Child Rights Coalition Asia

University of **Strathclyde** Glasgow

Inspiring Children's Futures support(s) the Sustainable Development Goals

Inspiring Children's Futures

Best Practices, Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Innovations in Supporting Children's Wellbeing During COVID-19: Insights from the Philippines

Inspiring Children's Futures

PROTECTION
PROVISION
PARTICIPATION
PREVENTION

For the wellbeing of our *children*

The International **COVID 4P Log Project**

LEARNING SERIES | **4** THE PHILIPPINES

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About the
COVID 4P Log Project

COVID-19 has abruptly thrust the rights and wellbeing of children and families into greater risk around the world. The impact of COVID-19 on children continues to be vast. Risks posed to children's survival and development, to their special protections, education, health and access to food, for example, are being greatly compounded not only by COVID-19, but also by government responses.

With roughly a third of the global population estimated to be under age 18, children[1] account for a huge proportion of our population. Successful delivery of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (henceforth 'SDGs'), which relate to all ages, heavily relies on our ability to effectively and robustly respond to the distinct needs and rights of children. Even prior to COVID-19, our global task to achieve these global goals by 2030 seemed daunting. In the light of COVID-19, achieving the SDGs is even more challenging.

To effectively mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the light of protecting children's wellbeing, and ultimately for our collective societal future, policy and practice responses must be distinctively designed to address children's wellbeing needs.

Policymakers, and those working with children, are at the heart of pandemic responses as they continue to support children's wellbeing, rise to many new challenges, and respond in new, innovative and, in some cases, unprecedented ways. To address the impact of COVID-19 on children in the long term, the COVID 4P Log Project sought to better understand the changing demands on these policies and practices across different cultures and contexts, in 22 countries and five continents.

The **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** is a joint initiative at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, with a collective vision of ensuring that children and young people have what they need to reach their full potential, particularly those who face adversity.

We work in partnership with a wide range of partners nationally and internationally. Children's human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are the heart of our work.

1. The term 'children' is used throughout to describe all those under the age of 18 years, in line with the CRC's definition of a child. Where 'young person' is used in the Report, this is reflecting that specific age group only.

THE SMARTPHONE APP

The COVID 4P Log is an Android and iOS smartphone app, free-of-cost to app users, that collected the real-time, anonymous views and experiences of practitioners and policymakers who were working across the globe to support children's wellbeing in the light of COVID-19. In answering a series of questions, these volunteer respondents helped us to better understand the ways practitioners and policymakers were responding to these challenges.

During the last quarter of 2020, practitioners and policymakers were invited to download the app to log a 2-minute response to one main question every day, for eight weeks. The questions were both practice and policy-focused, and based on the '4P' children's human rights framework of Protection, Provision, Prevention, and Participation, in order to better understand the ways practitioners and policymakers around the world were protecting children, providing for their unique needs, enabling their participation in decisions that affect them, and preventing harm, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 3339 responses from 247 respondents representing 22 countries were generated across the eight weeks of questions. 139 direct service providers, 66 service managers and 42 policymakers from NGOs, civil society organisations, governments and the private sector in Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa, Scotland, Sweden, the USA, India, Canada and 14 other countries participated in this project.

RESEARCH THEMES

The smartphone app explored respondents' views of several core areas:

1. Learning from the pandemic so far
2. Protection: Ending violence against children
3. Provision: Access to food, health, education
4. Collaborations, flexibility, transparency and trust: Applying evidence from past emergencies to COVID-19
5. Prevention: Children's social and emotional wellbeing
6. Special considerations: Justice, alternative care and disabilities
7. Participation: Responding to #COVIDUnder19 – children and young people's findings
8. Preparing to rebuild post-COVID

OUR KEY PARTNERS

Our 17 international Key Partners range from capacity-building organisations, to international advocacy NGOs and service delivery partnerships, to the UN and other inter-governmental agencies. Their support and close engagement enabled the **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** to gather these important insights through the COVID 4P Log smartpone app. Their mention here does not imply endorsement of these findings.

Dissemination Partners in the Philippines:

Action for the Care and Development of the Poor in the Philippines (ACAP), Samahan ng Mamamayan-Zone One Tondo,Inc. (SM-ZOTO), Break the Silence National Network, Inc., Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC Coalition), Mindanao Action Group for Children Rights (MAGCRP) now called the Alliance for Child Rights Mindanao, Child Rights Network (CRN), The Psychosocial Support and Children's Rights Resource Center (PST CRRC), Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN), and Consuelo Foundation.

