

Uganda Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

COVID-19 Situational Analysis

Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTS	Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery
CATIPU	Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons in Uganda
CSEC	commercial sexual exploitation of children
CSO	civil society organization
FGD	focus group discussion
GFEMS	Global Fund to End Modern Slavery
PLA	Platform for Labor Action
PPE	personal protective equipment
PSWO	probation and social welfare officer
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
SOPs	standard operating procedures
TdH	Terre des Hommes Netherlands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) commissioned ICF to conduct a situational analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of GFEMS funded projects that combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). In specific terms, the study aimed to:

- Determine how the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda, including the ensuing COVID-19 policies, would impact GFEMS subrecipients' implementation of CSEC projects in Uganda.
- Identify the immediate, short-term, and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the targeted vulnerable populations in the CSEC project areas.
- Provide practical recommendations to aid the successful implementation of CSEC projects.

The study was implemented in March 2021 in the areas where GFEMS subrecipients will be implementing CSEC projects, namely Kampala District in central Uganda and Napak District in the Karamoja sub-region. In Kampala, the study was implemented in divisions where a consortium of agencies led by Hope for Justice, together with Platform for Labor Action and Rights Lab, are implementing the Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery in Uganda project. In Napak, the study was implemented in sub-counties where TdH and Dwelling Places are implementing the Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Napak District, Karamoja, Uganda project. Overall, the study included three broad categories of study participants:

- Project staff from participating organizations at the level of managers, supervisors, community workers and field-based staff/project officers attached to the projects. Community workers or field-based staff involved a range of cadre including social workers, counselors and case managers who directly provide services to survivors of CSEC.
- Non-project staff including probation and social welfare offices, representatives from the Child and Family Protection Unit, law enforcement and local government officials who support policy development and implementation of national projects related to CSEC.
- Survivors of CSEC and vulnerable populations who were also defined as the direct participants of the GFEMS-supported interventions and families considered to be at risk of CSEC.

The overall approach was highly iterative and participatory in nature. The study team received input from GFEMS, and refinement of the final design was also informed by input from the document review, project staff, and the analytical process. The study team employed qualitative methods of data collection, including focus group discussions, group interviews, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews, to understand participants' opinions and experiences of the impact of COVID-19 on the GFEMS-supported projects. The focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted through face-to-face interactions while adhering to the COVID-19 standard operating procedures. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was also used as a conceptual tool to guide data collection. A SWOT analysis was conducted with staff from Dwelling Places and TdH, and another SWOT analysis was conducted with staff from Hope for Justice, Platform for Labor Action, and Rights Lab. A wide range of issues emerged from the discussions, specifically regarding how COVID-19 has affected project implementation and mitigation measures on how to address the effects of the pandemic.

Discussions with CSEC survivors revealed that the advent of COVID-19 is linked to an increase to child rights violations, with cases reported to have drastically increased during the lockdown period compared to the pre-lockdown period. Specifically, participants highlighted heightened exposure to CSEC, increased risk for child trafficking, and, for those already engaging in CSEC, exposure to physical torture and mistreatment. Program staff reported that COVID-19 has been disruptive of working life and has created new work demands. It was noted that workloads increased for staff who remained on

duty during lockdown, and for those who were not working, fears concerning possible loss of employment mounted.

Findings show that the effects of COVID-19 have increased the vulnerabilities of survivors of CSEC, exacerbating exposure to risk factors that increase CSEC. For most project implementers, the COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges that affect implementation. However, projects have found ways to adapt and continue implementation in the midst of the pandemic.

The study recommendations were centered around the following:

- **Technological adaptations and innovations:** Training staff on how to use virtual platforms, optimizing training materials and resources for virtual platforms, implementing capacity-building initiatives focused on technology, investing in the use of technological innovations, and ensuring data security and protection.
- **Project-related adaptations:** Refocusing project activities and interventions to better address new realities that have emerged as a result of COVID-19, such as the shifting locations and in which CSEC occurs, and leveraging and repurposing savings from COVID-19 related adaptation such as virtual meetings.
- **COVID-19-specific changes:** Incorporating COVID-19 prevention and response into programming, using structures created in response to COVID-19 for project delivery; revisiting standard operating procedures and protocols in light of COVID-19; and continuing to strategize and plan for project implementation in response to COVID.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) commissioned ICF to conduct a situational analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of projects supported by GFEMS. In March 2021, ICF's subcontractor, Makerere University Department of Social Work and Social Administration, conducted fieldwork in Kampala and the Karamoja sub-region. The fieldwork comprised interviews with key staff drawn from subrecipients, government officials, and vulnerable populations targeted by the interventions. This report contains the findings from the situational analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on GFEMS-supported projects aimed at ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and supporting CSEC survivors in Uganda.

Although evidence on the prevalence of CSEC in Uganda is limited, a few existing studies point to high prevalence rates, particularly in urban slum areas, where 13.7 percent of the children aged 12–17 were identified to be involved in CSEC in 2019.¹ National estimates supported by the International Labor Organization, although far from being reliable due to methodological challenges, suggest that the number of children involved in CSEC has more than doubled in recent years, from an estimated 7,000 in 2004² to 18,000 in 2011.³ Not only do children sell sex, but they also often get involved in pornographic activities in exchange for money or other material gifts.⁴

COVID-19 further aggravates the situation of children in CSEC, given that it intensifies conditions of poverty, ill-health, and loss of employment. All these unfavorable social indicators increase children's vulnerability to CSEC. COVID-19 lockdown measures, for example, keep children out of school, which increases the likelihood of participating in hazardous work. Sexual exploitation of children in a number of situations is associated with hazardous child labor, including but not limited to working on the streets, and working in bars, lodges, and pornographic activities, as well as child trafficking.

This study was conducted at a time when most of the COVID-19 lockdown measures introduced in March 2020 had been reduced, although not entirely lifted. In particular, travel restrictions at the time of writing this report⁵ were limited to a night curfew that starts at 7.00 p.m., although in practice, this measure is irregularly enforced. There are still restrictions pertaining to the number of participants at gatherings, which must not exceed 20 for any social events or meetings, and meetings are required to comply with COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs), such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing. Certain activities, such as entertainment performances in closed and open spaces and operating bars, are still prohibited. Earlier on, in March–June 2021, academic institutions had been reopened, albeit in phases. However, they are currently closed due to an upsurge of COVID cases in the past few months. International travel is not restricted if health requirements are fulfilled, such as having been tested for COVID-19 within a specific time frame and presenting a negative test result.

Although the findings on the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of GFEMS-supported projects on ending CSEC in Uganda are presented within this context, it is important to bear in mind that opening and reintroducing lockdowns are part of the recent experience given the uncertainty of pandemic. The country has so far experienced two waves, and it is expected that the third wave could arrive in the near future. In addition to the restrictions that existed at the time of data collection, many of the restrictions adopted earlier in March 2020 were reintroduced on June 6, 2021,⁶ and were recently eased at the end of July 2021.

¹ Swahn, et al., 2014

² International Labour Organization, 2004; the estimate number ranged from 7,000 to 12,000.

³ Uganda Youth Development Link, 2011

⁴ Uganda Youth Development Link, 2011

⁵ August 2021

⁶ <https://www.africanews.com/2021/06/07/uganda-imposes-another-lockdown-what-are-the-restrictions//%200701499785>

II. BACKGROUND

In this study, we use the term CSEC to refer to any situation in which “a child, whether or not at the direction of any other person, engages in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value, which includes monetary and non-monetary things such as food, shelter, drugs, or protection from any person.”⁷ CSEC is one of the vulnerabilities that children experience in Uganda and is expressed in various forms, comprising activities that result in anything of value being given to or received by a child, such as the following:

- Engaging children in commercial sex
- Sugar daddy/mama relationships (in which a child may perform sexual favors in return for gifts or other support)
- Student-teacher relationships in which students perform sexual favors in return for grades or material goods

Non-contact sexual exploitation of children, such as pornography or stripping, is not currently covered in the GFEMS projects in Uganda and therefore is outside the scope of this study. Non-transactional and non-commercial sexual exploitation are also excluded from this study.

CSEC is known to occur in Uganda with children of varying age groups, and in particular, those age 15 and older are more affected.^{8,9,10} Children in CSEC, particularly girls, face significant health risks, among other vulnerabilities. CSEC survivors have difficulty progressing with their education, and they are highly susceptible to dropping out of school. Poverty and family separation partly contribute to their precarious circumstances. On account of deep-rooted poverty, 56 percent of children in Uganda experience multidimensional deprivations,¹¹ a sign that they are living in destitute families, with 37 percent of the households experiencing food insecurity¹². Many children involved in CSEC are separated from their families because of poverty and sometimes due to death of their caregivers.

With the onset of COVID-19 and its widespread impact on almost all segments of society, including vulnerable children affected by CSEC, it is not known how service providers who designed interventions to address the problem of CSEC have been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emerging evidence on the effects of COVID-19 reveals that children in Uganda, on account of being out of school, have suffered more violence compared to the pre-COVID-19 period,¹³ with many girls identified as being pregnant and out of school.¹⁴ Lockdown measures appear to have complicated access to services by the survivors of violence and the affected families. Services such as access to HIV testing and post-exposure prophylaxis, even before COVID-19, were not easily accessible to children who were sexually exploited.¹⁵ Nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) are often expected to be more efficient and flexible in the delivery of their services to the targeted vulnerable groups on account of limited bureaucracy and non-reliance on government funding. However, they often work with limited budgets and are not able to match their services with the level of demand in the communities. It is therefore not clear to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their ability to reach the targeted communities and whether the prior planned activities adequately respond to the needs of the targeted groups in light of the impacts of COVID-19 on the communities.

