Persons, and a Child Trafficking Unit in the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. In 2011 the state adopted a National Plan of Action (NPA) against Human Trafficking 2011-2013, and reported that a new "action plan on pornography and prostitution" would be incorporated into this NPA. As of 2011 the Egyptian government was also in the process of drafting a new ten-year NPA for Children. (CRC OPSC 2011) It is noted that in 2011 the CRC expressed concern that significant government efforts made in training had focused on human trafficking and not on the sale of children, child prostitution or child pornography. **It is recommended that activities to study and address the use of the internet to facilitate child trafficking are incorporated into national policies against human trafficking. It is further recommended that the new ten-year NPA for children specifically addresses SEC Online.**

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF LAW & POLICY IN RELATION TO CSE ONLINE

As with all countries in the MENA region (and many countries elsewhere), there appears to be a wide gap between impressive progress in terms of development of law and policy in relation to child sexual exploitation online, and their implementation by the relevant duty bearers on the ground. UNICEF report a lack of specialised child protection services and of a qualified workforce, including social workers, judges, police, and prosecutors[54]. These professionals are the duty bearers with regard to children's rights in Egypt, who are mandated to implement children's rights under national law, and it is essential that they are sufficiently trained to properly apply the law regarding child sexual exploitation online. The CRC Committee expressed concern in 2011 that limited access to justice, including legal aid and accessible complaints and reporting mechanisms were seriously limiting investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators in relation to offences under the OPSC (CRC OPSC 2011). Egypt was ranked 115th out of 197 countries in the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) 2015 Global Ranking on Access to Justice for Children[55].

> It is recommended that activities to study and address the use of the internet to facilitate child trafficking are incorporated into national policies against human trafficking. It is further recommended that the new ten-year NPA for children specifically address SEC Online.

Implementation of the law regarding child sexual exploitation online can be looked at in terms of what happens at the reporting stage, at the police investigation stage, at the prosecution stage, and then during and after the court process in terms of recovery and redress.

Reporting

Before children decide to report cases of SEC Online, they need to overcome the socio-cultural barriers which may make it difficult for children to disclose abuse for fear of shame and stigmatisation. Sexual abuse in any form is often accompanied by **a culture of victim blaming and shame which prevents victims from reporting their experiences to authorities, or others. This culture of shame may be exacerbated by other factors, including social class, gender issues and how women are perceived.**

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[54] http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection.html
[55] https://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/rights-remedies-and-representation-global-report-access-justice-children

Similarly these factors often influence the way cases are handled, and victims and their families face additional challenges in a culture that is reluctant **to acknowledge and discuss child sexual abuse** (CSA). Reporting systems need to take these factors into account in the tailoring of services to victims, and in the manner in which the services are promoted, and offered, to victims of sexual abuse.

There is a national 24-hour free emergency telephone helpline that children can use to report all forms of violence, including SEC Online, called *children's emergency line 16000*. However, the CRC Committee found in 2011 (CRC 2011) that this helpline is primarily used by adults rather than children, and out of 72 cases of violence and abuse reported in schools, only two abusers were reprimanded. A second Hotline (108) sits within the Ministry of the Interior, and receives any reports of cybercrimes more broadly. No statistics are available regarding reports of SEC Online.

Cases of child abuse and exploitation can also be reported to Child Protection Committees throughout the country, although it is not clear whether children can report cases directly themselves.[56]

Police investigation & prosecution

Stakeholders from the Ministry of Justice reported that in their view Article 116 bis of the Child Law is sufficient to cover online crimes including CSA. However, there is not sufficient awareness of the content of the law and its applicability to online crimes against children, amongst duty bearers such as police and social workers. This remains one of the major challenges with frontline workers in many countries globally, and the adequate training and implementation of the relevant articles and legislation is essential in both the provision of adequate services to victims, and to the investigation and successful prosecution of cases. As such, the provision of high quality (and often ongoing) training constitutes one of the most important areas of intervention.

The Child Law Section 116bis states that child victims and witnesses of crime are entitled to child friendly justice procedures in line with the UN Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime. The focus of justice for children in Egypt, like in many countries in the MENA region, has historically been on juvenile justice, which involves suspected child offenders. Stakeholders reported that child friendly justice for victims is however starting now in Egypt, and UNICEF's child protection programme now refers to children in *contact* with the law, rather than children in *conflict* with the law, which includes victims of crimes as well as suspects[57]. The MoJ explained that the first child court was inaugurated in February 2016 in Cairo. Plans of expanding accessibility to specialized child courts are underway, with three planned to cover Alexandria, Assad and Giza in 2016. Successively, the establishment of four courts per year is planned to ensure that child courts are established across Egypt. Furthermore, the MoJ plans to train special judges in children's issues to be appointed for these courts.

The newly established juvenile courts which will be staffed by judges, prosecutors, and lawyers who are trained in child rights, only have jurisdiction over cases involving suspected child offenders, whereas child victims of crimes committed by adults must attend an adult court.

UNICEF report that the Egyptian justice system currently disproportionately focuses on prosecution of perpetrators of child abuse and leaves little room for the rehabilitation of child victims[58]. The MoJ reported that social workers, psychologists, and experts are called as witnesses to present expert

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[56] CRIN (2014, revised 2015), Access to Justice for Children: Arab Republic of Egypt. Available at:
https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/egypt_access_to_justice.pdf
[57] http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection.html
[58] http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection.html

reports to the courts, but the extent to which these reports are comprehensive and considered by judges is not clear. They additionally reported that although according to the law, interviewing of children should take place in private and confidentiality must be maintained, this at times may not happen in practice.

It was reported by the MoJ that the conviction rate in child sexual abuse cases in general is very low, and there is a problem of attrition both at the initial reporting stage at the police station, and also even more so at the stage in between prosecution and the case coming to court.

It is recommended that judges are given training, or that guidance is issued, on how national laws related to child sexual exploitation online should be interpreted, in accordance with the OPSC, which has the same status as other national laws in Egypt.

When the child victim's initial statement is taken by the police, it is not considered to have evidentiary value until it is read through again by the victim and signed by them at the prosecutor's office. At the court, the same statement must be presented to the victim and signed again. Sometimes the family will decide they do not wish to proceed with the case due to the associated shame and stigma, and the family court will not pursue the prosecution if the family claims that the initial statement was taken under police intimidation.

Interpretation of the law

The Committee was concerned in 2011 that they had been informed by the delegation to the CRC that children aged over fifteen must prove elements of coercion or force to be considered as victims of prostitution, whereas those deemed to have entered into prostitution of their 'own free will' could be criminalised. There had also been limited reports of children exploited in pornographic materials being criminalised. (CRC OPSC 2011) Prostitution can be facilitated by ICTs, and CSAMs are increasingly being distributed online. It is recommended that judges are given training, or that guidance is issued, on how national laws related to child sexual exploitation online should be interpreted, in accordance with the OPSC, which has the same status as other national laws in Egypt.

Access to lawyers and courts

Under Article 116bis of the Child Law 2008, child victims and witnesses of crime are entitled to legal assistance at all stages of investigation, trial, and implementation.[59] If children cannot access a legal aid lawyer, it is possible for them to obtain legal assistance from a number of practicing lawyers on a pro bono basis via NGOs or university legal clinics.[60] UNDP has established 32 Legal Aid Offices in seven governorates across Egypt as part of its Access to Justice for the vulnerable in Egypt project[61]. However, the focus appears to be on the family courts rather than on cases involving child victims of crime.

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[59] CRIN (2014, revised 2015), Access to Justice for Children: Arab Republic of Egypt. Available at:
https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/egypt_access_to_justice.pdf
[60] CRIN (2014, revised 2015), Access to Justice for Children: Arab Republic of Egypt. Available at:
https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/egypt_access_to_justice.pdf
[61] http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/access-to-justice-for-the-vulnerable-in-egypt-.html

In Egypt it usually takes between one and two years to receive a judgement at first instance.[62] This lengthy process may discourage victims to report and pursue cases within the formal justice system.

