

Family
for every child



Hearing the Voices of Survivors:

Co-produced research on reintegration from child sexual exploitation

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Introductions: Family for Every Child

A diverse, member-led global alliance of 46 local civil society organisations in 38 countries.

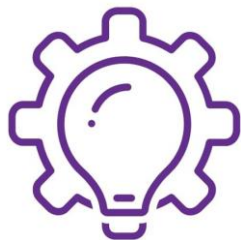
Goals: preventing family separation, strengthening families, ensuring high quality alternative care when needed and protecting children outside any care.

Our members have a rich understanding of the situation for children and families in local contexts, as well as solutions and interventions for improving children's care.



Overview

Multi-country research with four research partners in Nepal, Madagascar and Uganda



Common Methodology

through a series of in-depth discussions (focus groups) with 10-15 children and young people in each site.



Peer Research

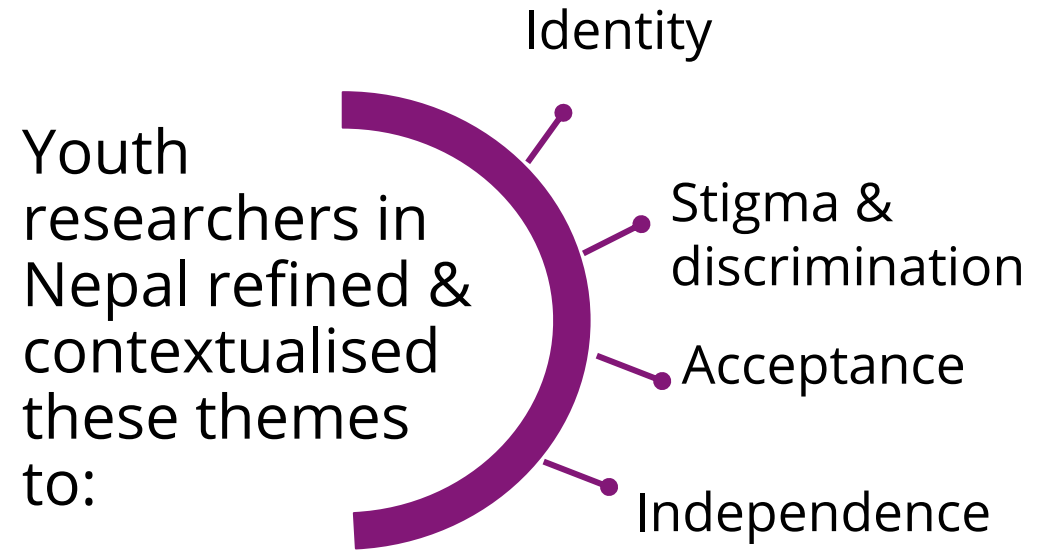
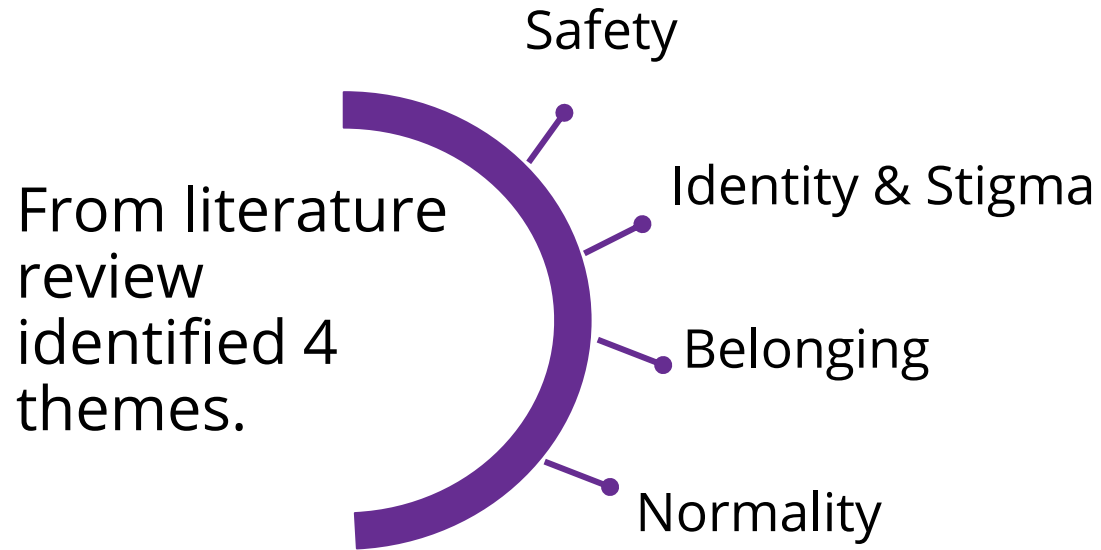
Researchers and research participants were peers, who had experienced sexual abuse or exploitation and were current or former beneficiaries of a reintegration programme.