It is important to bear in mind that the Government of Uganda has worked together with international organizations to address the problem of CSEC, including enactment of legislation such as the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009. This complements other legislation, such as the Penal Code Act

⁷ <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/commercial-sexual-exploitation-children>

⁸ Nielsen, et al., 2019

⁹ U.S. Department of State, 2019, p. 475

¹⁰ Uganda Youth Development Link, 2011

¹¹ UNICEF & Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2019

¹² Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018

¹³ Makerere University & Catholic Relief Services, 2020

¹⁴ Africa Child Policy Forum, 2020

¹⁵ Makerere University, 2020

Section 129, which criminalizes defilement of girls under 18, and Sections 136–139, which outlaw and penalize anything associated with engage in commercial sex, including aiding or earning from activities involving sex work.¹⁶ The Pornography Act 2014 aims to primarily protect girls and boys who are most vulnerable to commercial sex exploitation.¹⁷ Other efforts seek to improve the reporting of cases and provide remedial intervention for the affected children, such as the establishment of the child helpline service known as Sauti with code 116, through which cases involving abuse of children and neglect are reported; develop a case management system to support children who are victims of abuse and neglect; reequip the social service workforce through retooling efforts focusing on child protection, alternative care, and applying SOPs in management of cases; and develop an Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System, among other efforts. GFEMS’s efforts geared toward the elimination of CSEC fit squarely in the ongoing government priorities, as reflected in the Children Policy of 2020, which, among others, highlights CSEC as an area of priority action.

Objective of the situational analysis

Broadly, this study sought to establish the likely impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the CSEC projects supported by GFEMS in the Kampala and Karamoja areas. In specific terms, the study aimed to:

- Determine how the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda, including the ensuing COVID-19 policies, would impact GFEMS subrecipients’ implementation of CSEC projects in Uganda.
- Identify the immediate, short-term, and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the targeted vulnerable populations in the CSEC project areas.
- Provide practical recommendations to aid the successful implementation of CSEC projects.

Overview of GFEMS-supported CSEC projects

This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of two projects under the leadership of Hope for Justice and Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH).

Exhibit I: CSEC Project Overviews

Organizations	Project Title	Project Overview	Implementation Location	Target Populations
Hope for Justice Rights Lab Platform for Labor Action	Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery in Uganda	This project will deliver an integrated suite of activities at multiple levels to address issues surrounding the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in Kampala.	Kampala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female victims (aged 7–17) • Survivors of trafficking—Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons in Uganda • Practitioners and stakeholders
Terre des Hommes Netherlands Dwelling Places	Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Napak District, Karamoja, Uganda	This project seeks to create CSEC referral, response, and reporting mechanisms that operate effectively, provide a protective shield for children, and reduce their vulnerability.	Napak District, Karamoja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSEC survivors and at-risk children • Parents/caregivers of survivors • School administrators/teachers • Student peer-support clubs • Council members and law enforcement

¹⁶ Uganda Legal Information Institute, 1950

¹⁷ Uganda Legal Information Institute, 2014

COVID-19 and response measures in Uganda

The first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was recorded in March 2020. By the end of March 2021, the country had registered about 40,000 cumulative cases. However, following the resurgence in COVID-19 infections, the number of cases almost doubled during between May and June 2021. By June 21, 2021, the cumulative cases had increased to 74,260, with 752 deaths.¹⁸ At the time of writing this report (August 31, 2021), the country has registered 119,825 cumulative cases, with 3,006 deaths. The Government of Uganda had already introduced preventative measures prior to recording a single case of COVID-19 in March 2020 including closure of schools and religious worship services. In the weeks and months that followed and as more cases were recorded, the prevention and response measures became more stringent, and their enforcement was backed by the security forces. A summary of the measures introduced follows.

Measures introduced in March 2020:

- Closure of all schools and academic institutions
- Closure of faith-based prayer institutions, including churches and mosques
- Suspension of public transport and closure of the airport to international passenger flights
- Ban on public entertainment
- Directives on social distancing, wearing masks, and placing sanitary facilities in all public places (March 2020–present)

Measures introduced in April 2020:

- Suspension of non-essential services (essential services included health services, security, cargo transport, and media)
- Suspension or closure of some government offices
- Restrictions on the number of persons attending burials
- Implementation of stay-home directives and imposition of night curfew

Measures introduced in May 2020:

- Distribution of food assistance to poor families in urban settings (May–July 2020)

Measures introduced in March–May 2021:

- Schools remain closed
- Movements restricted to within districts or Kampala metropolitan area

Measures introduced from June 19 to July 31, 2021:

- Total lockdown reintroduced, with exceptions for essential service workers, including health workers and authorized staff from government and other selected organizations
- Cash transfer to selected categories of economically hard-pressed individuals, particularly in urban areas

Measures introduced in August 2021:

- Lockdown measures lifted but schools remain closed
- Other restrictions on gatherings remain

Generally, there is a recurrence of lockdown and reopening, depending on the advice of health experts to government. In August 2021, most of the COVID-19 measures were eased, but others remained in place, such as the night curfew (7 p.m. until 5 a.m.), social distancing measures, closure of schools,¹⁹ ban on public entertainment, and closure of bars. Within this period, there was an intensification of public awareness and educational campaigns through radio and television, print media, and social media. These measures can be credited with slowing down the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda. However, they have

¹⁸ <https://www.health.go.ug/covid/>

¹⁹ Pre-primary schools have been closed since then.

also been blamed for the loss of thousands of jobs and deaths from other diseases due to poverty or lack of mobility, which hindered access to health and other services.

As a result of the lockdowns, many families lost their sources of livelihoods, and children and youth, especially girls and young women, have been rendered vulnerable to risky behavior, which has led to an increase in teenage pregnancies and early marriages across Uganda.^{20,21} Over the mid-term and longer term, this increases the risk of exploitative labor, including CSEC. It was expected that with students largely learning from home and many formal sector workers working at home through the internet, reducing internet data costs would be prioritized to bring about relief to hard-pressed families. This remains an item for prioritization by the authorities responsible.

Overall, lockdown measures have had an effect on all actors as well as on social and economic sectors. It is important to examine the COVID-19 measures in relation to agencies implementing GFEMS-supported projects on CSEC.

The current study

The current study was conceptualized out of the perceived short-term, mid-term, and long-term impacts of COVID-19, not only on the targeted participants of GFEMS-supported projects (CSEC survivors and vulnerable individuals), but also on the implementing organizations. This exploratory study sheds light on how COVID-19 has impacted on the internal functioning of the organizations, their vulnerability and resilience, and their ability to adjust their projects to meet the needs of the targeted communities in light of the emerging impacts of COVID-19, which span negative outcomes on community livelihoods and health and social cohesion of families affected by CSEC. Although the data are primarily intended to support improved programming for GFEMS implementing partners, this study also provides sufficient data to inform other CSOs and government agencies that directly work with CSEC survivors and vulnerable individuals. At the same time, it offers recommendations on how systems strengthening for government and non-government institutions can be adjusted in times of pandemics and other emergencies to effectively improve the protection and response against CSEC.

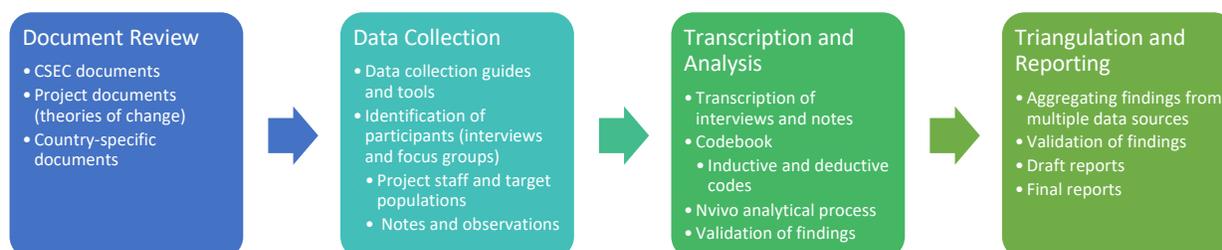
²⁰ Africa Child Policy Forum, 2020

²¹ Makerere University, 2020

III. METHODOLOGY

This situational analysis aimed at examining the short-term, immediate, and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations in project areas and providing practical recommendations on how projects can be tailored to better address these impacts. The study was implemented through a multi-stage exploratory study design (Exhibit 2). The overall approach was iterative, starting with a critical review of project documents from agencies implementing GFEMS-supported projects. Discussions were also held with project staff and participants. At the conceptualization phase, GFEMS provided critical input into the process of refining the design.

Exhibit 2: Study Design Overview



Study areas and study population

The study was implemented in the areas where GFEMS subrecipients will be implementing CSEC projects, namely Kampala District in central Uganda and Napak District in the Karamoja sub-region. In Kampala, the study was implemented in divisions in which the consortium of agencies led by Hope for Justice, together with Platform for Labor Action and Rights Lab, are implementing the Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery in Uganda project. In Napak, the study was implemented in sub-counties where TdH and Dwelling Places are implementing the Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Napak District, Karamoja, Uganda project.

The study was implemented through a multi-stage exploratory study design (see Exhibit 2). The overall approach was highly iterative and participatory in nature. The study team received input from GFEMS, and refinement of the final design was also informed by input from the document review, project staff, and the analytical process. It is anticipated that this analysis, which has been conducted at the onset of project operations, will provide information that will feed into project design and iteration through start-up.

Selection of study participants

Two categories of participants were involved in the study: the staff who will be involved in the implementation of the GFEMS-supported CSEC projects and the targeted participants who are defined as the vulnerable populations in the programs. Other stakeholders were recruited with support from the subrecipients and participated in the study as key informants.