PROTECTION
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Children's human rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are sometimes summarised as the four P's: Protection, Provision, Participation and Prevention. The COVID 4P Log uses this 4P conceptual framework to frame the questions we asked practitioners and policymakers. While the 4Ps are not all-encompassing, they offer an accessible lens through which to explore how practitioners and policymakers from different countries, sectors and organisations see children's human rights being realised.

We asked about good practices, and innovations despite the challenges, that ensured children's human rights were upheld across key aspects of children's lives, in particular those of children whose rights are most vulnerable to being violated. In this project, we explore how practitioners and policymakers are upholding the 4Ps, with the following foci:

PROTECTION

We explore children's rights to protection from exploitation, violence and other abuses, and to effective and child-friendly interventions if these occur. Our questions seek to understand what concrete and effective measures have been enacted to protect children from violence during the pandemic.

PROVISION

We explore children's rights to growth and development, including the right to food, health care and education, play and leisure, and provision of targeted assistance—including economic assistance—to families. We also ask about the special considerations for children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, in particular for children involved in justice systems, in alternative care, and with disabilities.

PARTICIPATION

We explore a child's right to express their views freely, and to have their views given due weight when decisions are made that affect them. Children's participation and intergenerational partnerships are essential ingredients for understanding the impact of COVID-19 on children's wellbeing.

PREVENTION

We explore children's rights to social and emotional wellbeing support. Isolation under COVID-19 has been a common reality for many, and social exclusion of children can undermine their wellbeing. Supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing, and that of their families, can prevent further harms.

Foreword

Dear Friends

The past year was a difficult year. With the rapid and fatal spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all experienced various degrees of lockdowns, the loss and separation from loved ones, the near-collapse of our health systems, the downward spiral of the economy and livelihood security, deepening inequalities, and the disruption of education and progress on children's rights. On top of all of these, we also see the realities of shrinking civic spaces in the country exacerbated by the pandemic.

On the contrary, strength in solidarity is the other most important depiction of our lives under the coronavirus. In spite of all the drawbacks, we managed to rapidly adapt to the changing environment by modifying our ways of working and taking advantage of the new opportunities that emerged. We strengthened partnerships that we had built in the past years to be able to actively respond to the new crisis. We also found many ways of expressing dissent through various digital platforms and increased community-based mobilization efforts.

The use of new technologies and innovative approaches and applications such as COVID 4P Log project is very useful in hearing the views and experiences of adults, our co-advocates, who are working with and for children during the pandemic. I am thankful to all our dissemination partners in the Philippines who helped us spread the word and reach out to other organizations and communities to anonymously participate in the 8-week research: Action for the Care and Development of the Poor in the Philippines (ACAP), Samahan ng Mamamayan-Zone One Tondo,Inc. (SM-ZOTO), Break the Silence National Network, Inc., Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC Coalition), Mindanao Action Group for Children Rights (MAGCRP) now called the Alliance for Child Rights Mindanao, Child Rights Network (CRN), The Psychosocial Support and Children's Rights Resource Center (PST CRRC), Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN), and Consuelo Foundation.

It is my hope that the results of this report will be used to inform the ways of working of civil society organisations (CSOs), relevant policy makers in government offices, and the private sector towards the fulfilment of children's rights. I hope that this will help shape priorities and truly put children's rights at the center as we build back better. Also, as the Presidential elections approach, I also hope that the findings will help you make decisions about the candidates.

I would also like to add that we are happy to become part of a project that facilitates a feedback loop from children and young people to policymakers and practitioners and vice versa. It is an example of intergenerational dialogues and partnerships accomplished through non-traditional and innovative approaches that we would like to share with CSOs that we are working with in the region.

Surviving, and even thriving, during this time would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of child rights organizations. Again, on behalf of CRC Asia and the brilliant team at COVID 4P Log Project of the Inspiring Children's Futures at the University of Strathclyde led by Professor Jennifer Davidson, many thanks and let us take good care of ourselves and continue to look after one another.