In May 2016 the EU Delegation organized the first workshop for 98 judges of the Egyptian Court of Cassation, within the framework of the EU-funded Support to the Modernization of the Administration of Justice (SMAJ) project which aims to address the issue of unification of Egypt's jurisprudence and legal interpretation. The SMAJ aims to support the Egyptian Ministry of Justice to reform and modernize their internal processes in order to reduce case backlogs and increase the quality of justice rendered[63]. It is recommended that UNICEF explores whether there is an opportunity to partner with the SMAJ project to address jurisprudence and legal interpretation with respect to online crimes and electronic evidence, and with respect to backlogs in cases involving child victims.

It is recommended that UNICEF explores whether there is an opportunity to partner with the SMAJ project to address jurisprudence and legal interpretation with respect to online crimes and electronic evidence, and with respect to backlogs in cases involving child victims.

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[62] CRIN (2014, revised 2015), Access to Justice for Children: Arab Republic of Egypt. Available at: https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/egypt_access_to_justice.pdf
[63] http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/44972/EU-supports-modernisation-of-justice-system-in-Egypt

Recovery

Child victims of sexual exploitation online may require both physical and mental health services to enable their full recovery. The El Salam Centre for the Rehabilitation and Integration of Child Victims of Exploitation in Cairo provides

children with medical services and psychological counselling, but it is unclear whether there is any specialised counselling for child victims of online abuse. However, the CRC Committee found in 2011 that mental health counselling for child victims (or any children) remains close to none existent outside of Cairo (CRC OPSC 2011). This is an area that is receiving more attention within Egypt, with a growing focus on voluntary counselling and support, in order to meet increasing demand**. It is recommended that the NCCM works with the Ministry of Health to ensure that sufficient physical and psychological victim support services are available to victims of SEC Online.**

Redress

The CRC Committee recommended in 2011 that Egypt ensure that all child victims have access to adequate procedures to claim compensation from the perpetrators, and also to establish a state compensation fund for victims for those cases where claims against the perpetrator are not successful (CRC OPSC 2011). Children's guardian's can bring civil claims for compensation against the perpetrator of online sexual abuse under the Civil Code on behalf of their children[64]. However, in order to do so they would need to have access to a lawyer, and to know that they have the right to do so, and it is likely that the case would take a long time to be resolved. A civil claim against the perpetrator would also only succeed if the perpetrator had sufficient assets to pay the compensation claimed. In line with the CRC Committee's recommendation, **it is recommended that Egypt should create a State compensation fund for child victims of child sexual exploitation to facilitate their easy access to redress. This fund could be funded by the State, or by industry, or both.**

4.   MAJOR ACTORS AND ROLE-PLAYERS IN COP IN COUNTRY

Egypt has achieved substantial progress in formulating a cross-sectoral, inter-departmental collaboration to preventing and addressing sexual abuse online. It has done this in part through the establishment of the National Commmittee for Cross Collaboration, which coordinates between the different Ministries, and facilitates multi-agency collaboration. The following section details the role of the various agencies, Ministries, and partnerships.

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[64] Article 50 of the Civil Code: "Any person who sees any of their personal rights violated has the right to ask for this violation to stop and to seek compensation for harm suffered".

4.1   National Ministries and Partnerships

The National Committee for Child Online Protection

The **National Committee for Child Online Protection (NCCOP)** was initiatied by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and focuses primarily on empowerment and internet safety. A working group was established in 2009 under the MCIT to collaborate with national and international entities to build frameworks for safe Internet use among children, raise awareness, develop educational curriculums, and work with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to protect against child pornography and child abuse, and safety, more broadly. This multi-sectoral collaboration effort is regarded as the main national actor in Child Online Protection and a model for other countries. It includes the MCIT, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Interior (MOI) (General Administration for Information and Documentation), Ministry of Education MoE), Ministry of Higher Education, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), National Council for Youth, Ministry of Media, National Telecommunications and National Telecomm Regulatory Authority (NTRA), civil society organizations and the private sector.[65] The Committee engages in collaborative efforts with a number of statutory and other bodies within Egypt, and across sectors, *including* (but not limited to) the Computer and Software Department at Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Egyptian Industries, and Chamber of Information Technology and Communication, Egyptian Information, Telecommunications, Electronics, and Software Alliance (EITESAL), Egypt Internet Society, and the ITU. It also works proactively with the private sector, from ISPs such as TE Data (Telecomm Egypt), LINK (Orange), Vodafone, and Ebsalat; to multi-national organizations *such as (but not limited to)* Microsoft, Intel, Cisco; and a number of data transfer, communication, and technology companies, and mobile operators.

Stakeholders describe efforts to draft a national strategy for child online protection that would include programmes in criminalization, law enforcement, awareness, and technological solutions (including smart filters such as NetClean). The Committee draws upon its collective expertise and existing research to provide recommendations for areas of focus. Working with ISPs and technology experts, the Committee supports efforts to remove child sexual abuse images and is committed to extra measures of child online protection per the Internet Watch Foundation.

The Committee additionally focuses on awareness raising of the empowerment potentials of online use as well as potential risks. A few stakeholders pointed out that new users often don't realize what is possible online, both positive and negative, and may not fully comprehend the enormity of the connection they are making.

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) plays a proactive role in addressing child online protection, and all forms of internet safety, and was identified as one of the leading drivers of online safety. The Ministry is also responsible for the active promotion of ICTs and technology, maximizing the opportunities presented to children through technology. The Ministry has five pillars for child protection online: awareness, laws and regulation, research and statistics, IT and software, and education. The Ministry is active

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[65] "National committee for child protection on internet: An overview," 2013

in the National Committee for Child Online Protection, and in the consideration of relevant legislation and policies relating to children's online safety.

The MCIT undertakes a range of awareness raising initiatives in partnerships with industry organizations such as ITU and multi-national corporations such as Vodafone and Microsoft. These initiatives include, campaigns on cyber bullying aimed at parents, peer to peer 'train the trainer' workshops, and distribution of online safety information in schools. It partners with leading international organizations, including InSafe, UNICEF, and Connect Safely, to translate, localize and deliver materials and resources on online safety for children. It is also one of the Ministries to have a Facebook page and social media presence specifically on online safety. The MCIT has partnered with the Ministry of Education on both these initiatives, and on the development of the internet safety curriculum in schools. It has also facilitated the introduction of various content filtering and control systems, including the net Clean system, and other personal blocking tools.

Through the MCIT, Egypt has also worked closely with the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX), through seminars on raising awareness on both legislation and policy, and on technical matters.

The Ministry is also actively involved in the promotion of research and data to inform policy and practice, and is motivating for the inclusion of child online protection in various national studies, including subsequent VAC studies, and those conducted by the national statistical agency. To this end, the MCIT is also actively engaged with agencies such as UNICEF Innocenti and the EU Kids and Global Kids Online projects at the London School of Economics in developing further research.

Ministry of Education (MoE)

The Ministry of Education was identified by both State and non-state actors as a key and active partner in both preventing and responding to child sexual abuse online. The Ministry has, in partnership with both industry and MCIT, introduced an online safety curriculum into schools, although this has not yet been extended to all grades across all schools. Importantly, the Ministry of Education serves as a conduit for both the MCIT and the NCCM in educating children and raising awareness amongst children. Rather than focusing purely on risks, harms and safety, the curriculum and conceptual framing within schools is located within a broader digital citizenship paradigm, which allows the promotion of the rights and opportunities of children online, the promotion of responsible usage, and awareness and knowledge of risks and harms. This is consistent with the approach taken by an increasing number of countries globally. This approach also ensures that children's experiences of the digital is embedded into broader pro-social, behavioural approaches that recognize the integration of the online into everyday life. This approach builds on the outcomes of a series of international meetings and local and regional consultations, the last conducted in October 2015 and hosted by the MCIT on how best to develop and embed safety into the school curriculum, based on international experience. These meetings included engagement with different stakeholders, from parents and schools to youth meetings, and also included a series of training of trainers (TOT) with teachers on the new curriculum.