Identification and selection of project staff: Staff were purposively selected from participating organizations at the level of managers, supervisors, community workers, and field-based staff/project officers attached to the projects. Community workers and field-based staff involved a range of cadres, including social workers, counselors, and case managers, who directly provide services to survivors of CSEC.

Identification and selection of target participants: The target participants were survivors of CSEC and vulnerable populations who were also defined as the direct participants of the GFEMS-supported interventions and the families considered to be at risk of CSEC. A purposeful sampling approach driven by the focus on the project objectives and goals was used as a criterion in the selection of the target participants. Project staff in the agencies implementing the GFEMS projects played a lead role in guiding the selection and recruitment of the target population based on their expert knowledge of projects' targeted participants. The study team first discussed the recruitment criteria for

the target group with the program staff in the implementing agency. In all cases, the agencies would first explain to the survivors/target group the study purpose and seek their consent before the study teams were allowed to hold the discussions. This was partly to ensure that the survivors were willing to take part in the study. Selection of the participants focused on age 15 as the minimum. None of the survivors under age 15 were interviewed.

Selection of key informants: Other key stakeholders, particularly policy makers in Kampala and Napak District where interventions will take place, were identified based on recommendation from program staff in the participating agencies. These individuals were identified at district and community levels. They were interviewed for additional information on key issues affecting program implementation during COVID-19.

IV. STUDY IMPLEMENTATION

Data were collected using qualitative methods, including focus group discussions (FGDs) with program staff and project/target participants, in-depth interviews with project staff and target participants, and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of project subrecipients. In addition, documents were reviewed to become familiar with the programs and generate additional evidence.

SWOT analysis and group discussions with project staff

Two SWOT analyses were conducted, one with project staff from Dwelling Places and TdH, and one with project staff from Hope for Justice, Platform for Labor Action, and Rights Lab (see Exhibit 3). Some discussions were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and others were conducted through face-to-face interactions following the COVID-19 SOPs. Research staff used SWOT analysis guides to discuss project strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. From the discussions, a wide range of issues emerged, specifically how COVID-19 has affected project implementation and mitigation measures on how to address those effects.

Exhibit 3: SWOT Analysis and Interviews Conducted with Project Staff

Organization	Position
Interviews with Program Staff	
Dwelling Places	Deputy Director Communications, Strategy and Impact
	Manager Communication, Strategy and Impact
	Deputy Director Child Protection
	Deputy Director Operations
Rights Lab	Head, Civil Society Engagement and Impact
Platform for Labor Action	Manager Programs
	Assistant Director
TdH	Program Manager
	Deputy Director Communications, Strategy and Impact
	Program Manager
	Finance Manager
	Project Coordinator
Hope for Justice	Community Program Manager
SWOT Analysis	
Dwelling Places and TdH	
Hope for Justice, Platform for Labor Action, and Rights Lab	

FGDs and interviews with project participants

In-depth interview guides were developed to facilitate FGDs and interviews with study participants (see Exhibit 4). Two FGDs were conducted with CSEC survivors in each of the regions/districts. In addition, two FGDs with parents of families identified to be at risk of CSEC were conducted, with guidance from the project subrecipients. Discussions were held in spaces accessible to participants and the data collectors. On average, FGDs and interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. During discussions, survivors discussed their experiences in accessing services during COVID-19 and the general effects of COVID-19.

Exhibit 4: Interviews and FGDs with Participants

Category of Respondents	Implementing/Participating Agency	# Participants
In-depth interview with CSEC survivor (girl age 15)	Hope for Justice Shelter, Muyenga Lighthouse	1
Group interview with CSEC survivors (boys aged 15–17)	Hope for Justice Shelter, Kibuli Lighthouse	4
Group interview with CSEC survivors (girls aged 15–17)	Hope for Justice Shelter, Muyenga Lighthouse	3

FGD with at-risk boys (aged 15–17)—Matany S/C at St Daniel Comboni S. S	TdH and Dwelling Places	5
FGD with at-risk girls (aged 15–17)—Lokopo S/C at Longalom P/S	TdH and Dwelling Places	6
FGD with female parents	Participants	6
Group interview with male parents	Participants	2
Interview with school patron	TdH and Dwelling Places	1
Group interview with teachers/administrators	Lorengechora P/S, Napak, Karamoja	4

Note: Hope for Justice refers to their shelters as “Lighthouses.”

Key informant and group interviews with non-project staff

Guided by the subrecipients, some of the key informant interviews were with a probation and social welfare officer from Napak, the Child and Family Protection Unit from Napak, law enforcement officers, and local council officials (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Key Informant Interviews and Group Interviews

Position	Organization
Probation and social welfare officer	Kampala Capital City Authority—Central Division
Vice chairperson	Local Council I Committee
Antichild Trafficking Desk—Uganda Police	Katwe Police Station, Uganda Police
Local Council I chairperson	LC I Chairperson Lorengechora S/C
District Child and Family Protection Unit officer	Napak District Police Station, Uganda Police
Group interview with CSO	Cooperation for Development

Document review

The study team began with a review of CSEC background and country-specific documents and program documents. This review generated contextual information and helped further inform the study design. A key component of the document review was understanding the theories of change for each of the projects. The theories of change were also reviewed to understand how COVID-19 can potentially impact the program outputs, outcomes, and long-term outcomes. An attempt was made to ensure that the interview questions were tailored to each project. Findings from the document review were used in the process of triangulation and reporting whenever possible.

Ethical considerations

This study received ethical review and clearance from the local Institutional Review Board at the Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and later with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (registration number SS757ES). In addition to the ethical approval processes, the study followed all the established ethical procedures for protection of human subjects. Discussions were held after participants provided consent. The participants are anonymized, and confidential information about the participants is not displayed. All audio recordings were destroyed immediately after transcribing the discussions and interviews. All survivors who participated in the study were first briefed by the implementing agency about the study. After they agreed to participate, they also provided consent before the interview was conducted. Discussions and interviews were conducted in spaces where the participants were comfortable and felt safe.

V. FINDINGS

Impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable population in project areas

Discussion with study participants generally suggest that the impact of COVID-19 (at the time of data collection, February–March 2021) was closely associated with the public health measures instituted by the Government of Uganda to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not surprising, given that only a few deaths—less than 500—had been registered during that time. Perhaps the participants would have identified the issue of deaths and the burden of disease as issues if data had been collected at a later date. Some of the control measures that adversely impacted their lives relate to the restriction of movements for non-essential travel, which disrupted the provision of services for the protection of children from CSEC. Participants generally discussed the pandemic as leading to heightened exposure to abuse, namely as a result of school closures, increased opportunities for trafficking, and increased exposure to physical abuse and mistreatment. The box to the right highlights the main themes that study participants discussed about the impact of COVID-19 on themselves and other vulnerable populations. Further details are discussed in the sections that follow.

COVID-19 control measures and risks for exposure to CSEC

- School closures increasing time children were unattended
- Increase in early and forced marriages
- Abuse occurring in hidden and presumed “safe” locations
- Economic hardships leading to exploitation

Heightened exposure to child sexual exploitation due to school closures

School closures occasioned by the need to stop the spread of COVID-19 left school-age children with little or no attention, a situation that exposed them to varying degrees of sexual exploitation.

Since COVID-19 came, it has affected many children in education, but also many children have got problems. Many have joined bad groups. Others have been defiled and others have escaped from home to go and work under unclear circumstances. (Female survivor, aged 15–17)

Some of the parents were reportedly taking advantage of school closures to force girls into marriages. When girls are out of school, some parents, particularly in the Karamoja region, look at it as an opportunity to offer them for marriage in exchange for a dowry. Child marriages and teenage pregnancies are higher in Karamoja and generally in the eastern region, compared to other areas in Uganda.²² Although forced marriage was prevalent before COVID-19, the available evidence suggests that pandemic-related school closures fostered an increase. A parent of a survivor stated, “There were increased incidences of forced and early marriages for children here in Napak during the lockdown as a result of Corona.”

Child survivors reported that COVID-19 has altered the spaces in which sexual exploitation of children has been happening. For example, children are now being abused in homes, away from bars and streets where CSEC used to happen before the pandemic. Perpetuators of CSEC have shifted from being strangers in the streets or bars to being relatives and friends in a child’s home, which makes it harder to identify the victims and offer support. One of the survivors noted:

Some men were used to buying prostitutes every day (from the streets and bars). However, when they locked down the country, they didn’t have prostitutes on the streets. So, they resorted to using the young girls left at home. Other men had no jobs yet they were used to buying prostitutes. So, without money they turn to their daughters to fulfill their sexual desires. (Female survivor, aged 15–17)

As families and children became increasingly desperate due to disruptions in sources of livelihoods, participants reported cases of perpetrators luring children, including male children, into sexually exploitative situations under the guise of catering to their needs. While articulating their experiences during a FGD, one of the survivors reported:

²² Uganda Bureau of Statistics & ICF International, 2012; Walakira, et al., 2016

I met a man on the street who bought me what to eat. I remember he bought me sausages, rice, and chicken. After, he took me to his home near freedom city in Kampala. He then forced me into having sex with him. I tried to yell but he held my mouth. He gave me 10,000 [Ugandan Shillings] after. I did not report anywhere because I feared if I reported to the police, they would send me back to Kampiringisa Children's Prison saying I was on the streets during lockdown. This is the first time I am talking about this case. (Male survivor)

I met a man at Nakasero I went to him and he asked me why I was there on the street and what I was doing. He told me "come in" and I sat in his car. Then he took me to his home, but he started to romance me like a woman and I yelled. There was a woman in the neighborhood who came and rescued me from him. (Male survivor)

Generally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on children. The immediate socioeconomic implications of the pandemic have led to a rise in child poverty and a severe threat to their survival, safety, and health. Although there have been few studies examining the impact of COVID-19 on CSEC, a recent study conducted in Kenya highlights that with the closures of schools due to the coronavirus outbreak, there has been a surge in the number of cases of children engaged in child labor. A further increase in economic hardship as a result of the pandemic can also serve as a push factor in trafficking of children for labor.²³ For some children, the pandemic has also increased the time that they spend at home, unsupervised and online, which can be another risk factor.²⁴

The pandemic has exacerbated a learning crisis and has highlighted the inequity of access to education experienced by a majority of children. Nearly 6 out of 10 children aged 10–13 (60 percent) did not have access to any lessons or structured learning during lockdown, although the proportion of those who did not access learning was reduced to 4 in 10 (44 percent) among older children aged 14–17.²⁵

Created a window for child trafficking

As with most forms of CSEC that were exacerbated by COVID-19, some children from Napak were reportedly trafficked when schools closed down, particularly using cargo trucks, which were not subjected to travel restrictions during lockdown. Other children were reportedly trafficked when the government lifted travel restrictions but did not open schools. Therefore, some of these measures created opportunities for the traffickers to exploit to engage in trafficking of children. Although it has not yet been clearly established how many children have been trafficked during the pandemic, discussions with agencies such as Dwelling Places indicate that, in the process of tracking some of the children to take them back to school, they were able to establish that some children were trafficked from Napak and the greater Karamoja region during lockdown, suggesting that many may never return to school, especially in Napak.