Overall Sample

61 children & young people
18 boys and 43 girls.

Contextualisation: refining themes



Youth researchers in Madagascar and Uganda refined and contextualised the original themes to:



Participatory Research

Why?

Gain a more nuanced and contextualised understanding of how reintegration was experienced and understood by the children themselves

Pilot participatory research methods



How?

Co-produced: youth and adult researchers - refined research questions, undertook data collection and to a lesser extent data analysis (sense checking)

Key Findings: Stigma and Discrimination

- Girls and young women **labelled** as 'promiscuous' or linked to a supportive NGO.
- Faced verbal **abuse**, unequal treatment, belittling, **exclusion**, and 'backbiting' from family, neighbours, and friends.
- **Their parents seemed to be ashamed of them**, and saw their experience of being a victim of sexual abuse as 'bad behaviour'.
- The **discrimination had a negative effect** on their lives, creating hopelessness and pushing them back into risky behaviour.
- They hate other people gossiping about them. This makes them **feel insecure**, forcing them to want to stay alone.
- **School drop out** due to discrimination and economic hardship



'I was exploited but they would not say that I was exploited but they would directly say that I stayed in 'Maiti Nepal' [name of an NGO]. They used to mention Maiti Nepal.'

Rita, 25 years old

"I stay alone and I am comfortable. I don't like the fact that they talk about me, accusing me of having many men and drinking alcohol."
Carol, aged 21



Key Findings: Support Systems

- **Emotional and practical** help provided for positive change.
- **Empowering self-worth** crucial for problem-solving and positivity

Family

- **Family support**, particularly from mothers, deemed vital as they give unconditional support.
- Acceptance from extended family often linked to **financial independence**.

Community

- In Madagascar, **Teachers and community officials** were reported as being supportive
- **Social workers and peers** were pivotal in the reintegration journey
- **Religious** communities, prayer, and church provided solace
- The young people **felt the needed to prove they had changed** their behaviour. They befriended young people who they felt promoted good morals.



Key Findings: Financial Independence and Freedom

- Independence defined as economic and emotional.
- Economic independence through income or small businesses.
- Financial stability led to increased acceptance within families and communities.
- Family members/Husband's support to business/micro enterprise
- Integration in Workplace crucial for reintegration.



Key Findings: Building Self-esteem and Self-reliance

- **Holistic support**, including life skills, psychosocial counseling, and education.
- Boosted self-esteem, confidence, **emotional independence**.
- Encouraged **'I can do' attitude** and positive thinking, enabling independent living and confronting discrimination.
- **Sports activities** foster self Esteem, safety and acceptance.
- Building relationships **requires effort**, leading to positive outcomes, including improved status.
- **Discipline and mentorship** are crucial pillars to develop self sufficiency



Key Findings: Reintegration of BOYS

Boys Experience Sexual Abuse

- Abused by relatives, friends, or colleagues and labelled as well.
- Unable to resist or share their experiences.
- Fear of blame and silence led to emotional distress for 2-3 years.
- Nepalese society unaware of boys' vulnerability to exploitation.