It is important to note that by focusing on digital citizenship, rather than safety relating to any particular platform, hardware or software, there is greater scope for the primary focus to be on the

behaviour that promotes online safety, and responsible usage, and on the knowledge of how to respond to risks and threats online, and of help-seeking behaviour, than focusing on specific safety curriculum that may be more platform or technology specific. This to some degree mitigates the risk to changing relevance and to the subject becoming outdated presented by the rapid pace of change of technology, although this will not negate the need for ongoing engagement on reporting processes with different software and social media service providers.

As industry partners (for example the Vodafone Foundation) are increasingly providing support for the roll-out of technology to schools throughout Egypt, so the opportunity for the utilization of technology in the curriculum, and to engage learners directly, is increasing. This also impacts positively on the levels of digital literacy amongst children withing the formal education system. One challenge, however, is the rapid pace at which technology changes, and the need for constant adaptation to keep pace with this change. This was identified by several stakeholders as a challenge to the implementation of both curriculum, and the utilization of rapidly-changing technology by educators.

The role of educators as peer mentors for other educators in online safety has been developed through the Ministry of Education, and teachers are themselves trained to act as mentors in both digital skills and content, for other educators. This is a more cost-effective way of achieving scale, although attention should also be paid to ensuring the fidelity of the training, and the quality of the mentoring and support provided by peer trainers. The Ministry has also assisted in the development of an Acceptable Use policy, to be disseminated nationally to all schools, and which provides a framework for the appropriate and acceptable use of ICTs within the school environment by both learners and educators.

Respondents reported mixed views of the impact of the school curriculum, with some arguing that the introduction of the curriculum had achieved little, while others cited the roll-out as a positive outcome in itself, despite challenges. To date, there has been no evaluation of the roll-out of the curriculum on internet safety, and so it is difficult to assess both its relevance and the impact it has had on both direct safety outcomes, and on broader digital citizenship outcomes. Any measurement needs to take into account the broader behavioural change, and change in awareness, knowledge and behaviour, rather than focusing on the technology itself, if it is to remain relevant as technology changes. The mixed view on the impact of the curriculum presents an important opportunity to revisit and assess the content and delivery of the curriculum as it stands, and to develop core metrics against which the impact and suitability of the curriculum can be assessed in the future.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood is responsible for coordinating and implementing the national Egyptian child protection system, and is the highest government authority entrusted with policymaking, planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluation of activities in the areas of protection and child development. The Committee considers all aspects opf abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage, domestic abuse, and other forms of abuse. The NCCM, which is the agency tasked with regular reporting on progress on the rights of the child and on the OPSC, has until recently not had a major focus on child online protection. In 2011, the CRC Committee expressed concern in 2011 that the NCCM was principally focusing on child trafficking to the exclusion of other issues contained in the OPSC, and that offences related to the OPSC are brought under the legal

framework on anti-trafficking rather than defined as specific offences.[66] The NCCM has recently engaged in a more focused strategy to incorporate online safety and sexual abuse online into their core mandate. National Helplines fall under the ambit of the NCCM. While these have also traditionally focused more on general abuse, there is increasing focus on building the capacity of these Helplines to provide services to victims of online abuse. The Helplines offer referral services to psycho-social support services, make referrals to law enforcement and the justice system, and to medical facilities, where these are required. The NCCM is actively involved in raising awareness of the Helpline, and on abuse broadly. These campaigns are conducted through schools, and through various social media platforms, and include not only awareness of the Helpline, but on how to identify abuse, how to manage and respond to behaviour, and on reporting processes.

The nationwide **Child Protection Committees (CPCs)** also fall under the mandate of the NCCM. Where reports are made over the Helplines of cases of abuse, referrals are made to the local CPCs who in turn implement specific interventions, visiting the families, confirming reporting, and collaborating with local service NGO's.

The wider role of the NCCM in child protection offers valuable opportunities for further collaboration between different state and non-state agencies. The Committee already collaborates with both government and non-governmental partners, including MCIT, Ministry of Justice, UNICEF, Save the Children, and Child Helpline International. Rather than addressing sexual abuse online as a discrete problem, the NCCM is in a position to integrate the challenges attached to the online explotation and abuse of children into broader child protection and violence against children agenda's and initiatives, with the support of a range of different stakeholders.

It must be noted that the NCCM identified the lack of reliable data as a major impediment to its own programming, planning and strategies. To date, there have been minimal reports of sexual abuse online reported through the Helpline, and the Committee recognizes that reliable data, beyond just reports, are required to adequately strategize, and to inform the development, where necessary, of legislation and policy.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The MoJ monitors the implementation of the law, and oversees the Egyptian Supreme Judicial Council.

The MoJ has made online child protection a priority, and is part of the National Committee for Child Online Protection, and of the ITU Working Group on Online Child Protection. The MoJ is also a member of the Arab League on Child Protection based in Lebanon. A new department within the MoJ has recently been created with the leadership of a Deputy Minister of Justice for Women and Children, which represents an opportunity for collaboration on justice issues related to SEC Online.

Judges and prosecutors have received trainings regarding SEC Online for the past 5 years, although it was suggested that more intensive training may be needed in terms of criminal procedure rules in relation to ICT related crimes. There is also a special cybercrime court within the Economic Court, with an early focus on hackers attempting to access government sites. The Economic Court has the technical knowledge to analyse expert reports related to cybercrimes, and this expertise can be applied to cases involving SEC Online. Reportedly, the courts see very few cybercrime cases.

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[66] It should be noted that the MCIT has specifically requested that the NCCM includes a discrete component on Online Abuse in the next report.

There is strong coordination between the police, the courts and the ISPs, although there are capacity issues amongst all of these stakeholders in terms of responding to SEC Online which need to be addressed. At the investigation stage the police collect electronic evidence in allegations of online sexual abuse including hardware such as mobile phones and computers, as well as IP addresses, telephone numbers, analysis of computer logs, and details of the relationship between the offender and the victim. It is crucial that electronic evidence is collected following proper procedures, otherwise it may be inadmissible or refutable in court. The Attorney General's office is empowered to place a request for information from the ISPs, which the ISP is required to comply with by law where it is within its power to do so.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI)

The MoI is responsible for law enforcement and national security in Egypt, and directs the Central Security Forces, the National Police,

and the Egyptian Homeland Security. The MoI has a specific cybercrime department which is responsible for monitoring the internet, which has been active for 14 years and has significant expertise in this area. The MoI supports the Child Helpline, a dedicated hotline number for reporting CSAMs and illegal content, although it was suggested that the numbers of reports made to this line related to online abuse is relatively low. The MoI is an important partner, particularly from the enforcement perspective, and in the coordination between international bodies and agencies and other local Ministries and partners.

The Ministry of Youth

The Ministry of Youth oversees 4,500 Youth Centres 4,500, which offer access to sports, education, entertainment, and internet for low-income children. Training and support are provided across these areas. Youth can receive education about how to protect themselves online and practice digital citizenship. The Ministry of Youth partners with Microsoft to train instructors for the youth centres. Based on evaluations completed by young adults participating in the training, key concerns are around piracy and an increased rate of malware and viruses, and they report improved awareness and skills for protecting themselves online and an understanding of positive online behaviors. While not currently a member of the National Committee for Child Online Protection, the Ministry of Youth may join in the future, and could provide a valuable addition to the work of the Committee.