<p>Increased child trafficking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifted travel restrictions amid school closures created opportunities for traffickers• Financial challenges led to forced labor
--

When the government lifted the opening of schools for candidate classes, some children needed tracking down to go back to school. As Dwelling Places, we had to track down Primary Seven candidates. When we followed up children to take them back to school, in places like Kibuye zone in Kampala, we realized that many of them had been trafficked to Kampala to work in the markets as well as beg on the streets when schools closed. (Dwelling Places staff)

Discussions with stakeholders and CSEC survivors suggest that the advent of COVID-19 increased household poverty and greatly impacted critical sources of livelihoods. In particular, businesses and household income were affected.

COVID 19 increased the rate of existing poverty amongst the community. Before lockdown, some people used to operate small business—like brewing alcohol—but due the restrictions that came up during

²³ Freedom Collaborative, Eastern Africa Child Rights Network, & Stop the Traffik Kenya, 2020

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

COVID-19, businesses were shuttered down hence creating poverty and suffering amongst these communities. (LC I officer)

For some of the children who have been victims of CSEC during COVID-19, exposure was reportedly heightened by the need to supplement family income. This is especially common among girls who are made to work as housemaids or babysitters but are not paid well. Some were reported to have engaged in commercial sex as a way of making ends meet.

When the roads were opened up, most people sent their children to the streets to look for survival and get income to sustain their families because they saw families of those on streets were okay and hence, they had no other option other than sending their children to the streets for survival. (MC I officer)

Increased exposure to physical abuse and mistreatment

COVID-19 and its associated prevention and response measures led to increased shortages of food and shelter, physical abuse, and maltreatment of persons by security operatives, with persons in urban areas more at risk. Children faced physical torture and mistreatment by security operatives on the streets of Kampala, especially because of the instituted curfew, as highlighted by one survivor:

Physical abuse and mistreatment

- Increased food and shelter shortages
- Shift in economic activities (e.g., vending and market closures)
- Maltreatment by security operatives

We were lashed/beaten by the Local Defense Unit and people always scared us that we were going to be killed by the roadsides. The police even used to come and take us to the police station until they release us after some time and then we come back here because most of us feared going back home because of the many crimes we had committed back home. But the LDU lashed us so bad and some children got wounds even, while others were taken back to their homes. (Male survivor, age 17)

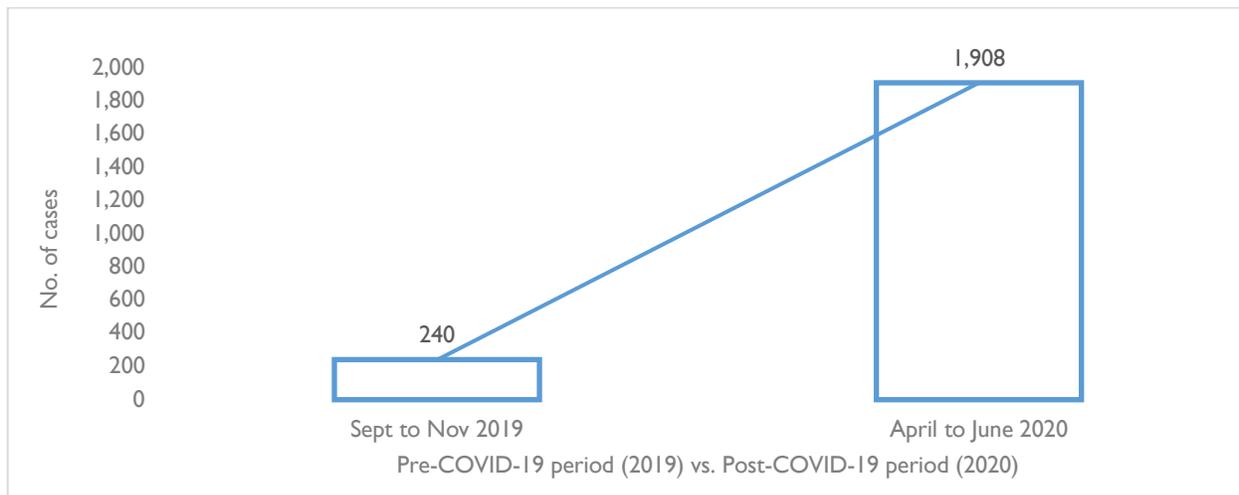
Discussions with local leaders suggest that as small businesses closed, children who had been trafficked to Kampala to work in markets were reported to have become victims of CSEC. This is true for children who had been trafficked previously to offer labor services. The affected children could have been re-integrated as per government policy, but the lockdown measures did not create a conducive environment for implementing interventions targeting such children. In fact, many government programs were suspended as resources were channeled toward efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and also to provide treatment to affected persons. In reference to children who were affected by the closure of markets, one local leader observed the following:

Due to the closure of markets like Owino where most of the children were working in Kampala, I understand some just started selling themselves [offered themselves for sex] because there were no alternatives to survival as life became hard. This by the way also increased the rates of HIV/AIDS because there was a similar case that we learnt of. (Male LC I officer)

Literature also points to an increase in physical abuse and mistreatment. A study undertaken by Makerere University during two comparison periods—pre-COVID-19 lockdown period (September to November 2019) and COVID-19 lockdown period (April–June 2020) revealed that 240 cases of child rights violations were recorded in 30 districts prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, compared to 1,908 cases recorded in 24 districts for April–June 2020 (during the lockdown period) (see Exhibit 6).²⁶ The cases that increased the most included child neglect, child desertion, and torture.

Exhibit 6: Number of Child Rights Violations Reported in Pre- and Post-COVID-19

²⁶ Makerere University & Catholic Relief Services, 2020

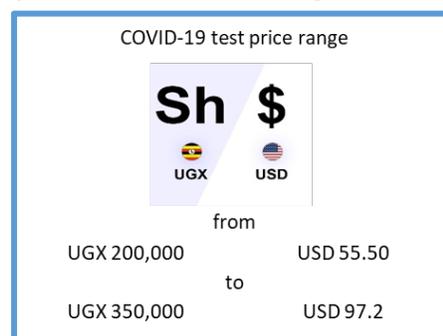


Impact of COVID-19 on project implementation

Although the design of the projects considered the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of concerns came up during discussions that relate to COVID-19. Overall, the impact of COVID-19 for the majority of the project staff involved disrupted work schedules, increased costs of undertaking project activities, risk of COVID-19 infection, and adapting to the new dynamic around the problems of CSEC that agencies are grappling to address.

Increased costs of project operation

Some projects reported an increase in operational costs as COVID-19 SOPs are enforced. These costs are resulting from the implementation of COVID-19 SOPs that require, among others, routine testing for COVID-19 and social isolation, which may require hiring more physical space for meeting participants. These costs also relate to ensuring that the participants are protected from COVID-19, especially those in centers for CSEC survivors.



There are the things that were not planned for. Things like undertaking continuous testing of the project staffs, testing the beneficiaries when they move from one point to another. There is that increase in the cost of implementation which was not planned for or foreseen. (Interview with staff from Platform for Labor Action)

We have to ensure that they (survivors) are COVID-19 free even before we take them to our centers. We have to isolate them, we have to get them tested as they enter the isolation centers and also test them as they leave which is quite expensive. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)

Increases in project costs create challenges to project implementation. Projects are likely being forced to reduce the number of participants reached or targeted, especially if participants must be supported within shelters. A reduction in the numbers reached with interventions is of critical concern, because at the same time, COVID-19 has increased survivors' vulnerability and placed many at the risk of CSEC. Scaling down at a time when cases are increasing and demand for services is high affects service provision. In addition, due to the cost of testing, some organizations reported concerns related to challenge arising from implementing some of the technical aspects of the projects, particularly case management. During discussions with staff from Hope for Justice, staff reported that implementation of a case management approach and case management systems have been greatly hampered by COVID-19, which has implications for reintegration of survivors of CSEC. As staff noted, the need for COVID-19 testing poses challenges to the reintegration process. The high cost of COVID-19 testing has also impacted the work of partners, such as police in apprehending the perpetrators of CSEC. For example, it was noted that the perpetrators taken to the police must first be tested for COVID-19 and handled in accordance with the COVID-19 SOPs. Although testing for COVID-19 is a requirement for placement

of children and management of CSEC offenders, agencies like the Police and Probation and Social Welfare reported limited capacity to implement the COVID-19 SOPs. Even the government itself was reported to have no clear mechanism of meeting the costs of testing offenders before they are taken into custody.