Identity Crisis and Online Support

- Boys questioned their identity.
- Found solace in online communities to discuss their experiences.
- Also, faced risks from online predators.

Importance of Self-Acceptance

- Fear of community stigma and discrimination.
- Community perception crucial for successful reintegration.
- Self-acceptance as survivors is the first step.

Independence and Motivation

- Boys took time to cope with abuse.
- Motivated by parents' acceptance, especially mothers.
- Financial independence reduces exploitation risks and fosters independence.



Key Recommendations

Improving services for other reintegrated children and young people



Challenge - Lack of support from family regarding stigma and discrimination



It is essential to **develop a package** to prepare the parents to accept their children who experienced sexual abuse. This include community awareness, Counselling, etc.



Orientation on sexual abuse, child rights, need for protection and maintaining confidentiality, legal support and psychosocial counselling at the **community level**.



Psychosocial counselling and life-skills should be a 'must,' as some organizations are seen not giving priority to them. There should be "continuity in care" across all points (source, destination, transit)



Regular and in depth follow-up the reintegrated youths after the reintegration, providing them with the needed services. Continuity in assessment.



Challenge: Stereotypes, social judgment leads to social mistrust, stigma and discrimination from communities and self-stigma



Sensitization programs and campaigns (Radio or TV) should be organized at school and in communities to fight against discrimination and stigma of victims of child sexual abuse.



Encourage and Promote Survivors to be involved in reintegration programs by participating in planning, sensitization, through creative and adapted tools (dance, testimonies, etc).



Reintegration services should **mobilize community leaders including religious leaders**



Reintegration providers should intervene, talking to teachers and school directors, **to fight discrimination at school.**



General reintegration programs in collaboration with community, health service providers, parents, schools, employers and **develop referral pathways**

Behavioural challenges faced by victims of child sexual exploitation



Explain how **the reintegration program works** and how families can support children with their education and other goals.



Reintegration programs should **include moral education, self-esteem programs, and life skills** programs to help victims build good relationships between themselves and with others.



Reintegration practitioners should make **Regular home visits** to inform the victims' families about their rights and dignity and how to avoid discrimination.



Reintegration practitioners should **organize multidisciplinary meetings** in order to discuss about cases and provide adequate services.



Challenge: Economic Reintegration



Must Engage survivors in the planning and decision making process related to their livelihood



Thorough needs assessment of skills required and employability at the place of reintegration, skills training to be designed accordingly



Regular follow up visits to support survivors or their employers



train the staff members at the place of work of reintegrated children and young people about discrimination and stigma. Develop support network



Recommendations For Governments



State parties should help reintegration practitioners by **introducing/enforcing standards of reintegration practice** for victims of child sexual exploitation and provide resources.



Thoroughly **assess the reasons and root causes** for sexual abuse and exploitation.



Bring effective **programs to prevent** child abuse and exploitation.



Raise **mass awareness on the legal provisions** for committing such crimes and the need for child protection mechanisms.



Create programs to **promote the skills and education** for the young children affected by abuse and exploitation.



Generate opportunities of entrepreneurship and job placement.

Recommendations for Boys Reintegration

1. Massive awareness program for the public and among the boys. (*Awareness among the professional general public about the fact that CSE affects boys.*)
2. Specific laws/policies/programmes related to Boys and their reintegration.
3. Issues related to sex and sexuality, masculinity, gender norms) and context should be included in the academic curriculum as well.
4. Media sensitizations: To bring out the issues of boy's exploitation as well as be the push factor for new policies and laws.
5. More research



"Before being accepted by others if you accept yourself it improves your self-confidence and your determination to accept...who I am, my identity or the mental or physical status of being a survivor."



Key Takeaways



Survivor Participation



Networking and referral



Care Continuum



Questions and comments



You're invited
to join the social network
for child rights practitioners

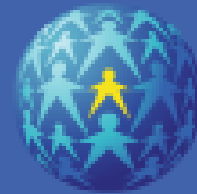


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Thank you



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