



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 2025

Pasig City's First Responders Sharpen Skills to Protect Children from Online Sexual Exploitation

PASIG CITY, PHILIPPINES – More than 20 law enforcers, social workers, prosecutors and other frontliners in Pasig City deepened their understanding of the intricacies of online sexual abuse or exploitation of children (OSAEC) as they continue efforts to prevent this crime and protect children.

Held from July 9 to 17 in collaboration with International Justice Mission (IJM), the Multi-Disciplinary Team–Basic Internet Crimes Against Children (MDT–BICAC) training provided participants with foundational knowledge of Internet Crimes Against Children, with a specific focus on OSAEC.

Participants enhanced their skills through sessions on relevant legal frameworks in the Philippines, basic investigative techniques, planning and conducting operations, and providing trauma-informed care to survivors.

“We are the ones who stand between innocents and exploitation,” said Pasig City Councilor Maria Luisa “Angelu” de Leon. “We don’t just react to crimes—we anticipate, we collaborate, and we transform systems. The perpetrators do not work in silos, so neither should we.”

Over the course of a week, the city’s child protection frontliners came together to strengthen their capacity to respond swiftly and collaboratively to cases of OSAEC. The training emphasized coordinated service delivery, tailored to the identified needs of survivors and their families, and informed by the local context.

Since 2011, IJM has partnered with Philippine law enforcement, prosecution, and social services to rescue victims of OSAEC and hold perpetrators accountable. However, first responders often face significant challenges in carrying out effective interventions at the local level.

IJM’s *Scale of Harm* (2023) prevalence study underscored the need to increase community efforts and capacity at both local law enforcement and barangay levels remain to prevent and reduce the trafficking of children for the production of child sexual exploitation material.

OSAEC often involves the trafficking of children to produce child sexual exploitation material, including livestreamed abuse, for profit, often perpetrated by family members or trusted individuals in contact with remote sex offenders abroad. According to the prevalence study, nearly half a million Filipino children—approximately 1 in 100—were trafficked to produce child sexual exploitation material for profit.

OSAEC often occurs inside the victim’s home, making detection more challenging and requiring proactive law enforcement and community vigilance. In some communities, people refer to these illegal activities as “show” or “show me”.

IJM’s MDT-BICAC training aims to strengthen collaboration among prosecution, social services, and law enforcement to prevent delayed investigations, disjointed case assessments, and inefficient resource use.

“First responders in the community play a critical role in protecting children from online sexual abuse and exploitation—and Pasig City's commitment to equipping its frontliners with effective prevention and response strategies should serve as a model for other local governments that prioritize the safety and well-being of their children,” said IJM Philippines’ Community Engagement Director Evelyn Pingul.

IJM has previously conducted MDT training in several local government units to strengthen local protective mechanisms and establish MDTs—bringing services closer to communities they serve and enhancing coordination among key frontline agencies.

Highlighting the dedication of Pasig City’s child protection first responders, City Councilor de Leon said: “We don’t just learn, we lead. We don’t just follow protocols; we create new ones. We do not just do our job; we answer a calling.”

To report OSAEC incidents, contact the Philippine National Police – Women and Children Protection Center at 0966-725-5961 (Globe) and 0919-777-7377 (Smart). ###

***Notes to Editors**

- The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as the Luxembourg Guidelines, prescribes the use of the term “child sexual abuse material” or “child sexual exploitation material” instead of “child pornography”. Sexualized material that depicts or otherwise represents children is a representation, and a form, of child sexual abuse and should not be described as “pornography.”

For inquiries, contact:

Evelyn Pingul

Director, Community Engagement

IJM’s Program Against Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

epingul@ijm.org

About IJM

International Justice Mission is a global organization that protects people in poverty from violence. IJM partners with local authorities in 33 communities in 18 countries to rescue and restore survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and help strengthen public justice systems so they can better protect people from violence. Our work in the Philippines led to a dramatic decrease in the prevalence of sex trafficking of children in bars and brothels—reductions ranging from 72%-86% in the cities where we partnered with local authorities. In 2016, IJM fully transitioned our program in the Philippines to combat online sexual exploitation of children, in particular the trafficking of children to create new child sexual abuse materials, including via livestreaming.

Learn more: <https://www.ijm.org.ph>