When we rescue these children, we are supposed to hand or take them to places of safety. However, when COVID-19 came, they insisted on children being tested first for COVID-19 before placement, which is not easy because you have to incur costs of testing for COVID-19 and we do not have the money. Government has no straightforward mechanisms of testing those children. (Probation and Social Welfare Officer (PSWO), Kampala Capital City Authority, Central Division)

This means that COVID-19 has placed additional demands on the budgets of subrecipients. Items such as hand sanitizers and handwashing facilities might seem to be less expensive on the market, but cumulatively when added to the expenditure for testing for COVID-19, this puts pressure on the available limited resources. Expenses related to personal protective equipment (PPE) are a challenge for most agencies because for the most part, these were not budgeted for. For some agencies, especially those that had no budget allocation, PPE is insufficiently provided.

One of the issues has been around inadequacy of the personal protective equipment for the staff and victims. It is not covered in the budget per say on our side. PPEs remain a problem that can hamper the implementation of activities in the trauma-informed support care services. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)

In addition, because most work is now done virtually, most organizations are under immense pressure to upgrade their technological capabilities, including training staff and acquiring software that supports virtual activities, including paying for virtual communication platforms. Uganda has the highest cost of internet in East Africa,²⁷ so the increased reliance on internet results in resource challenges.

Relatedly, while costs are increasing, the development assistance environment from which most of the agencies receive funding remains uncertain due to COVID-19. For example, at the time of this situational analysis study, the UK Government had proposed to cut development aid from 0.7 percent of the gross domestic product to 0.5 percent, which was reportedly likely to have direct impact on the project work for agencies such as Rights Lab. In addition, Dwelling Places also reported that the disrupted flow of income and the need to reallocate funds to cater for emerging needs have tilted resources away from project activities.

... There has been delayed funding as a result of COVID-19. I will give an example of a project that was meant to start in January but was delayed to April and even we are not sure when it will start. The communication from the donors is that they have been economically impacted. New and running school-related projects could not start as per our intended plan. For education support projects, we had to seek the donor's approval to permit us to use funds to print reading materials. However, in November 2020, Primary Seven resumed after we had rechanneled some of the funds. All this is disrupted our planning. (Group discussion with staff from Dwelling Places)

The cost-related challenges emanating from COVID-19 notwithstanding, it is likely that some organizations will be able to save on expenses on activities that may not be possible because of COVID-19. Most activities are going online, so organizations are able to save on transporting staff to places of work or paying for physical spaces during workshops or meetings. Discussions with staff from Rights Lab indicated that they anticipate savings on travel because some of the planned trips have been affected by COVID-19 travel restrictions. However, it appears that none of the project subrecipients has been able to conduct a cost-savings study to document the likely savings that will accrue from implementing COVID-19 SOPs and how such savings would be used.

Disrupted work life

Program staff reported that COVID-19 has disrupted work life and created new work demands. It was noted that workload increased for staff who remained on duty during lockdown, and for those who were not working, the fears concerning possible loss of employment mounted. Relatedly, it was also

²⁷ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/business/prosper/why-uganda-s-internet-cost-is-highest-in-east-africa-1873090>

reported that workers faced an additional burden of work resulting from the implementation of COVID-19 SOPs.

There is increased workload. An activity that would be completed in one day has to be phased, may be in 5 days. For example, in regard to community dialogues, previously you would meet 300 people from 12 villages in one day but now you have to meet 80 people per village. (Group discussion with staff from TdH and Dwelling Places)

Scaled down services to CSEC survivors

Psychosocial support previously provided to the children was scaled down and, in some cases, completely halted, given the COVID-19 measure of social distancing. Project staff resorted to teleconferencing and tele-counseling and reduced the face-to-face interactions between project staff and CSEC survivors. This made it hard to physically counsel survivors. The field staff also missed out on the non-verbal interaction, which often reveals the physical, emotional, and social well-being of children; creates an atmosphere for building trust in the service provider; and also serves as a source of healing.

There was suspension and in other cases delayed donor funding of projects because of COVID-19, because the donors were also economically impacted by the pandemic. New projects and those already in place, especially educational projects, could not start as per intended plans owing to the closure of schools. With reduced budgets, funding aimed to improve food provisioning for example, was affected.

Information flow to targeted project participants was affected by the restrictions on people's movements—the stay home measures. Project staff resorted to the use of mass media, particularly radios, as an alternative to face-to-face community sensitization, but the target community members had limited access to radios.

Changing face of CSEC

Emerging new trends of CSEC and trafficking, and their associated challenges, present a new challenge and an opportunity for organizations working in the area of CSEC and trafficking in persons. For example, discussions with participants showed that COVID-19 and its associated measures exacerbated exposure to the risk of CSEC and child trafficking, increased hunger and unemployment, and reduced the lack of access to basic protections for the most vulnerable children. This leads to an increase in the magnitude of the CSEC and risk of trafficking, which calls for scaling up the interventions rather than scaling back. The disruptions created by COVID-19, however, also mean that these projects and organization have limited opportunities to respond. Further, the lockdown posed challenges to gathering personal information from victims, which was often previously done in person. Interviews with participants revealed that CSEC and trafficking networks have been driven underground (i.e., from public to private spaces). Consequently, there are difficulties in identifying and rescuing victims.

In some communities the abusers are changing and children are now abused in homes. So, its difficult to rescue and prove that there is exploitation (...) so rescue becomes extremely difficult. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)

Evidence suggests that the perpetrators of CSEC have shifted from strangers in the streets or bars to relatives and friends in homes, which made it harder to identify the victims and offer support as well as deal with the perpetrators. This has the potential of making work challenging, which consequently means that abuse goes on unabated as movement was hindered and transport halted. This scenario appears to also affect those vulnerable to trafficking, given the interlinked nature of CSEC and trafficking.

Before COVID-19, the rescues were direct and were easy to follow up. There were clearly demarcated areas of abuse; you could easily see abuse and identify abuse. But now with COVID-19 and the lockdown, these places have changed and abuse is taking place in people's homes. Since bars and lodges have been locked, rentals have been turned into areas where CSEC is perpetrated. People are renting private houses and that is where abuse is going on and to the effect it is difficult for the community and community leaders to know that abuse is taking place. So even if one is able to handle the cases, it's hard to know where and how they are happening. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)

Management of community expectations and needs

As noted, COVID-19 has imposed great livelihood strain on most households. In communities like Karamoja, the struggle to survive in times of COVID-19 might further affect the interest of parents in education. Project staff expressed a certain level of concern that, unless the project directly addresses their livelihood concerns, including making food available, the communities may reject such interventions.

Increased insecurity in the Karamoja sub-region

Other challenges reported to have been exacerbated by COVID-19 that have direct bearing on the implementation of project activities include insecurity in places like Karamoja. It was reported that when the country went into lockdown, parts of Karamoja that have always been susceptible to insecurity were affected. It appears that the COVID-19 lockdown created a vacuum in security, which has greatly affected the region. For example, in September 2020, it was reported that more than 224 prisoners escaped from Moroto Prison, partly because of what was termed as the “low morale” by the prison wardens following an outbreak of cholera and COVID-19 in the prison.²⁸ It was reported that the prisoners escaped with 14 guns, 15 magazines, and 480 rounds of ammunition, creating a more volatile security concern in Karamoja, where cattle raids were also reported to have increased during COVID-19.²⁹

Right now, there is cattle rustling. Our social workers at one time reported that as they were doing their work of visiting homes and resettling children, there were instances when they would find dead bodies lying on the roadside. I actually remember around April/May during lockdown, it was tabled at the floor of parliament when the Member of Parliament was shot at (by cattle rustlers) when driving through the region. (Group discussion with staff from Dwelling Places)

Adaptions to COVID-19 and emerging opportunities

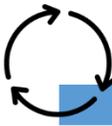
The impact of COVID-19 notwithstanding, subrecipients have put in place innovations to adapt to the effects of the pandemic and adapted COVID-19 SOPs to project activities. As summarized in Exhibit 7, projects have restructured implementation approaches to minimize COVID-19 transmission among staff. For participants, they have implemented SOPs for testing and COVID-19 mitigation, and they have been nimble regarding project implementation.

Exhibit 7: Project Implementation Adaptations



Rotational Approach

- We established the rotational approach for our staff to minimize the number of people at the Lighthouse if a group is here this week another comes the other week. And those who work that week reside in the Lighthouse to avoid the issue of movements in and out. We did not trust public transport, we introduced private vehicles... All these were done to reduce chances of COVID-19. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)



Repurposing Lighthouses

- The other thing was to change the other Lighthouses to become light transit centers. The children would be taken to the Lighthouse and tested for COVID and then would be to the final Lighthouse where they had to reside. They were tested from one center and made to stay in another center. (Interview with staff from Hope for Justice)



Implementation Revisions

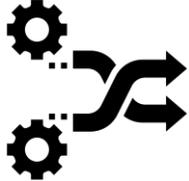
- The project is being adaptively managed and we have to keep an eye on how things are developing across the board both in terms of COVID and other relevant developments... The work plans and timelines have been consistently revised given the different considerations and developments as they come. (Interview with staff from Rights Lab)

²⁸ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/moroto-prison-break-only-20-escapes-were-convicts-2371800>
²⁹ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/karamoja-cattle-raids-50-people-killed-in-one-year-3372664>

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report documents the findings of a study that sought to examine the likely impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of CSEC projects supported by GFEMS in Uganda. The report shows that the effects of COVID-19 have increased the vulnerabilities of survivors of CSEC, exacerbating exposure to risk factors that increase CSEC. For most project implementers, the COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges that affect implementation. However, projects have found ways to adapt and continue implementation in the midst of the pandemic. Based on findings from the interviews, FGDs, and SWOT analysis, there are several recommendations that projects can incorporate to improve implementation in light of COVID-19 and the impact it has had on target communities.