Amihan Abueva
Regional Executive Director
Child Rights Coalition Asia

Report Summary:

Insights from the Philippines About Best Practices, Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Innovations in Supporting Children's Wellbeing During COVID-19

This report provides an overview of the findings gathered from the 48 respondents representing the Philippines in the last quarter of 2020. Key messages and illustrative quotes are offered in alignment with our main investigative streams – specifically:

- Effective practices and successes, challenges and lessons learned in responses to the pandemic so far;

- Best practices, challenges and innovations in protecting children from violence during the pandemic;

- Staff supervision, coping and wellbeing, including their impact on service delivery;

- Responses to children's restricted access to food, health care and schooling;

- Collaboration, transparency, flexibility and trust – learning from past emergencies;

- Children's socio-emotional wellbeing and resilience;

- Access to justice and special considerations;

- Rebuilding post-COVID-19.

This report aims to generate new insights, and spark new questions and ideas to inform, equip and strengthen policy, service and practices for and with children and their families.

This report is part of a series of Learning Reports documenting the COVID 4P Log App findings from responses across the eight weeks of questions. This COVID 4P Log Learning Report series aims to inform and equip those who seek to 'respond to children's distinct needs, and realise their full range of rights and opportunities, to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all'.[2]

2. Davidson, J.; Elsley, S.; Giraldi, M.; Goudie, A.; Hope, K.; Lyth, A.; Van Keirsbilck, B. (June 2019): Justice for Children, Justice for All: The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+ Call to Action. Glasgow: CELCIS - Inspiring Children's Futures, University of Strathclyde. https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/justiceforchildren

Spotlight Country: The Philippines

664 responses from 48 respondents

1. Manila
2. Quezon City
3. Antipolo
4. Davao City
5. Zamboanga
6. Rizal
7. Visayas
8. Pasay
9. Batangas
10. Valenzuela

19 DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS

19 SERVICE MANAGERS

10 POLICYMAKERS

The findings in this Learning Report are based on 664 responses from 48 respondents – including 19 direct service providers, 19 service managers and 10 policymakers (36 women; 11 men; 1 – other).
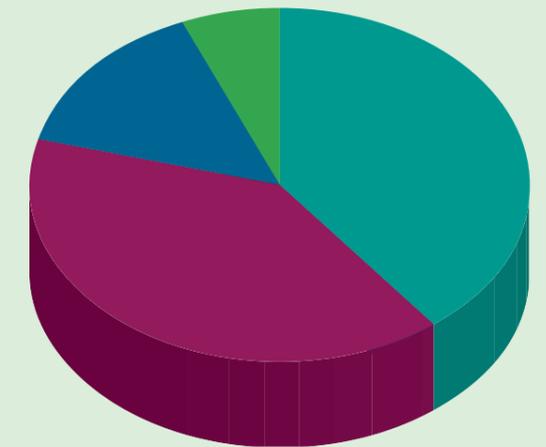
26 (54%) represented NGOs; 12 (25%) – civil society organisations (CSO); 8 (17%) – the government; 1 (2%) – the private sector; 1 (2%) – other.

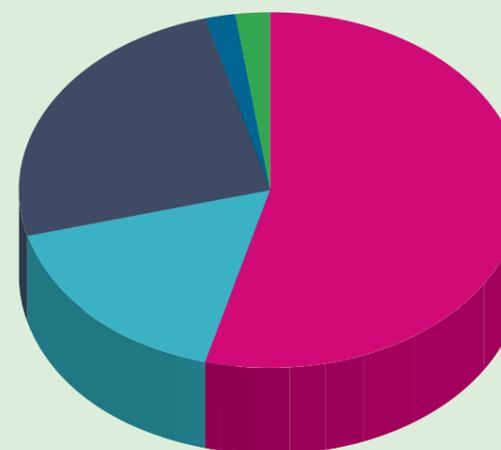27 (56%) of all respondents in this report supervised staff.
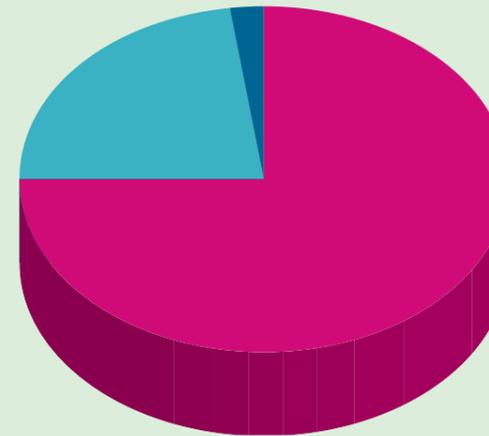
Respondents by Gender