4.2 INDUSTRY

Under Article 36 of the Egyptian Constitution, the State encourages the private sector to perform its social responsibility in serving the national economy and society. The IT sector in Egypt is relatively mature, and many international companies have based their MENA regional offices in Cairo, which has made Egypt a hub for the IT sector in the region. Egypt also has a burgeoning startup community, and was named by Virgin as one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial hubs in the world, with 50% of its population of 90 million aged below 30.[67] The complexity and richness of this sector in Egypt presents opportunities for collaboration in terms of protection and promotion of children's rights online.

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[67] https://www.virgin.com/entrepreneur/the-worlds-best-start-up-hubs-cairo-egypt

The CRC Committee noted in 2011 that Egypt intended to examine how to regulate the impact of the business sector on human rights, and had extended an invitation to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, to visit Egypt (CRC 2011). The mandate of the Special Rapporteur ended in 2011, but since then, the associated UN Working Group has made several country visits, but not including Egypt so far[68]. In a briefing on business and human rights in the MENA region from 2013, the UN Working Group outlines the concerns and opportunities in the MENA region regarding technology companies in relation to freedom of expression and privacy[69]. The report highlights two initiatives: the Global Network Initiative (GNI), which is a multi-stakeholder endeavor aiming to protect and advance freedom of expression and privacy in the ICT sector (members include Evoca, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Procera Networks, Websense, and Yahoo!); and the Telecommunications Industry Dialogue (TID), which is a group of companies with the same focus for the telecommunications sector (including Alcatel-Lucent, AT&T, Millicom, Orange, TeliaSonera, and Vodafone).

In 2012, UNICEF, Save the Children and the UN Global Compact came together to make the UN Principles on Business and Human Rights specifically relevant to children's rights, through the development of the Children's Rights and Business Principles. UNICEF is prioritising engagement with the ICT industry, and in this regard has produced the COP Guidelines for Industry, Tools for Companies, Learning Materials, and Good Practices[70]. Given the high degree of self-regulation in the ICT sector, an effective way to engage with businesses may be through their CSR Programmes, and through ensuring that they commit to and are held accountable for implementing the Children's Rights and Business Principles (particularly Principles 5 and 10) into the core work of their business. The ITU and UNICEF Guidelines for Industry on Online Child Protection provide specific guidelines for the technology sector on the kinds of steps that can be taken under Principle 5.

It is recommended that the government of Egypt explore opportunities to promote ICT sector business engagement with the Children's Rights & Business Principles, possibly through existing networks such as the GNI or TID.

UNICEF, the UN Global Compact, and Save the Children have held a series of global events on the Children's Rights and Business Principles, two of which have been held in Africa. In 2014 Google and Cisco Systems participated in the global event held in Nairobi, Kenya, which had a special focus on child rights and business in Africa[71]. In Kenya, UNICEF and Save the Children have brought together key players in the business sector who have adopted the Childrens Rights and Business Principles (Principles), and who have been given a platform to showcase their work[72]. It is recommended that the National Committee on Child Online Protection considers partnering with UNICEF, the UN Global

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[68] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGCountryVisits.aspx
[69] https://business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/briefing-business-and-human-rights-in-mena-10-dec-2013.pdf
[70] http://www.unicef.org/csr/childrightsandinternet.htm
[71] https://business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/crbp-invitation-nairobi-may-2014.pdf
[72]
http://webdav.unglobalcompact.org/system/attachments/LocalNetworkEvent/2821/original/Child_Rights_Business_Principles_Report_Summary__FINAL.pdf

Compact, and Save the Children, to launch the Principles in Egypt, with a specific focus on the technology sector[73]. The National Committee on Child Online Protection could be an ideal mechanism to oversee the implementation of the adoption of the Principles by Egyptian (and possibly regional) technology businesses, who could be incentivised through an award and recognition scheme based on their efforts to both promote children's access to the internet and their protection online.

There are many strong efforts occurring around awareness raising and prevention by multi-national and local corporations within Egypt. *Some examples* of corporate partnerships and activities include:

- **Microsoft partners with a number of different government Ministries, including**
    - **the Ministry of Youth** in training staff for the 4,500 Youth Centres that, among other services, provide computer and internet access to low income youth. They additionally partner with the **Ministry of Education** to train teachers in online safety. Microsoft has developed reports on online reputation, safe online behaviors, and guidance for parents in discussing online safety with their children. They have reportedly raised awareness of 40,000 youth in the past two years through these offerings.
    - **the MCIT** to translate and disseminate localized Arabic language resource and training materials, and to deliver online safety workshops throughout the country.
    - **UNICEF and the Ministry of Youth** to provide job skills training for technology-related careers. Training includes technical skills, introduction to entrepreneurship approaches, and understanding how to use job search tools. Their Freelancers program provides special training in seeking and managing freelance jobs. AspireWOmen is a program that encourages girls to pursue careers in the technology sector.
- **Orange Egypt**, formerly known as MobilNil engages in a nation-wide awareness raising effort that involves person to person, word of mouth **education on healthy use of the internet**. Orange collaborates with local NGOs and schools to host community events, often at youth clubs, local celebration halls, churches, or mosques. They provide lectures by experts about family online protection.
- **TE Data** reports adding blocking of CSAM content beyond what is expected by law. They use NetClean WhiteBox, which retrieves a block list from IWF and INTERPOL and these sites are filtered at the level of the whole website or parts of the website[74]
- **IBM** has developed a Threat Detection System to identify incidents of cybercrime, but has potential applications for child online protection.[75]
- **Intel** has partnered with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports to provide training in internet and computer use, plus internet safety.

In addition to these industry-sponsored initiatives, larger alliances work across borders and within country to address issues of child online sexual exploitation. The Mobile Alliance Against Child Sexual

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[73] In Africa, the Principles have so far been launched in Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, and Nigeria: http://childrenandbusiness.org/category/uncategorized/event-calendar/page/2/

[74] http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Documents/events/2015/COP/Presentations/SessionIII/NetClean-TEData.pdf

[75] http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Documents/events/2015/COP/Presentations/SessionIII/Child%20Internet%20Safty%20-%20Industry%20best%20practices-%20Dr.%20Khaled%20Negm.pdf

Abuse Content, founded by a group of mobile operators within the GSMA seek to obstruct access to CSAMs via mobile devices. Key measures include:

- Implementation of technical mechanisms to prevent access to web sites identified by an appropriate agency as hosting child sexual abuse content
- Implementation of notice and take down processes to enable the removal of any child sexual abuse content posted on their own services
- Supporting and promoting hotlines or other mechanisms for customers to report child sexual abuse content discovered on the internet or mobile content services

In 2015, the ITU Regional office for the Arab States in Cairo, hosted the 'ITU Regional Strategy Workshop on Child Online Protection (COP) for the Arab Region', as a collaboration between the MCIT in Egypt and the League of Arab States. The meeting sought to build a coherent COP strategy framework for the Arab region. Child Helpline International, of which the NCCM is a full member[76], TE Data, IBM, and Microsoft, gave presentations on the work they are doing in the region. The GoE also works with the ITU on, amongst others, implementing the ITU Guidelines for Industry on Child Online Protection, training and awareness activities, and on the development (currently underway) of indicators to be included in national statistical surveys (as discussed elsewhere).

Egypt has celebrated Safer Internet Day since 2009. Safer Internet Day is an annual day dedicated to the promotion of of safer and more responsible use of technology and mobile phones by children. The MCIT partners with the Committee and other government Ministries, private sector partners including those detailed above, and other civil society organizations, to promote Safer Internet Day, and since its inception has achieved a wide geographical reach, including Asswan and Beheira.