	<p>Dedicate resources to training staff on how to better use virtual platforms, tools, and resources. Given the impact of COVID-19, there is an overreliance on virtual and digital platforms. However, not all staff are well equipped to effectively use such platforms.</p>
	<p>Adapt training materials and resources to virtual platforms. Although the design of the projects happened at a time when COVID-19 had already been confirmed, the actual impact of COVID-19 was never anticipated. Ensure that project staff adapt to the “new normal” of doing business, including conducting meetings and providing services to participants. Training materials and resources that were originally designed for physical delivery should, therefore, be revisited and adapted to the current situation.</p>
	<p>Implement capacity-building initiatives focused on technology for project participants and partners as a way to foster better service provision. For example, one of the major concerns raised regards the limitations in the use and adaptation of modern technology, including the use of online communications and data management platforms. It is therefore critical that efforts are equally directed toward supporting such partners and building their technological capacity.</p>
	<p>Invest in the use of technological innovations and monitor their use and scalability. For example, one of the organizations had started providing tele-counseling to survivors to ensure continuous flow of services. Yet, little was mentioned in terms of how effective tele-counseling is or what modifications are needed to make it more effective.</p>
	<p>Leverage savings that could accrue from use of communication technologies, and blend community visits with use of virtual platforms where applicable. Although there are increases in costs, government SOPs, and other requirements, there are potential ways in which costs could be reduced because of COVID-19. For example, projects with budgets for physical trainings, transport, and other activities that have been scaled down because of COVID-19 should be restructured to support a blend of virtual and physical delivery of services.</p>
	<p>Bearing in mind that situations of CSEC and trafficking are changing, there is a need to rethink some of the interventions that are being planned. For example, CSEC is now in homes and largely practiced by those expected to protect children. By implication, interventions should pay more attention to the elimination of CSEC in the homes and communities where it mostly occurred during COVID-19.</p>

	<p>CSEC interventions in schools should find more creative and innovative ways to engage students, such as creating modules on CSEC and trafficking in persons that class teachers can integrate into their teaching, and introducing games and other competitions that raise awareness of CSEC and child trafficking.</p>
	<p>Redeploy resources toward understanding how CSEC has evolved in the context of COVID-19. For example, through community engagement, subrecipients may want to explore the dynamics of CSEC during the pandemic and where resources for prevention need to be targeted. There may be elements of resilience in families and communities that projects can learn from, among others.</p>
	<p>Incorporate COVID-19 prevention and response in programming for CSEC. This requires flexible budgeting and allocation of resources to these emerging needs.</p>
	<p>Use existing and new structures created in response to COVID-19 to support delivery of CSEC-related activities. As a response mechanism, the government created COVID-19 task forces at the district and sub-county levels. Projects should creatively engage these structures to deliver messages on CSEC that can easily reach target communities. One way to do this is to deliberately build community and village-level relationships and networks as a means to identify challenges and as avenues for service provision, especially in instances in which traditional institutions such as schools are impacted by COVID-19.</p>
	<p>Revisit SOPs, protocols, and procedures considering COVID-19. Projects should consider documenting indicators with COVID-19-related disaggregates. Although projects have adjusted their work methods in response to COVID-19 challenges, it is unclear whether and how these efforts are being documented. Performance indicators and other measures should be revisited to account for and track COVID-19-related efforts. Some indicators, even at the output level, could include documenting information about the number of participants reached with PPE, the number of tests conducted, and COVID-19-specific or related training.</p>
	<p>Ensure data security and protection for information and activities conducted in digital spaces. As more project work is digitalized and conducted online, projects should focus on ensuring data security and protection for information and activities conducted in digital spaces. Where possible, projects should revisit data security and protection SOPs and protocols.</p>
	<p>As new COVID-19 variants and strains are being reported elsewhere, it is likely that Uganda may experience another wave or phase of COVID-19 that would demand new response measures. Such measures may also have significant impact on project implementation. Projects should therefore create strategies and systems for regular meetings focused on strategizing and troubleshooting.</p>

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ANNEX I: SWOT ANALYSIS OF CSEC PROJECTS

The matrices below in this annex show how organizations itemized their strengths, such as existence of personnel and expertise to deliver the services to the communities, existence of infrastructure in terms of physical space and buildings, having a good working relationship among staff within the agencies, and having a good working relationship with government and community-based structures. In addition, organizations highlighted what they perceived to be their weaknesses, which included a shortage of accommodations for field staff, limited funding that affected the scope and level of service coverage, and mobility challenges within communities. These limitations appear to be mostly linked to how fast and adaptive or the degree of flexibility available for the agencies to modify program design where necessary, and to deliver services tailored to the emerging needs of communities arising from COVID-19. For example, with no budgets allocated for COVID-19 testing and protective gear for staff and community workers, the organizations' staff are likely to face the constant risk of exposure to COVID-19. Moreover, although vaccination is free, the availability of vaccines is low for staff and communities.

It would appear that program implementers need to incorporate COVID-19 prevention and response in their programming, but this is difficult in the absence of flexible budgeting and allocation of resources to meet these emerging needs. In addition, the ability to be more flexible and adaptive is complicated by reduced funding to non-governmental organizations from donors and the absence of funding from government, even though the level of need in the communities continues to increase.

The agencies envisioned opportunities in their work environment to include, among others, the good will from government and community actors to provide a solid foundation for continued engagement and mobilization of resources and the availability of communication infrastructure and technologies that reduce the gap between staff and between staff and communities they serve. Platforms such as Zoom and social media were credited with providing a continuous link between service providers and targeted participants through timely reporting of areas of need, and with making it possible to deliver services where resources permitted. Finally, COVID-19 has increased vulnerabilities, resulting in the urgent need to implement social protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable. Whether this growing urgency will translate into tangible actions in the short- and mid-term from government and other actors remains to be seen. For now, agencies are working to envision opportunities to overcome the effects of the pandemic.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for project 1: Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery in Uganda

Under the leadership of Hope for Justice, the Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery (ACTS) in Uganda project will be implemented by three partner agencies: Hope for Justice, Rights Lab, and Platform for Labor Action (PLA). The ACTS project has three primary aims:

- Provide trauma-informed care services for female victims (aged 7–17) of commercial sexual exploitation, and facilitate access to vocational, educational, and economic opportunities for girls to enable sustainable reintegration and livelihoods, and therefore reduce vulnerability to trafficking.
- Ensure best practice in the field of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)/trafficking victim care through the development of nationwide evidence-based standards of care for survivors of trafficking to enable better support and navigation through the justice systems and referral services. The project will strengthen the Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons in Uganda (CATIPU) network to enable dissemination of knowledge and best practice between civil society organizations (CSOs) and with wider government structures.
- Support and build capacity for key practitioners and stakeholders through the provision of training and resources for trauma-informed care modeled programming, to ensure effective responses to victims of trafficking.

The program is expected to be delivered in 21 months. In Kampala, the three subrecipients (Hope for Justice, Rights Lab, and PLA) will deliver an integrated set of activities at multiple levels (district, division, and local council; including survivors) to address issues surrounding CSEC and trafficking of children in Kampala. These activities will be implemented through a robust strategic approach encompassing three key intervention areas:

- Delivering evidence-based, trauma-informed care for CSEC victims via the Lighthouse
- Improving coordination to address CSE and developing nationwide standards of care
- Capacity building for practitioners through an Immersive Learning Center

The ACTS project will provide an integrated suite of activities aimed at reaching multiple levels: children and households, practitioners, key stakeholders in CSOs, CATIPU network, and governmental structures. The project will adopt and deliver a trauma-informed care model for survivors of CSEC primarily within Uganda. Learning generated from this will be coupled with the use of Hope for Justice's Lighthouse as an Immersive Learning Center for key practitioners, with the intention to establish the Immersive Learning Center as a central resource and Center of Excellence for the promotion of trauma-informed care support for survivors and victims of CSEC and exploitation. The review and development of nationwide survivor care standards and the strengthening of a dedicated network of CSOs, practitioners, and member organizations (spanning various structural levels) is integral to this process. This will be accomplished through the strengthening of the CATIPU network, whose member organizations will participate in capacity-building activities to share and generate knowledge on trauma-informed care, and subsequently support the review, development, and ultimate implementation of nationwide survivor care standards.

A SWOT analysis was conducted for Hope for Justice, Rights Lab, and PLA as subrecipients for the ACTS project. Facilitators guided participants to explore internal and external factors that may affect program implementation. Given that the project will be implemented as a consortium, initial assessment done for individual organizations was later incorporated into the discussion of SWOT for the consortium as a whole.

Exhibit 8: SWOT Analysis for Addressing Child Trafficking and Slavery Project in Uganda

	PLA, Rights Lab, and Hope for Justice	Issues Emerging as a Result of COVID-19
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have experience in similar or related work activities, (e.g., PLA is experienced in providing services in a risky environment; Hope for Justice is experienced in developmental work). All partners have skilled, academically qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable staff to provide technical advice and support on emerging developments. All partners have skilled and experienced human resource profiles with motivated workforces that willingly adjust to new work systems. Partner organizations have good reputations and cordial working relationships with other stakeholders in government, and local, national, and international partners (e.g., PLA works closely with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution and the Coordination Office on Trafficking in Persons. PLA is also an opted member of the National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs Uganda. Rights Lab boasts a well-established and international reputation for excellence). There are excellent working relationships among partners (e.g., Rights Lab boasts of an excellent working relationship with Hope for Justice). PLA is a fully accredited Legal Aid service provider by the Uganda Law Council. PLA has a spacious, licensed Vocational Training Institute, making it easy to create space for social distancing in preparation for vocational training for participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical and strategic guidance from headquarters and Line Ministries in Uganda on COVID-19 control and awareness Ability to undertake innovations and adaptation to work (e.g., repurposing two Lighthouses to act as COVID-19 testing and quarantine centers, introduction of work shifts, residency system for non-resident staff)
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate logistical support and supplies Limited funding PLA has limited capacity to provide accommodations for the legal officer/project officer directly interfacing with the participants at the Lighthouses. Some partners, like Rights Lab, face limited contextual familiarity with Uganda and consequently face language limitations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 necessitated that some staff who directly interface with participants are accommodated at the Lighthouses run by PLA, yet there is limited capacity to provide such accommodations.