Women	36
Men	11
Other	1

Respondents by Role

Direct Service Provider	19
Service Manager	19
Policymaker – NGO or CSO	7
Policymaker – Government	3

Organisation Type

Non-Government Organisation	26
Civil Society Organisation	12
Government	8
Private Sector	1
Other	1
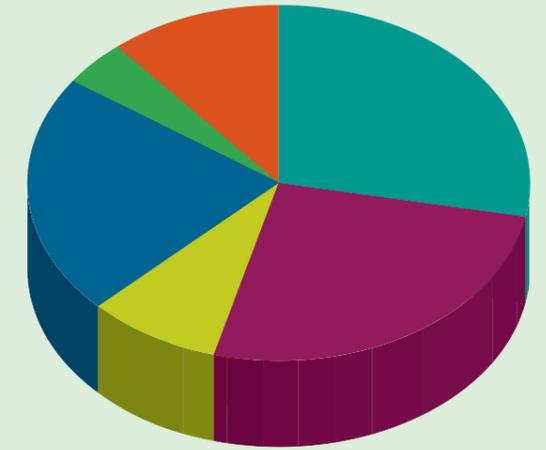
Years of Experience

0–5	13
6–10	12
11–15	4
16–20	10
21–25	2
26–30	0
30+	5

The respondents represented a wide range of sectors and areas of work – including advocacy and child rights; education; prevention from violence; community-based services; working with children with disabilities; working with urban poor communities; child and youth care; mental health; juvenile justice; and several others.

Their self-described roles included Program Manager, Registered Social Worker, Deputy Director, Professor, Educator, Public School Teacher, Country Coordinator (of an organisation), Regular Government Employee, Educator, Consultant, Community Facilitator, Project Director, Psychologist, and other.

Reflections:
Pressing Issues, Systemic Barriers and Creative and Committed Responses to Ensure Child Protection, Participation and Justice

Successes and Lessons Learned in Humanitarian Responses

Several respondents shared they had started providing humanitarian support (such as distribution of relief support) although they had not been trained in that type of work. This was a learning experience. Some respondents shared 'how unprepared development and policy advocacy groups are in humanitarian work', and how humanitarian support should be embedded within their work. Sometimes, child-friendly leisure and informational materials were added to relief packs. This was not always done, and packs sometimes included only the basic necessities.

Shrinking Civic Spaces

The shrinking civic spaces during the pandemic posed barriers to child protection, advocacy and activism, including social protests. Those restrictions, coupled with the ineffectiveness of governmental policies and systems put in place, hindered actions and mechanisms to protect and safeguard children.

Compounding Impact of School Closures, Economic Crises, Inequalities and Insufficient Funding

Issues relating to school closures, child monitoring and engagement, job loss and financial struggles were frequently reported. Several respondents shared they had programmes in place to engage parents on issues such as positive parenting and protection from abuse. However, access to digital technologies was a barrier. Respondents also shared parents were unprepared to best manage children's online study. Some respondents believed the expectations about parents' learning support were unreasonable. Financial assistance did not reach all families in need.

Swifter and More Equitable Governmental Responses Were Needed

Distribution of relief packages was one of the main strategies enacted during the pandemic to support children, including those who were most economically disadvantaged. However, there were inequities and delays in this type of support. Social amelioration programmes in the form of cash grants for the poorest were reported. The need was expressed to design programmes so that they were equitable and met the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

Creativity and Innovation

Many respondents highlighted the value of an innovative and creative approach to support children during the pandemic. Respondents also placed value on sharing innovations with partners, and being part of innovative organisations and creative discussions. A wide range of innovative practices were shared as examples of efforts to protect children from violence and promote their wellbeing. Some of those were positive parenting training; involvement of young people in child rights advocacy; administering justice online; engaging with children via virtual communication; and others.

Reflections:
Pressing Issues, Systemic Barriers and Creative and Committed Responses to Ensure Child Protection, Participation and Justice

Collaborations Between Organisations and Institutions: Positive Examples and Persisting Barriers

Examples of positive collaborations were reported. They had resulted in coordinated actions such as relief distribution, medical assistance, online service delivery, and awareness-raising programmes. Barriers to collaboration were also reported such as the lack of collaboration by government agencies, bureaucratic hurdles, corruption and the lack of resources to support need. Several respondents noted the communication by the government about COVID-19 had not been transparent and clear enough.