The borderless and invisible nature of online child sexual exploitation requires a multi-sectoral response. While this section provides highlights, there are many efforts underway involving partnerships across the technology industry and Egyptian government ministries to combat the multiple dimensions of abuse, including prevention, awareness-raising, reporting, and the taking down of abuse images.

4.3   CIVIL SOCIETY

The Government of Egypt has collaborated extensively with a number of international NGOs and organizations on both the raising of awareness, the development of awareness and training material, and drawing on technical assistance. These include (but are not limited to) organizations such as inSafe, iKeepSafe, Connect Safely, Childnet International, the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI), as well as regional bodies such as the OECD and the European Union. For example, Egypt has celebrated Safer Internet Day (referenced above) since 2009.

Within Egypt, civil society efforts span across education, health, justice, and industry. Locally situated NGOs in towns and small communities are reportedly essential to child online protection responses, supporting the Child Helpline in arranging local assistance to families who have reported abuse. Civil society organizations throughout Egypt also offer psycho-social support and case management

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[76] NADA in Algeria and the Jordan River Foundation are also full members. See further: http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Documents/events/2015/COP/Presentations/SessionIII/NetClean-TEData.pdf

services, working with local Child Protection Committees and other agencies to act on reports of sexual abuse made through Hotlines or Helplines, or directly to the authorities.

Local NGOs additionally facilitate trainings for children and their parents to learn about healthy internet use, as in the earlier example of Orange Egypt's person-to-person awareness raising efforts. UNICEF has partnered with a number of NGOs in both directly and indirectly addressing online safety, and in supporting the provision of services to victims.

Arab Digital Expressions Foundation (ADEF)

The Arab Digital Expression Foundation focuses on empowering youth and young adults (aged 12-30) to engage with information and the transmission of knowledge through creative uses of technology. ADEF believes that knowledge should be free and available to everyone and posts all of their curricular materials online in Arabic.

ADEF offers two-week youth summer camps for teens aged 12-15. They additionally develop curricula and offer trainings throughout the year in digital skills, including a program "Empowerment of Marginalized Youth" that promotes youth-led start-ups. Successful start-ups started with the help of ADEF in 2012-2013 include Mazg, Gramophone, Aflam Seen, and Hassala Films. Youth receive training in computing based on open-sourced programs and creation of visual arts, video, sound and digital music. They additionally provide training for young adults aged 21-25 to become instructors at ADEF.

ADEF hosts the Digital Expression Community Area (DECA) in Cairo, which is a special space for workshops and training. Anyone in the community or network can apply to use the space to test a workshop. ADEF operates five spaces in Egypt, including one in Giza, two in Alexandria, and two in Cairo.

ADEF is supported by DROSAS, a Swiss foundation. Scholarships for summer school are offered and are funded by foundations, NGOs, and crowd-funding. 60% of summer school students receive scholarships, which reflects the values of ADEF to promote co-existing and bring together people from different backgrounds.

Mid-East Tunes

Mid-East Tunes is a youth-led platform that describes itself as a tool for social change. In addition to providing a space for youth to post music, it is additionally a platform for political expression and has space for reporting both offline and online abuse. The platform is crowd-sourced, so does not have an established response mechanism, however, it reportedly enables youth who may not report due to shame to have a space in which they feel more comfortable.[77]

Combatting Child Abuse Offline

SAFE teaches abuse prevention to children, led by a certified team of 15. They additionally provide training to parents, teachers, and caregivers. Part of the training is identifying behaviors that are

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[77] https://mideastunes.com/

abusive and learning how to safely report them. They additionally provide psychological support and safe spaces for child survivors of abuse.

UNICEF

UNICEF has worked to consolidate community-based Child Protection Committees to strengthen and build capacity in child protection responses, particularly in early identification of children at risk. This initiative is expected to cover at least 30 districts and reach 50,000 children by 2017.[78] UNICEF additionally works with the National Council for Human Rights in operationalizing a children's unit for receiving complaints and independently investigating serious abuse reports, and runs a media campaign to raise awareness of sexual abuse. These initiatives, while combatting offline abuse, address the local systems that are also critical to response for abuse whether occurring online or off.

Schools

Many stakeholders described engagement with schools in using online safety curricula or engaging teachers in training. Schools are essential points for awareness-raising and are reportedly supportive of industry and government efforts to engage in campaigns around healthy internet use and prevention. Child Helpline and Orange reported engaging in awareness campaigns at schools throughout Egypt.

Professional societies

Professional societies organize their members to collectively pool their skills and resources to address online child sexual exploitation. For example, **The Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce** provides recommendations for technological solutions that promote online safety. The Federation works closely with Corporates such as Microsoft, Cisco, and Orange to host workshops with parents about protecting children online. They additionally engage in joint training with Microsoft to train the trainers for the national youth centres that provide access to civic and social activities, including computer and internet access. These workshops focus on cultivating the concept of safety, with tenets that include approaching strangers in the virtual world as they would in the real world, in terms of safety: virtual life should be considered the same as real life and could be more dangerous; behind the avatar or social media profile is a real person at the keyboard. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the MCIT, the Federation has contributed to a national curriculum for online safety across K-12.

5. PRIORITIES AND COUNTRY FOCUS

5.1 DATA

The lack of reliable reasearch and data around the issue of online child sexual exploitation was consistently identified throughout the study as a challenge in both programming, and policy development. The lack of reliable data was also noted by the CRC, which, while recognizing "key difficult*(ies)* in the implementation of the Optional Protocol due to their "complex and delicate" nature (CRC/C/OPSC/EGY/1, para. 27) and the perceived stigma attached to the offences", and while

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[78] footnote: http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection.html)

noting the work of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, including the completion of a national study on trafficking in persons (2010), studies on sexual exploitation of children and on "temporary" marriages, as well as the data base of the Ministry of Interior on crimes related to the Optional Protocol on the internet, expressed concern at the fragmented and ad hoc collection of data relating to the OPSC.

In addition to common constraints related to nationally representative databases – funding, representivity, language – several further difficulties exist in collecting data relating to child sexual abuse online, and all forms of online violence. These difficulties are those common to collecting data on any form of violence against children, and particularly sexual violence, and include the sensitivity and intrusiveness of asking questions relating to violence to children, the ethical considerations, the secondary trauma that may result, the availability of trained enumerators experienced in asking questions of this nature and managing disclosure, and reporting and support procedures.

The availability of adequate data is a prerequisite for the development of appropriate policies and legislation, that truly reflect the needs and priorities of the countries children, for ongoing reporting at both a national and international level (under international conventions), and for the design of appropriate and targeted interventions (as well as assessing progress at both a programmatic and policy level). However, this data cannot only focus on the most immediate concern relating to child sexual abuse online, without a true understanding of how many children have access to the internet, how children use the internet and technology, the opportunities, and the challenges, as well as the risks and harms that they encounter online. This data is required to be representative by geography, social-economic status, age and gender.

There are already some initiatives underway to improve the collection, management and analysis of data. These include discussion on the viability of including a module on online abuse into subsequent sweeps of a Violence Against Children study, the collection of administrative data from Hotlines and Helplines, and the collection of data within the criminal justice system on investigations and prosecutions, and on child victims and perpetrators. This latter is hindered by the fact that there are no existing classifications specifically for online crimes, but these are in the process of being developed. The MCIT is also in discussion with the national statistics office (CAPMASS) on the possibility of including online abuse in upcoming national surveys. CAPMASS is also working with the ITU to include basic ICT indicators into their household surveys. Data collected from the Helplines, which until recently have not addressed online abuse and focus more broadly on all forms of abuse of children, is currently categorized into sub-categories, and an online category is shortly to be added to this.

Various initiatives are therefore underway to improve data collection, and the need for enhanced collection has been recognized across government and other stakeholders. It should be noted that, as data becomes available from different sources, so the importance of consistent analysis across data sources, and a means of analytically utilizing all sources of data, will need to be addressed.