	PLA, Rights Lab, and Hope for Justice	Issues Emerging as a Result of COVID-19
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing community structures to monitor, identify, and report incidences of child trafficking within their areas of operation A supportive policy environment Existence of a need in the community that donors are willing to support Successful synergy among CATIPU coalition members Nuanced understanding of the project team of a range of global contexts to the project Ability to disseminate learning from this project to a significant global audience Skilled internal capacity at both global and in-country levels for most project partners Rights Lab and Hope for Justice work together on another project in Uganda from which both learning and opportunities positively benefit this project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 has presented an opportunity to strengthen the use of existing community structures to monitor, identify, and report incidences of child trafficking within their areas of operation. COVID-19 has necessitated redirection of the focus of the Office of Director of Public Prosecution, particularly trafficking in persons, from transnational trafficking to internal trafficking, which primarily involves children. This creates an opportunity to expedite sanctioning processes of the different cases that would have been reported under this project. COVID-19 has empowered community networks to be able to sustain project interventions in emergency situations. COVID-19 has necessitated quick adaptation to technology in day-to-day operations that might result in cost savings (e.g., conducting meetings via Zoom).
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowdowns/delays in prosecution processes Scale down of operations due to funding constraints Continued lack of an unrestricted funding base that impacts quick responses to emergency situations (e.g., testing kits, personal protective equipment [PPE]) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowdown or delays in prosecution processes given reduced/scaled down court operations as officials strive to adhere to COVID-19 operational guidelines instituted by the government Increased cost of implementation, particularly in ensuring that participants do not contract COVID-19 (e.g., continuous testing of participants and project staff and provision of PPE that was not initially planned for in the budget) COVID-19 restrictions leading to delays in the identification of child victims of sexual exploitation to be supported to file cases Threat of contracting the virus from use of public transport and interaction with beneficiary populations due to limited logistics and PPE Continued geopolitical situation in the central region; COVID-19 restrictions likely to affect project performance or related outputs Reported funding cuts to UK Government development funding occasioned by COVID-19 negatively impacting a number of funding mechanisms accessed by agencies such as Rights Lab Continued lack of an unrestricted funding base impacting quick responses to emergency situations (e.g., testing kits, PPE)

SWOT Analysis for Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Napak District, Karamoja, Uganda project

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH) and Dwelling Places, the subrecipients, will deliver the Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation program in Karamoja that targets both prevention and response to CSEC. Prevention will aim to strengthen community structures, including the family, by reducing vulnerability to CSEC and raising awareness among community members to identify and report suspected cases of CSEC. Response will include, among others, targeting interventions that strengthen the law enforcement agencies to conduct investigations and hold the perpetrators accountable, and building the capacity of social service systems to respond effectively in delivering appropriate services to survivors of CSEC.

The program's overall goal is to create CSEC referral, response, and reporting mechanisms that are effectively operating, providing a protective shield for children and reducing their vulnerability. This will protect 2,000 children at risk in Napak District (in Karamoja) from CSEC. Key activities and outputs of the program include the following: building capacity of 120 district council members to develop, popularize, and enforce the child protection ordinances and local by-laws; training parents and caregivers of vulnerable children on how to identify trafficking risks, how to monitor their children, and how to follow up on cases of CSEC; training 200 teachers and 280 students on CSEC and the role they can play in the prevention and monitoring of children; and organizing community dialogues and theater plays (reaching 10,000 people) on CSEC and the by-laws to change negative social norms. In addition, 160 CSEC survivors and 160 parents/caregivers of survivors will be economically empowered. Younger CSEC survivors will be supported to re-enter and remain in school.

Overall, the program strategy consists of a combination of prevention activities and the creation of an enabling environment (Outcome 1) through community engagement activities (Outcome 4), economic empowerment of survivors (Outcome 5), and promotion of education among younger survivors (Outcome 6). The strategy relies on communities acknowledging their circumstances and deliberately choosing remedial actions with the support of stakeholders to change their situation. Where this model has been applied by TdH and partners, families, communities, schools, and authorities are more empowered and responsive to play a critical role in preventing, responding to, and reporting CSEC should it occur. The project will carefully document promising practices, so they can become a springboard for behavior change and greater success in future programs.

Exhibit 9: SWOT Analysis for Community Action to End Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Napak District, Karamoja, Uganda Project

	TdH and Dwelling Places	Issues Emerging as a Result of COVID-19
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in donor relations • Existence of partnerships and locally available partners, both CSOs and community-based organizations • Existence of strong capacity-building framework to support and build capacity of partners • Strong experience and capacity working with and through partners • Existence of a strong working relationship with various structures of government, and strong working relationships with district-level departments like probation and social welfare and community development • Existence of staff with technical expertise in child protection programming • Staff with strong project management skills • Strong coordination with the local community through child protection committees, which creates potential for sustainability beyond the project lifespan • Experience in implementing similar interventions or projects in the same area • Solid reputation working with communities, which means that there is existing community support, trust, and experience in applying community-friendly approaches, such as participatory community engagement approaches that make it easier to address and implement work that involves changing [negative] attitudes [and practices], working through structures and with community champions to make sure they organize these dialogues • Technical support from regional office in areas like child protection, lobbying and advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TdH's approaches to and materials for trainings fit in the different COVID-19 standard operating procedures that the government has put in place. • Existence of a strong data management system means that it is easier to adapt to conducting activities online. • Some activities like meetings are already happening online using various platforms. • A strong online system has helped in the area of information receiving and sharing, including continued engagement with partners during the pandemic. • Work is being implemented as planned, including trainings that follow COVID-19 guidelines.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited control over what partners can or cannot do • Internal capacity is not at 100 percent, missing key staff roles • Limited financial resources to reach more participants • Lack of skill set and competency of some staff • Low organizational visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited direct contact with participants due to COVID-19 restrictions • Limited physical contact among staff, although there are opportunities for staff to collaborate through virtual platforms • Increased workload and extra effort resulting in increased spending, for COVID-19 compliance reasons

	TdH and Dwelling Places	Issues Emerging as a Result of COVID-19
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of willing partners • Scale-up of interventions to a wider area/greater impact • Increased opportunities for funding from outside sources/donors • Better networks built through CSO engagements for elimination of CSEC/child trafficking • Increasing interest from development partners on child protection programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 has necessitated the creation of new structures in the community, such as COVID-19 committees and task forces, that have brought other stakeholders on board. These are structures that partners can depend on to continue to reach communities. • Digitalization will make engagements and communication with partners easier and faster. • Online tools have been developed and shared with partners likely to help on delivery of the project (e.g., conducting online meetings through zoom, Microsoft Teams). • COVID-19 has created opportunities for more staff skills development.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple structures at the community level can overwhelm and confuse partners on the ground • Political activities/interference in non-governmental organization operations/funding reduction • Volatile security situation arising out of security threats caused by cattle rustlers might affect workflow in Napak • The unwritten rule where working with government officials also means facilitating them might exert extra financial strain • Managing community and stakeholder expectations regarding financial or monetary contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New COVID-19 structures mean several layers to work with within the community. • Extra work is expected, including integration of information on COVID-19 (i.e., expected to talk about COVID-19 in meetings). • In Napak, in light of COVID-19, strangers are viewed with suspicion, as possibly a risk of COVID-19 infection to the community, which is a threat to project work. • COVID-19 structures such as COVID-19 task forces mean that there are a lot of protocols and procedures to follow. • COVID-19 has resulted in restricted access to the community. • The pandemic has reduced donor funding for projects.

ANNEX II: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guides (CSEC & OLR)

Interview Guide: Project Staff (CSEC and OLR)

To get started I would like to hear about the project you work on and what your role(s) on that project.

- What project do you work for?
 - What is your current role/responsibilities for the project? How long have you been in this role? Have you held similar roles/responsibilities before coming to this project?
- What is the purpose of the project? What are the main goals of the project? What activities are being conducted to meet these goals?
- Can you describe the main activities/milestones that the project intends to implement?
 - What are the immediate and short term goals?
 - What are the long term goals?
- *[If not already discussed- ask] What would success/a successful project look like? (if applicable participant can make reference to similar or previous projects)*
- What are some factors that can impede the success of the project? *(if applicable participant can make reference to similar or previous projects)*
 - Probe for general factors, not associated with COVID-19
 - Once factors are established- introduce COVID-19/corona virus

[As you may be aware the first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was confirmed in mid-March 2020, since then there have been over 33 thousand cases and 200 deaths. To help contain the spread of the virus the government issued a lockdown and has also recommended the public take certain measures such as wearing a face mask and washing hands. We would now like to discuss in more depth, the effect the COVID-19 pandemic has or will have on project implementation. If your project has not yet begun implementation, we can discuss based on your thoughts and experience with similar projects.]