Listening, Reflecting, Learning

Understanding the needs of all children, including children with disabilities, and children living in remote rural areas, as well as coming up with 'creative and customised' approaches were highlighted as important.

Respondents' self-reflection and its relationship to service delivery were other prominent themes. Respondents highlighted the importance of their own learning to optimise policy and service responses during the pandemic:

- Learning to do different types of work such as emergency response work and online discussions on mental health; enhancing one's communication skills
- Learning from children and parents; learning how to better engage children in discussions
- Learning from their own 'misses' and successes ('trial and error learning')

Mobilising the Community. Involving Peers

Examples of peer support among children were mentioned such as peer-to-peer counselling. The responses also contained examples of involving youth in disseminating information on child abuse; in advocacy; in tutoring and counselling.

In the community, peer-to-peer education, community kitchens, community council responses, and other unspecified community programmes helped strengthen local systems and responses.

Agile Responses to Protect Children's and Families' Social and Emotional Wellbeing

The negative impact of stress on parents, children and providers was discussed in a number of contexts. Online learning at home was stressful for both children and parents. Children needed additional support, engagement and monitoring during online study. Not enough efforts had been directed to promoting children's stress management and coping skills.

In terms of mental health and psychosocial support, some respondents reported informational materials on psychological wellbeing had been disseminated, and wellbeing webinars – organised. The importance of engaging children in recreational activities at home and online was highlighted. Support to parents was highlighted as important, and respondents reported guiding parents on positive parenting and child protection by organising webinars and support groups.

Communication with Children and Media Use

During the pandemic, accessible information was delivered to children via printed materials added to relief packs; translations into multiple languages; and child-friendly press conferences.

Children becoming more engaged and using social media to express their views and feelings and report abuse – was highlighted by several respondents as an example of good practice and adaptation during the pandemic.

Concerns about children's safety online were also raised. Protecting children from online abuse and educating families on dangers and best practices were stressed.

Key Messages:
Learning from the Pandemic So Far

A total of 44 respondents logged answers to the Week 1 survey questions. The survey items concerned effective practices and successes in supporting children's wellbeing in both respondents' sectors and organisations, and within their own practice. Questions were also posed about the biggest challenges faced, lessons learned and recommended actions for upholding children's rights and promoting their wellbeing.

Effective Responses Within Sectors

In the Philippines, effective sectoral responses to the need to support children's wellbeing during COVID-19 included:

- Making services more accessible – for example, adapting services to be delivered online;
- Responding to child protection issues at the community level;
- Attending to the needs of children – including girls, children with disabilities and children in street situations, and other children living in poor urban communities;
- Engaging in policy advocacy;
- Drafting policies to protect children;
- Asking children about their views and experiences;
- Awareness-raising about child protection and mental health issues; and
- Cash transfers and the delivery of food packs.

Drivers of Effective Sectoral Responses

- The key drivers to those positive responses were the collaboration with local government units, NGOs and communities; advocacy and lobbying; fund-raising; regular communication and information sharing; and supportive management.
- Civil workers' dedication and commitment, and the inclusive approach to emergency responses, were also reported as important.

Effective Responses Within Organisations and Own Practice

- In their own work, respondents used online tools to engage children and parents, and maintain a safe environment; contributed to legislative advocacy and public discussions via webinars; administered justice online; and ran income generation programmes.
- Several respondents reported amplifying children's voices and ensuring they informed COVID-19 policy recommendations.
- Some respondents also had to shift to delivering relief and emergency response work.
- Respondents highlighted the importance of their own learning to optimise policy and service responses during the pandemic:
- Learning to do different types of work such as emergency response work and online discussions on mental health;
- Learning from children and parents;
- Learning from their own 'misses' and successes.

Facilitators of Adaptive Organisational Practices

Among the key facilitators of those adaptive practices were:

- Community mobilisation;
- Support leadership and administration;
- Concerted efforts by like-minded individuals;
- Links with regional and international bodies;
- Flexibility within organisations; and
- Understanding children's unique needs.

Key Messages:
Learning from the Pandemic So Far

Major Challenges to Supporting Children's Wellbeing

- Significant challenges to supporting children's wellbeing during COVID-19 were also faced. Movement restrictions; the lack of connectivity for some children; the lack of resource to meet the need; coordination issues; and misinformation and inconsistent guidelines all created difficulties with meeting children's needs and protecting their rights.

