



**End Violence
Against Children**

THE FUND

Keeping Children Safe Online



The rise of the internet has delivered new levels of creativity, innovation and informed generations, in particular among children and young people. But this connectivity has also become a vehicle for extreme harm. Although children have long been exposed to violence and exploitation, the internet and new technologies have changed the scale, form and impact of the abuse of young people everywhere.

The presence of 800 million minors online – many of whom are unsupervised – has made it easier for perpetrators to access them and profit from their exploitation and abuse. Technology has also enabled large online offender communities, mostly operating in anonymity. Some 25 million child sexual abuse images were reviewed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2015 – up from 450,000 in 2004¹. More disturbing material is found online than ever before.

In 2017 alone, online child sexual abuse imagery increased 37 per cent from the previous year, with an accompanying increase in images displaying rape and sexual torture². The Dark Web – a hidden internet that enables anonymity and a global community of criminal behaviour – has multiplied the risks and challenges; one of these hidden services dedicated to abuse of young children was found to have over 18,000 registered members³; another forum has had over 23 million visits⁴.

Disturbing new trends are emerging, threatening children of all ages including those too young to speak, such as on-demand and crowd-sourced production of child sexual exploitation and abuse material, as well as the increasing use of live-streaming, grooming and sextortion. The explosion of smartphone technology around the world has acted as a catalyst to intensify the threat.

Progress to date

Since its inception in 2016, the [Fund to End Violence Against Children](#) has invested in finding solutions to these grave problems. In the past year, it has invested in 31 projects addressing online child sexual exploitation in 20 countries, as well as regional and global projects. Organizations are working to rescue victims and support survivors; establish reporting hotlines; contribute to behaviour change and awareness raising; strengthen law enforcement and legislative reform; and develop industry solutions. In the Philippines for example, International Justice Mission has partnered with local authorities to rescue 40 children victims of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, while using each case as an opportunity to build local expertise in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. In Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi, Internet Watch Foundation has launched the first 3 of its 30 planned online reporting portals. And in Vietnam, ChildFund Australia has developed a training curriculum to be delivered by young people to sensitize 12,000 adolescents this year. These results and more are the outcome of US\$57 million in investments by the Government of the United Kingdom and Human Dignity Foundation and in partnership with the WePROTECT Global Alliance, a global initiative dedicated to tackling child sexual exploitation online. To date, US\$24 million has been awarded, with another funding round planned for late 2018. Yet the problem is far greater. More than 200 organizations applied in the Fund's first application window, showing the breadth of the problem – and the drive to combat it.

What is needed?

The Fund is seeking further investment to advance work in this field, at the national, regional and global levels. Its work in this space seeks to augment national commitments to the WePROTECT Statements of Action, specifically by investing in projects to develop or advance a country's own national response, guided by the [Model National Response](#) framework. It does so by complementing broader efforts to end violence in countries, including the drive towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Regional grants go toward generating awareness of the threat in countries, and commitments from countries to develop national plans. Globally, the Fund seeks to invest in solutions that can be adapted across multiple contexts.

Violence against children does not begin or end online. By investing in catalytic solutions, the Fund seeks to deliver on the promise of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children – a world in which every child grows up free from violence.

1. Thorn, <https://www.wearethorn.org/child-sexual-exploitation-and-technology/>, accessed 19 April 2018
2. Internet Watch Foundation annual report 2017, <https://annualreport.iwf.org.uk>, accessed 18 April 2018
3. US Department of Justice, January 2018 (cited in WePROTECT Global Alliance Global Threat Assessment 2018)
4. INTERPOL, January 2018 (cited in WePROTECT Global Alliance Global Threat Assessment 2018)

To find out more and to discuss the opportunity of contributing to the Fund, please contact:

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The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and its associated multi-donor trust fund support the commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals to end all forms of violence against children by 2030. The Fund aims to prove through catalytic investment that evidence-based programming yields tangible results and there is an 'investment case' to be made.