- How does the COVID-19 pandemic factor into the project implementation?
 - Probe on impacts to **staffing** (who was available to work), **service delivery** (changes in what was provide or how it was provides) and **service recipients** (changes in who was able to access the services)
- How did it impact project activities? Are there any services or activities that you did not continue? If so, which ones?
- Can you describe changes you made to services or activities?
 - How do you think these changes impacted outcomes?
 - What could the project have done differently? What resources or supports would your project need to do things differently?
- What, if any, have been some challenges associated with COVID-19 *[continue to probe until participant cannot think of any more challenges]*. If participant cannot think of any current challenges, ask them to think about anticipated challenges.
 - What, if anything, has the project been doing to address these challenges?
 - What is needed for the project to better address these challenges?
- What did the project do well in response to COVID? What were some successes ('positive aspects') what were some lessons learned? *[continue to probe until participant cannot think of any more successes]*

- Is there anything else you would like to share as we consider recommendations for the project implementation considering the COVID-19 pandemic?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Group Discussion: Project Staff (CSEC and OLR) [handout to facilitate completion of SWOT template]

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this group discussion. We expect this discussion to be participatory and interactive. We would like to gather a range of opinions and perspectives, so it is very important that we hear from everyone and we give everyone space to share their opinions. If there is anyone that is not comfortable speaking out loud there will also be opportunities to write down responses.

The focus of this discussion will be to understand the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats to project implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is okay to bring into the discussion your experiences with similar projects.

First let’s have a general discussion about the project and some of the key activities that you are planning to implement

Facilitate discussion about the projects’ theory of change [Note: handout of the projects theory of change will be used to guide this discussion]

- In thinking about the various aspects of the theory of change facilitate SWOT discussion
 - Project outputs
 - Project outcomes
 - Long term outcomes
 - Impact

- Guiding questions include:
 - How would/is COVID-19 affecting this?
 - Did the project make changes to policies/procedures? If so, how?
 - Did COVID affect staff capacity to work as usual? If so, how?
 - What services continued? What didn't?
 - Were there changes in how the services were provided? If so, describe.
 - How did these changes impact program outcomes?
 - How did COVID affect the target population?
 - Was there a change in who received services? Who was left out?
 - What were challenges for the project? What were benefits for the project ?
 - Given the impact of COVID-19 what are the SWOTs?

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
External	Opportunities	Threats

- Is there anything else you would like to share as we consider recommendations for the project implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

[Thank you for your time and participation]

Interview guide: stakeholder group (CSEC and OLR) (project focused (i.e. CATIPU, CSO/NGO staff)

In this interview I would like to talk to you a bit about your organization and specifically the work that you do around [Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children, or CSEC/Oversees Labor Recruitment and Migration]

Can you tell me about your organization/group you work for and your role?

- Probe can you provide examples of the activities that your organization does to address CSEC/OLR? [ask for details about activities related to CSEC/OLR]

- What are some challenges that you've encountered doing these activities?
- How has COVID changed the way you've done these activities

I would like us to know talk a little bit more about [PROJECT NAME]. Before we start, have you heard about [PROJECT NAME]?

- If so, can you tell me about them and your understanding of the project goals?

[if participant is not familiar, provide a brief description of the project, its goals and how they intend to work with the group/organization]

- What are the specific ways in which your organization/group works or will work with [PROJECT NAME]?
- Can you give examples of how you work or will work together?
 - Probe: any shared activities? Resources? Training?

[if participant is not able to mention or does not provide all details- facilitator to provide information on the project goals as they relate to the specific stakeholder group]

- What is the goal of the collaboration between your organization and [PROJECT NAME]?
 - What might help meet this goal?
 - What might interfere with reaching this goal?
 - What role do you foresee COVID-19 playing in the implementation of [PROJECT NAME]?
 - Probe: how has COVID-19 affected the collaboration? What are some challenges? What are some opportunities?

- Is there anything else you would like to share as we consider recommendations for the project implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

▪

[Thank you for your time and participation]

Interview guide: stakeholder group (CSEC and ORL)- Non-project focused (i.e. practitioners, school administrators/teacher, council member/law enforcement, government counterparts)

In this interview I would like to talk to you a bit about your organization and specifically the work that you do around [Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children, or CSEC/Oversees Labor Recruitment and Migration]

- Can you tell me a bit about your organization/group and what you do?
 - Probe on range of activities, however, ask for details about activities related to CSEC/ORL (CSEC survivors and at-risk children/migrants)

What role does your organization/group play regarding CSEC/OLR?

- What are some challenges that you face?

[I would now like to have more of a discussion about the CSEC survivors and at risk children/migrants that you work with and the impact of COVID-19. As you may be aware the first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was confirmed in mid-March 2020, since then there have been over 33 thousand cases and 200 deaths. To help contain the spread of the virus the government issued a lockdown and has also recommended the public take certain measures such as wearing a face mask and washing hands.]

- How does your organization/group engage with CSEC survivors and at-risk children/OLR agencies/migrants?
- What are some of the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected your work with CSEC survivors and at-risk children/OLR agencies/migrants?
- Can you describe any challenges you've encountered engaging CSEC survivors and at-risk children/OLR agencies/migrants as a result of COVID-19?
 - What is being done to address these challenges?
- What are some ways that you anticipate that the COVID-19 pandemic will impact your work in the future?
- What are some things that can be done to help you better work with CSEC survivors and at-risk children/OLR agencies/migrants [*Probe: what types of supports? What types of resources?*]

CSEC Only: [We would now like to specifically ask you about younger populations, those between the ages of 7 and 14. Since children between the ages of 7-14 are of particular interest to the projects, we would like to have a better understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted this group]

- How has the pandemic affected the lives of children ages 7-14?
 - Please describe any major differences you've noticed in the 7-10 age group versus the 11-14 age group.
- What might projects do to better reach or respond to the needs of this population during the pandemic?
 - Probe: What needs do you see unmet or emerging due to the pandemic? (e.g., unstable living situation, transportation, safety, food security, emotional vulnerability)
- Is there anything else you would like to share as we consider recommendations for the project implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

[Introduction and consent statement]

- Can you tell me a bit about your organization/group and what you do?
 - Probe on range of activities, however, ask for details about activities related to CSEC/OLR (CSEC survivors and at-risk children)
- What role does your organization/group play regarding CSEC/OLR?
 - What are some challenges that you face?

[We would now like to have more of a discussion about the vulnerable populations that you work with and the impact of COVID-19. As you may be aware the first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was confirmed in mid-March 2020, since then there have been over 33 thousand cases and 200 deaths. To help contain the spread of the virus the government issued a lockdown and has also recommended the public take certain measures such as wearing a face mask and washing hands]

- What are some of the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your work with vulnerable populations (CSEC survivors and at risk children/migrants)
- What are some ways that you anticipate that the COVID-19 pandemic will impact your work in the future?
- What are some things that can be done to help you better work with CSEC survivors and at risk children/migrants, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

CSEC only*[We would now like to specifically ask you about younger populations, those between the ages of 7 and 14. Children between the ages of 7-14 are of particular interest to the projects, we would like to have a better understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted this group]*

- In what ways have the lives of children between the ages of 7-14 changed as a result of the pandemic?
 - Probe- any differences in the age of the children, younger vs older?
- What are some things that projects should be aware of as they work with these populations?
 - Probe for things specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Is there anything else you would like to share as we consider recommendations for the project implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

[Thank you for your time and participation]

Group Discussion: Target Population (At-Risk Youth-CSEC only)

[Introduction and consent statement]

[age/culturally appropriate ice breaker]

Today we are going to talk about a very sensitive topic (*facilitator to reiterate consent statement, confidentiality, and ability to withdraw from discussion at any time*).

Have you heard of the term, commercial and sexual exploitation? If so, can you tell me in your own words what this means?

[if participants are not able to define- use the definition below]

Sometimes bad things that are sexual in nature [touching private parts] are committed against young people. People do these bad things for money, or to get other things such as food, shelter, drugs or because someone told them to. We call this Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children.

- What do you think are some of the reasons that people your age would become victims of CSEC
 - What do you think are some things that can be done to help them not become victims?
 - Probe for several reasons/solution

-ask- have you heard about COVID-19 or the coronavirus? [if yes, ask the group to tell you what they know about it, if not provide a brief description]

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted young people like yourselves?
- What are some things that you are doing differently now because of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - Why are you doing things differently?
- If the COVID-19 pandemic gets worse, what do you think would change? Why?
- If the COVID-19 pandemic gets better, what do you think would change? Why?

Is there anything else you would like to share about this discussion?

[Thank you for your time and participation]

Group Discussion: Target Population (migrant workers/populations at risk for trafficking)

[Introduction and consent statement]

- Have you heard of the term overseas labor recruitment (OLR)? What does this mean to you?
- Can you provide me with some examples of OLR?
 - Why do these things occur?
- What do you think are some of the reasons that people participate in OLR or migration as a result of recruitment?
 - What are some benefits?
 - What are some challenges?
- Where do people tend to migrate? Why to these locations?
- What have you heard about people's experiences with migration?
 - Probe for several examples of different experience and background of the individuals associated with those experiences.

-ask- have you heard about COVID-19 or the coronavirus? [if yes, ask the group to tell you what they know about it, if not provide a brief description]

[As you may be aware the first case of COVID-19 in Uganda was confirmed in mid-March 2020, since then there have been over 33 thousand cases and 200 deaths. To help contain the spread of the virus the government issued a lockdown and has also recommended the public take certain measures such as wearing a face mask and washing hands. We would now like to discuss in more depth, how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted individuals that have either migrated or are at risk for migrating]

- Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you? If so, can you share how it has impacted you?
 - Probe: mental, social, and economic aspects.
- Do you think that COVID-19 pandemic has impacted individuals that would want to migrate? Why or why not?
 - Probe to find out what ways these individuals have been impacted.
- What about organizations that try to recruit individuals to migrate, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected them?
 - Probe Has this resulted in more recruitment efforts?

Is there anything else you would like to share about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact?

[Thank you for your time and participation]