- Difficulties were also experienced with adapting services for delivery online; consistently monitoring children at home; and ensuring children's rights are prioritised. For example, some respondents believed priority-setting and budget allocation did not reflect children's needs and rights.

- As a result, concerns were voiced about children's access to quality care and essential services; exposure to violence and abuse online; mental health; and their ability to attend online classes.

Priority Areas for Improving Children's Wellbeing

Respondents identified several priority areas for better supporting children:

- More effective collaboration with national and local bodies to provide immediate services for children

- More efficient assessment of child abuse and more prompt responses by authorities

- Mobilisation of informal support networks in the community

- More fund-raising

- Learning how to better engage children and other stakeholders in discussions, and consult them about key activities

- Massive information campaigns on child safety

- Better understanding of the needs of children with disabilities, children in street situations, girls, children living in poor urban regions, and all others

- Offering mobile and tele-health services in remote and poorer regions

- More effective budget allocation to reflect need

- Improved skills in humanitarian support

Protection: Ending Violence Against Children

A total of 13 respondents answered questions in Week 2 of the survey regarding their views and experiences of protecting children from violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents were asked to reflect upon good practices and outcomes, innovations and challenges.

Good Practices in Child Protection

- A number of good practice examples and principles in protecting children from violence during COVID-19 were shared. Those included using hotlines and social media to report cases of abuse; offering webinars on parenting; carrying out online consultations with children; peer-to-peer counselling among children; and multidisciplinary child protection units in hospitals.

'Use of social media to report abuses, neglect and exploitation against children'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Online Consultation with children [...] conducting child friendly activities online'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The youth are now involved in disseminating information on child abuse and where/who to report cases that they know of. They advocate messages online with their peers.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Challenges to Child Protection

- Exposure to abuse and neglect in the home; the lack of access to devices and connectivity; the poor implementation of programmes and services; as well as community awareness were cited as barriers to child protection.

- Ineffective child protection laws and mechanisms and the lack of trust in public services, in addition to the shrinking civic spaces during the pandemic, created further barriers to activism and child protection.

'The provision of hotlines might not be enough as many times children tend to report late or not at all, what the children need are services within their reach.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The challenge is really the effectiveness of the government policies and services in place that are supposed to protect children. Until now, the best services are still being provided by private NGO service providers. There is also no trust in the police and public social work provision'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Provision: Access to Food, Health Care, Education

17 respondents offered their views of the extent to which children within their care had experienced restricted access to food, basic necessities, health care and education during the pandemic, as well as of what had been done to increase children's access to those essential rights. Those questions were asked in Week 3 of the survey.

Systemic and Structural Barriers

- Job loss and poverty; lockdown measures; delays and inequalities in governmental support and responses; and inequalities in children's access to online education were all cited among the biggest challenges to ensuring children's basic needs were met during COVID-19.

Changed Practices

- Respondents had changed their practices in a number of ways to meet those challenges – including:
- Started providing humanitarian support (for example, delivered goods to houses)
- Influenced policies
- Listened to children's concerns
- Made experimental advocacy materials

Innovations

- Urban gardening and other livelihood projects; relief distribution and cash transfers were implemented to mitigate children's restricted access to food.
- Several effective responses to meet children's basic needs were cited such as economic assistance (for example, livelihood support and cash transfers); telemedicine; paid leave for parents; and supplying children with educational materials as part of the relief distribution.

Insufficient Resources

- However, several respondents indicated that the resources were not enough to meet the need, and that services were not well planned and sustainable.

Inequities in the Access to Essential Services

- Serious concerns were also expressed about children's restricted access to schooling during the pandemic. Children without sufficient access to online technologies experienced inequities in the access to education. Respondents believed poorer access to schooling negatively impacted children's mental health and social and cognitive development.
- Respondents also reported that the education system was under-prepared and that sectoral responses were not based on needs. This negatively affected both children's and parents' wellbeing.

Restricted Access to Health Care

- Children's access to health care was also severely restricted during COVID-19. Movement restrictions, overwhelmed services, inadequate medical supplies, limited information and infection risks and fears were cited as major barriers. As a result, many children did not get medical attention, especially children with chronic health conditions.

Recommended Actions for More Effective Responses

- To better address children's needs, respondents stressed the importance of supportive LGUs; equitably designed programmes for children in vulnerable circumstances; allocating sufficient funds; better communication between LGUs, community leaders and households; and being creative in engaging children and their families.