5.2   EXISTING (GOOD) PRACTICES, POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

A number of existing good practices exist that provide the basis for possible scale-up, replication or consolidation. While the lack of rigorous evaluation of these prevents definite categorization of best practice, they exhibit positive outcomes relating to the intended objectives.

Collaboration and Partnership

The partnership and collaborative approach promoted by the Government of Egypt and detailed above, and evidenced through for example, efforts to promote online safety by the National Committee on Child Online Protection, or the partnerships between industry players such as Microsoft, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, provide concrete and positive examples of inter-agency collaboration, and provide the basis for a more systemtic approach to both preventing and responding to sexual abuse and violence online (see text box).

In addition, there are a number of positive practices, that reflect international good practice, that emerge in Egypt.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Youth and Sports have been implementing successfully a life skills development programme for adolescents and young people (13-24 years old) as a response to the social and economic exclusion and lack of career opportunities many young people face in Egypt that often times lead them to aspire to migrate. It aims at helping disadvantaged young people from slum and rural areas selected based on agreed upon vulnerability criteria by supporting them with skills in entrepreneurship and enterprise, thereby providing them with the tools and opportunities that they need to achieve a brighter economic future. The first phase of the programme was implemented from 2008 until 2011 and reached around 45,000 adolescent and youth in ten governorates. Building on the first phase, a second phase was initiated in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2012. It focused on building a cadre of young professionals from the youth centers and the Directorates of Youth and Sports who in turn reach out to more than 17,000 young people in disadvantaged rural and urban communities, with enterprise, employability, financial and life skills through a skills development model. Furthermore, the project set up in collaboration with the Ministry model career guidance centres in three governorates, to enable young people to access career counselling services and potentially funds for establishing businesses as well as work placement and employment opportunities. In 2016, the Ministry of Youth and Sports decided to scale-up the programme to include five additional governorates (Aswan, Qena, Kafr El Sheikh, Beheira and Dakahliya) with UNICEF agreeing to the provision of technical assistance in support of this expansion. The Ministry has adopted the programme and has dedicated some funding for its implementation. Currently, UNICEF is working with the Ministry to develop a strategic plan for ensuring the sustainability of the programme and its scale up and for ensuring its linkages to existing additional youth capacity development opportunities managed by the Ministry such as the provision of entrepreneurship training and loans through the Social Fund for Development, the provision of vocational training in home paintings, plumbing, mobile maintenance and other training and in kind contributions to enable these young people coming from disadvantaged and expelling communities to find a better living for themselves and for their families.

The Meshwary methodology has been tested and evaluated by external parties and has proven that life skills and employability opportunities for young people change their personalities, their perspectives and their aspirations. The programme graduates over the years have demonstrated their full potential and their ambitions to become productive members of the Egyptian society. The range of interventions include:

Skills Development Programme: building the life skills, entrepreneurial and employability skills of adolescents and youth: Interactive and highly animated modules cover such skills as future planning, creative thinking, communication, conflict resolution and decision-making skills, career planning skills, CV writing, interview skills, and entrepreneurial skills. The skills development programme is provided through MoYS youth trainers who are themselves young in age and who are equipped with basic training and facilitation skills to enable them to transfer the knowledge they gained in the skills development workshops to adolescents and youth in their respective governorates.

Providing career guidance, support and referral to young people through counselling centres. This service include special career guidance sessions; linking young people with opportunities to access credit to start their own businesses; linking young people with specialized vocational and career advancement training; and linking young people with job opportunities/experiences available in the private sector and NGOs, in particular. Staff affiliated to the MoYS were equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to be available to provide this service to young people, through established counselling centres.

Linking young people with micro-finance. Linking young people interested to start their own business to micro-credit schemes existing through the Social Fund for Development in the targeted governorates, or assisting these young people to establish their business through their own or family's resources.

Work placements for young people. This activity includes designing and delivering a programme of work placements with a number of UNICEF private sector partners such as Barclays Bank, Aramex, Carrefour and others in the different governorates to enable young people to gain critical experience and to help them make key life choices regarding their careers.

Monitoring and Evaluation. Key indicators were developed to measure the results, special monitoring tools were designed, including a baseline survey, special KAP surveys for the various modules of the skills development programme and the career guidance component, as well as the database and the reporting tools.

Child Helpline 16000 (run by NCCM)

Already mentioned above, the NCCM Child Helpline is available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week for reporting of general abuse. They report that currently they receive only 1 or 2 calls annually about sexual abuse on the Internet because it is not currently a focus of the hotline, though this is changing.

The helpline receives complaints and reports of abuse toward children. After receiving a report, hotline staff determine next steps, for example whether to involve law enforcement, legal, medical, or psychological responses. They provide referrals to hospitals and psychological intervention. Part of the evaluation process involves a committee that works directly with the family and in collaboration with NGOs from each province who know the local committees working in child protection and can mobilize response.

Child Helpline staff engage in awareness raising campaigns in schools and through their Facebook page. Awareness raising focuses on how to identify harassment, how to report it, how to support someone who reports abuse, and how to deal personally with psychological issues around abuse. Most reporting is done by parents, so awareness raising efforts occur at the moment of reporting to provide parents with a sense of how the process works and what psychological support is available for their family, including therapy sessions where parents are taught how to address the issue with their children and support them through the recovery process. While most reports come from parents, the National Child Helpline does provide the opportunity and means to give children the right to report incidents of online abuse, even when their parents do not want to report it.

The helpline is offered by the government and collaborates with several local NGOs as well as international child protection such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and Child Helpline International.

Arab Digital Expressions Foundation (ADEF)

Mentioned in Section 4.3, the ADEF promotes creativity, knowledge sharing, and digital skills building. Offering summer camps and year-round training, as well as educational interventions for youth start-ups, ADEF is in high demand. Many of their youth graduates return as instructors and they have trained youth entrpreneurs who have succeeded in their ventures.

Harassmap

While not directly addressing child sexual abuse online, the Harassmap project offers an innovative integration of technology into the reporting and response to sexual violence. Building on the success of the Ushahidi project to crowdsource election violence in Kenya in 1998, Harassmap adopts a similar crowdsourcing approach utilizing mobile technology to map and prevent sexual violence in Egypt. The intervention combines the community outreach programmes with the mapping technology, thus raising both awareness and encouraging action and reporting simultaneously. In addition to utilizing smart phones, reports can also be made using bulk sms, facebook or email. The data collected through the electronic reporting systems also allow the outreach to be specifically targeted to particular geographical areas. While the utilization of Harassmap has declined over recent years, the model offers an important lesson for collecting and mobilizing crowd-generated data, utilizing this data to target interventions and messaging, and to advocating for specific interventions from law enforcement or government agencies.

Outreach and Awareness-Raising

A number of initiatives were identified focusing on raising awareness at a local (community) level. For example, Orange reported that they travel to communities and villages, working through local NGOs, schools, mosques and churches, building capacity around the use of the internet, and on the risks and opportunities. Since 2008, MCIT's outreach programmes have reached over 100,000 school age youth through online safety awareness workshops, conferences, and community fora. For several years, MCIT, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and ITU has participated in Safer Internet Day. The day includes forums on responsible internet use, distribution of educational materials, and presentations at schools.

The NCCM has trained 1000 parents in community schools (informal schools in rural areas) in 5 districts in how to help protect their kids when using the internet at home. The NCCM also has a mobile awareness unit that provides training in schools and raises awareness, especially in rural areas of children's rights and basic computer skills. During 2015-2016, the NCCM trained 1260 computer instructors and their supervisors, psychologists, and social workers on using the *Safe Use of the Internet* guide in their practice and instruction. NCCM additionally provides workshops for students on risks of internet use and awareness of crime online, reaching 2090 children during the 2015-2016 school year.

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority reports engaging in a media awareness campaign of 20 interviews in television and radio addressing online child safety and the role of NTRA. The NTRA has additionally distributed print materials for child safety and developed a child safety leaflet in partnership with NCCM.

The Ministry of Education recently launched a programme to train social workers in schools to respond to reporting of abuse. The training additionally focused on rcomputer teachers because they are in most cases first line of support. When abuse is reported, social workers work closely with parents to raise awareness of treatment and prevention option, addressing the needs of parents of the victim as well as offender. A representative of the Ministry of Education reported during a stakeholder meeting that they usually try to address case within school structure.

The Presidential Specialized Council for Education and Scientific Research aims to develop training for 10,000 teachers in information and communication technologies and has initiated global partnerships with academic publishers to provide national open access to scientific research.

In addition to these national and local efforts, other potential efforts that could be developed is the use of local religious leaders, including Imams, to disseminate key messages after prayers. While such approaches have not been evaluated, either for reach or for impact, they offer important opportunities to engage with important community leadership and figures of authority and respect to disseminate information.

7.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Egypt, together with various partners, have already achieved substantial progress in addressing child sexual exploitation online. The Government was, arguably, one of the first in the region to develop appropriate structures and measures at a national level to deal with this emerging form of violence. Both the desk review and the stakeholder interviews reinforced this, but through the study, a number of possible recommendations to improve and advance the country's response to child sexual exploitation online, emerged. These are addressed below, in relation to institutional arrangements, programmatic areas, and research and data. Across all recommendations, several cross-cutting commonalities should be ensured:

1. Service delivery and the implementation of existing policy is often biased towards urban areas, and particular capital cities and metropols. This trend emerged in the Egypt country study as well, and so with all the recommendations below, careful consideration should be paid to ensuring the relevance of, and implementation throughout, more rural areas, and those outside of the major cities of Egypt;
2. Throughout all, the particular needs and experiences of different groups of stakeholders needs to be constantly addressed, in particular through the application of both a gender and age lense to policies and programming.
3. While the need for data is explicitly addressed as a recommendation area in itself, where any programing or policy recommendations are made, the need to constantly integrate key indicators of impact and sustainability should be integrated.

The recommendations are categorized as policy recommendations, and implementation/activity interventions, and are further sub-categorised according to short term or immediate recommendations, that offer the possibility for immediate action, and should be prioritized, to long term recommendations, that may require a longer period of time to formulate and implement, and which may be more resource-dependent.

Recommendations: Policy (short term)

- Considerable attention and investment has already been made by the Government of Egypt to developing an inter-agency prevention and response system. This should be further enhanced through a mapping of the roles and responsibilities of all agencies, including the health system, and through strengthening the role of educational institutions (both formal and informal) in prevention and response, and the development of a **standardized protocol for case management** that clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of each of the actors within the child online protection system, and the referral processes, from identification and reporting, through to victim support, investigation and prosecution. The protocol should take into account the role of social workers both within and outside of schools, civil society service providers and child protection agencies, police, child protection committees, educators and health care workers, at the frontline, through to the judiciary and those working with offenders at the back-end.
- As the boundary between offline and online worlds continues to blur, particularly for children, it is recommended that child *online* protection is mainstreamed within child protection in general in Egypt. There may be an online element to many previously offline crimes (such as child trafficking, child prostitution, and irregular migration for the purposes of exploitation),

and it is important that the use of technology to facilitate such crimes is considered in as broad a context as possible.

Recommendations: Policy (long term)

- The provision of adequate, child-focused victim support services has been identified as one area for possible improvement through the study. While recognizing that a significant number of child sexual abuse online cases are likely to go unreported, and that those that are reported are likely to constitute a fraction of the total experiences, adequate provision of targeted victim support services, available through both conventional service channels, and through online platforms, should be ensured and institutionalized. It is recommended that the NCCM works with the Ministry of Health to ensure that sufficient physical and psychological victim support services are available to victims of SEC Online, and that awareness of these services and support is raised.
- In line with the CRC Committee's recommendation, it is recommended that Egypt should create a State compensation fund for child victims of child sexual exploitation to facilitate their easy access to redress.
- It is recommended that UNICEF explores whether there is an opportunity to partner with the SMAJ project to address jurisprudence and legal interpretation with respect to online crimes and electronic evidence, and with respect to backlogs in cases involving child victims.
- It is recommended that activities to study and address the use of the internet to facilitate child trafficking are incorporated into national policies against human trafficking. It is further recommended that the new ten-year NPA for children specifically addresse SEC Online.

Recommendations: Programmatic (short term)

- In the provision of services and key messages, it may be useful to conceptualise service delivery in terms of **universal services**, and **targeted services**. Universal services (including universal messaging) are those relevant to, and targeting the entire population, i.e. all children, caregivers and teachers, whereas targeted services are those targeting those considered to be at greater risk of child sexual abuse online, and those who have already been victimized. This does however require a thorough understanding of risk and vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation online.[79]
- Related to the above, targeted training for social workers (with a particular focus on front-line social workers), on child sexual exploitation online and other forms of online violence and abuse, that includes at a minimum, the nature of the problem, how CSA online relates to other forms of abuse and violence, the identification of signs, prevention, treatment, referral and response, should be developed and implemented. This training should take as its departure point the case management protocol referred to above. While it is noted that there are a range of training processes, undertaken by both government and NGOs throughout Egypt, most of these are aimed at children, parents and educators, rather than those providing frontline services. Particular attention should be paid to the upstream linkages to

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[79] It may also be useful to consider a public health framing which looks at interventions on a primary (all children), secondary (those children at greater risk of experiencing violence), and tertiary (those who may already have engaged in, or encountered, violence) level. Specific resources, interventions and approaches can then be targeted to each population. This is particularly useful when considering different forms of online violence, including for example sexual exploitation or sexting, that is perpetrated by peers, as tertiary interventions then focus on preventing the reoccurrence of the relevant behaviour.

investigation and prosecution, as well as, where peers are involved, the response of the juvenile justice system; as well as downstream linkages to caregivers, educators and children themselves. Training should be provided through two streams: the first integrated into social work training curriculum, the second through in-service training. This recommendation is classified as short-term because it should be prioritized, but is dependent on the completion and finalization of the protocol.

- Where awareness campaigns are required, these should be based on an informed understanding of the existing levels of knowledge and attitudes of children and the adult audience, and specific measures appropriate to the context, delivered. In order to achieve this, substantially more research is needed that represents the population. Where possible awareness raising should utilize technology itself as one delivery mechanism. For example, innovative gaming interventions can be developed that incorporate key safety messages. These also offer an opportunity to further promote the development of tech skills and start-ups – a strong resource available to those working in online safety - amongst young programmers, while promoting safety.
    - o Messaging and awareness programmes should take care not to breed a culture of fear of the online space, but should be evidence-informed, focused on specific, data-support issues, and balance both the opportunities and the risks attached to the digital. Locating online safety within both broader child safety, and digital citizenship and opportunities frameworks provides a good departure point for this. They should also engage both children and caregivers in a systematic way.
    - o The voices of children themselves should inform the content and perceived needs for awareness and messaging campaigns, as in many cases children can provide the most relevant insight into how best to target messaging.
- New and existing programmes promoting the use of ICTs and social media, particularly amongst young people, should include key aspects of online safety where possible.
- Parents play an essential role in mediating their children's use of the internet, and in raising awareness of both the possible risks, harms and opportunities. In the past, engagement around these issues have often been left to late childhood and adolescence. However, as younger children increasingly go online, and as that age continues to drop, so the importance of parental mediation and awareness raising from the early years becomes important. This can be complimented with Early Childhood Development interventions that incorporate aspects of online safety and difital citizenship. UNICEF Egypt has prioritized the implementation of evidence-informed parenting interventions, and these offer an important oppoprtunity to integrate online safety aspects, and how to engage with children on their internet use, from birth. The possibility of integrating early-years interventions into new parenting programmes should thus be explored.
- A number of stakeholders are engaged in existing awareness initiatives targeting children, and to a lesser degree, parents, ranging from informal and ad-hoc interventions, to the more formalized training offered through the online safety school curriculum. It is proposed that a more strategic and focused approach be adopted, potentially through schools, that focuses on both the opportunities and the risks, but that does so in a way that focuses on behaviour rather than the technology itself, and that offers coordinated and consistent messaging between parents, children and educators. Where possible, existing, evidence-based curriculum and programmes should be utilized and, where necessary, adapted. Where training has been conducted, such as that developed by the Ministry of Education, MCIT, NCCM, and the private sector, evaluation studies should be conducted to determine the impact, and if necessary, adapt, the existing programming. It is essential that this training is

accompanied by small, site-based studies that evaluate the impact (on behaviour change rather than just awareness) on this work.