Collaborations, Flexibility, Transparency and Trust

10 respondents addressed questions about what positive collaborations had occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic; whether flexible responses had been implemented at national and local levels; and to what extent communication had been transparent and reliable. Those questions were sent in Week 4 of the survey.

Collaboration

- Examples of positive collaborations were reported. They had resulted in coordinated actions such as relief distribution, medical assistance, online service delivery, and awareness-raising programmes.

Barriers to Collaboration

- Barriers to collaboration were also reported such as the lack of collaboration by government agencies, bureaucratic hurdles, corruption and the lack of resources to support need. Several respondents noted the communication by the government about COVID-19 had not been transparent and clear enough.

'There has been confusing communications from those tasked to implement measures about the pandemic. Data on COVID-19 cases as well are confusing and late.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Information Dissemination

- During the pandemic, accessible information was delivered to children via printed materials added to relief packs; translations into multiple languages; and child-friendly press conferences.

'Some countries conducted child friendly press conferences which are helpful to children. Other child rights groups, including child-led once, are at the forefront of making sure that the language is understandable to children. They make sure that the information is translated into different languages, including languages of minority and ethnic groups'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Prevention: Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing
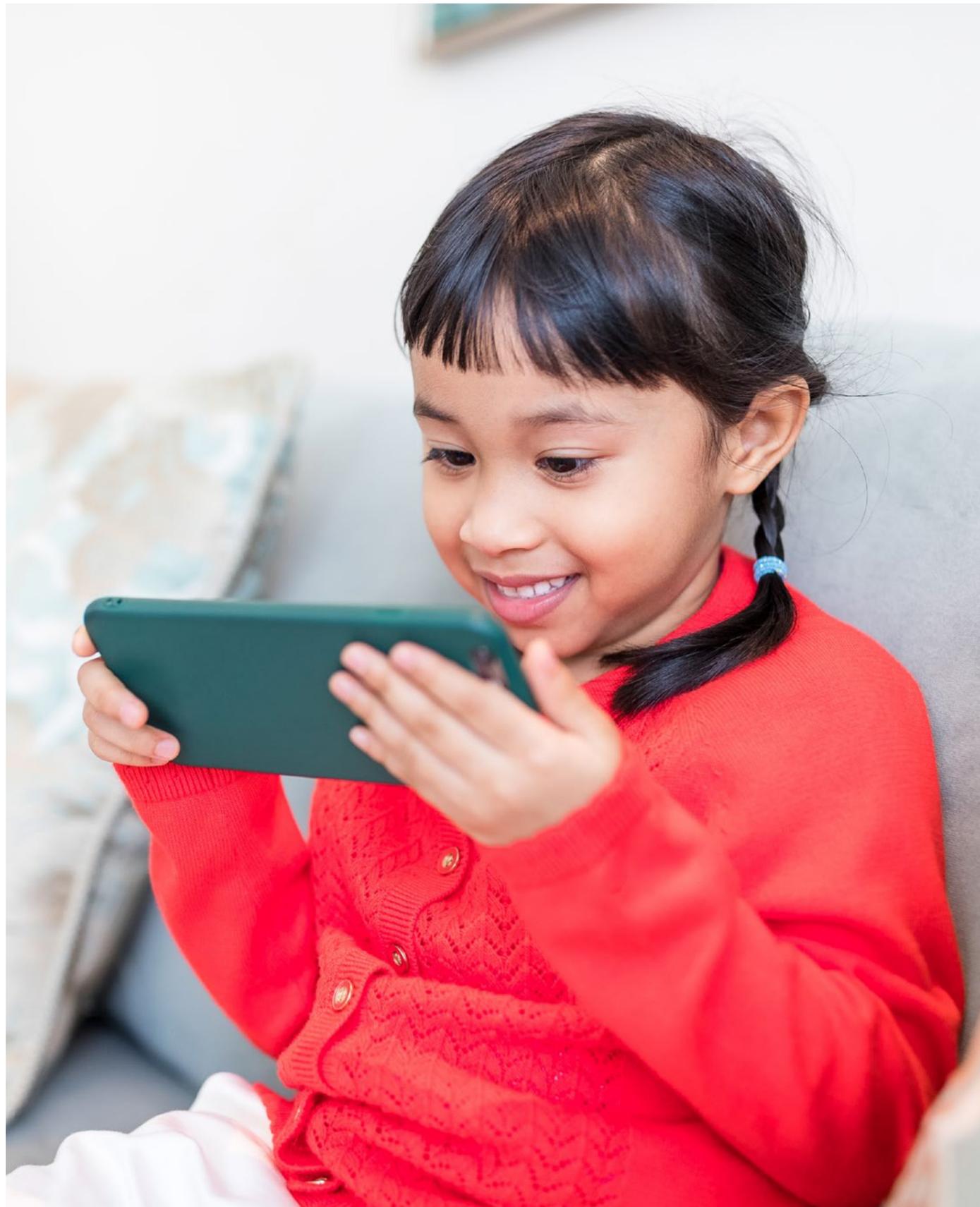
In week 5 of the survey, 8 respondents shared their views of how children's socio-emotional wellbeing and resilience had been supported during the pandemic.