- With little data on access and usage of ICTs amongst children available for Egypt, it is difficult to make concrete recommendations on the promotion of use and specific digital skills. However, in broad terms, the introduction of child and youth-focused ICT interventions can yield positive educational, skills, economic and social outcomes. Interventions can be provided as extra-curricula activities through schools, through activities such as coding clubs, while non-school based activities could include those offered by government, industry or NGOs such as "hackathons", gaming clubs, or peer-led digital literacy programmes. All these activities offer the opportunity to combine an approach that promotes the opportunities, while integrating core safety and digital citizenship messaging.

Recommendations: Programmatic (long term)

- There appears to be a specific need to focus on raising awareness amongst parents. Parents exert a great deal of influence over children, and their role on promoting both the positive use of technology, and online safety, starts when children are at a very young age. As the age of first access to technology, globally, decreases, so younger and younger children are starting to engage with technology, through the form of cell phones, tablet computers, or other personal devices. If parents are to successfully promote responsible usage, digital citizenship, and to raise awareness of the risks, then it is important that they not only are aware of the technology, but how to utilize it in raising children in a healthy and safe space. Where parental training does occur in Egypt, it appears to be somewhat fragmented. A more coordinated strategy for engaging parents around ICT could focus on understanding how the child engages with technology, from birth; on the benefits and opportunities that are presented through early engagement with technology; how to promote and foster pro-social online behaviour, as well as how to deal with the risks that may be faced. This is particularly important as the face of technology changes, and parents can benefit from focusing on behaviour relating to ICT usage, rather than only approaches that focus on restricting access, or placing controls, or monitoring usage.
- In stakeholder discussions, it was apparent that industry is eager to contribute further to initiatives related to child online safety. The National Committee for Child Online Protection could disseminate the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines developed by ITU and UNICEF and offer workshops to provide training. Through showcasing strong practice via an awards and recognition programme, industry members could be incentivized to further implement CSR practices.
- Many initiatives are underway to address child online safety, but public awareness of these activities are limited. The National Committee for Child Online Protection provides an excellent infrastructure for organizing and branding these activities to make them easier to find and access and also to make efforts more visible to potential partners and funders.

Recommendations: Data and Research (short term)

- It is recommended that a core set of online safety indicators be developed, that cut across the range of Ministries and partners, against which the progress at a national and provincial level can be measured, and which can inform specific needs and priorities. These indicators should:
    - o relate to prevention, response and prosecution;

- o include access, knowledge, awareness and behaviour change;
- o measure reports, response (by psycho-social services, law enforcement, industry etc), investigation and prosecution;
- o be consistent with broader measures of child well-being and safety.
- The 2015 VAC study conducted in Egypt recommended the introduction of a national child protection policy in schools, including the introduction of mandatory reporting and accompanying systems, procedures for investigation and referrals, codes of conducts and the establishment of school safety committees. Child sexual exploitation online, together with other forms of violence, should be integrated as a core component across these initiatives. For example, together with school safety policies, codes of conduct for responsible digital behaviour and technology use can be developed, training provided to educators, members of the school safety committee, and to peers within the school, together with the longer term integration of online safety and digital citizenship as a core component into the curriculum, building on the existing peer-teacher training already underway.

Recommendations: Data and Research (long term)

- The need for comprehensive national data was consistently identified throughout the study. Different forms of data are required, from nationally representative data on children's access to, usage of, and experiences with, ICTs, to administrative data on reports of exploitation and violence made to different authorities, and the usage and take-up of services.   This data is required to adequately finalize national policies, inform the deisgn of interventions, and track progress on the measures already in place, and new measures introduced.
  - o Epidemiological data:
    - It is recognized that national surveys are costly and time consuming, and while offering the opportunity for the most reliable statistical data, there may be limited scope to roll out dedicated large-sample surveys throughout the country. While a recent Violence Against Children study was completed in Egypt, this did not encompass items on online violence in any form. While it is unclear when the next sweep of the VAC will be undertaken, the opportunitynof including a dedicated module on child sexual exploitation, and all forms of online violence should be considered. It should be noted that such a module is under consideration by the CDC/Together For Girls for their VAC studies, and may provide a useful resource.
    - Other opportunities could include including such a module within other national health-related surveys, such as the DHS.
    - A targeted study that focuses on all aspects of children's access to, use of and experience of ICTs should also be considered. The Global Kids Online study presents one such global study that could be conducted, offering the additional value of contextualizing the experiences of children in Egypt within those of childrenfrom a number of other countries.
    - Whatever form is chosen, it is proposed that reliable, high-quality, recent and nationally representative data be collected to inform the innovative work already being undertaken.
  - o Administrative and service data:
    - In addition to survey data, specific and differentiated data on children's experiences of ALL forms of online violence, including child sexual exploitation online, should be routinely collected through administrative data

collected by schools, social workers and child protection agencies, clinics, child protection committees, ISPs, hotlines, helplines, and other frontline workers and offices (while recognizing that the number of reports are not likely to be representative of the extent of experiences, these are important in adding further insight into cases, in tracking change over time, and to assessing rates fof reporting to authorities over time). It is apparent that data is already available from some of these agencies (for example, the Hotline), and this needs to be fed not only into the own agencies planning but into broader monitoring and evaluation systems. A series of standardized indicators should be developed that can be collected, using standardized definitions, by various agencies.

- o Data from industry:
  - Members of the ICT industry already partner with the government of Egypt on online safety initiatives. Members of the National Committee for Child Online Protection could collaboratively identify key variables and indicators that would assist in various dimensions of prediction, prevention, and response and identify which of these data points are already collected by ISPs. The Committee could discuss which of these measures can be shared and develop a way to standardize measures so that values can be cross-compared.
- o Data measures should be integrated into existing initiatives currently implemented by the Government of Egypt, including for example the roll-out of the schools curriculum, that adequately capture the applicability, suitability and take-up of content, and the various delivery mechanisms. Routine data collection points can be integrated into the programme or service design, in relatively cost-effective ways.
- In the collecting of all data – primary and secondary – particular attention should be paid to particular groups often excluded from traditional data collection, including children with disabilities, those children falling outside the formal education system, and other marginalized child population. ICTs have a particularly important role to play across marginalized groups: children with disbailities can utilize ICTs to access services, and can utilize softare and hardware developed to assist with disabilities; children outside of the formal care system, including street children, often have access to various forms of cell phones, for example, and these can be leveraged to promote opportunities, and those faling outside the formal education system can utilize ICTs for non-formal education and training. It is thus essential that in designing relevant data collection systems, that these populations are considered, and adequate data collected on the same measures – access, usage, experiences – that are adopted for the general population.