Practices to Promote Children's Socio-Emotional Wellbeing During COVID-19

- Some respondents reported informational materials on psychological wellbeing had been disseminated, and wellbeing webinars – organised. The importance of engaging children in recreational activities at home and online was highlighted.

'We have collaborated with groups of psychologists and educators to develop information materials helping people to recognize that psychological and mental health are important, and disseminated numbers where people and children can call for advice, and we got some support from a telecommunications company to provide load so that the psychologists can call those requesting counseling. In addition, webinars have been organized by local community organizations to provide expert advice on how to deal better with stress and avoid depression and excessive anxiety'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'I use cellphone for counseling. I also use for sharing information sometimes I accept calls because somebody just need someone to listen to him/her.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Low Priority Given to Children's Mental and Socio-Emotional Wellbeing

- Concerns were shared about the insufficient support and attention dedicated to children's social and emotional wellbeing during the pandemic.

'There is already a growing recognition about the impact of COVID-19 to the Social and emotional well-being of children but the service is available and the measures in place is still lacking'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Access to Justice and Alternative Care.
Children's Participation.
Preparing to Rebuild Post-COVID-19

Very few responses from only 7 respondents were received in Weeks 6, 7 and 8 of the survey. Those weeks were concerned with children's access to justice; children's participation; and preparing to rebuild after COVID-19, respectively.

Justice and Alternative Care

- Court delays were reported. Examples of delivering justice online were provided.

'Only emergency or urgent motions areentertained for online filing and that has provedto be disadvantageous especially for children inconflict with the law needing judicial action.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Online filing, pleadings, hearings for specialcases and some reading of court decisions viaonline.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'They can use or adopt online hearing,announcement can be done in thorough text orcall. Or with the help of Barangay officials.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Children's Participation and Right to Play

- Examples of engaging and consulting with children were offered. The importance of developing guidelines for online safety was stressed. Several respondents believed children's right to play should have been given more consideration.

'Some children were mobilized online fordialogues through community partners andwith some support like communication and foodallowance'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Popularize children's right to play among adults'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Rebuilding Post-COVID-19

- The importance of prioritising children's access to mental health care was highlighted, in addition to lobbying for government funding:

'We are lobbying for government funding to children's rights at the national and sub-nationallevels'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Their input as stakeholders in accessing mentalhealth services is requested.'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

In-Depth Findings and Illustrative Quotes

A more detailed analysis and illustrative quotes from our respondents are provided in support of some of the key themes and research topics.

- Lessons from the pandemic so far: effective practices, innovations, challenges and lessons learned (Week 1)

- Protecting children from violence (Week 2)

- Staff supervision and wellbeing (Weeks 1 and 2)

- Children's access to basic necessities, health care and schooling (Week 3)

- Collaboration, trust, flexibility and transparency (Week 4)

- Prevention: children's social and emotional wellbeing (Week 5)

- Access to justice. Children's participation. Rebuilding post-COVID-19 (Weeks 6-8)

Learning from the Pandemic So Far:
Effective Practices, Innovations, Challenges and Lessons Learned (Week 1)

Respondents were asked to share what effective practices had been implemented at sectoral and organisational levels to support children's wellbeing during the pandemic, as well as what factors facilitated those. Questions about the most significant challenges faced and about what actions would have resulted in better outcomes for children were also posed.

Effective Sectoral Responses

'As a teacher, before the opening of classes we had conducted a Mental Health Psychological Support Service for the students wherein each students were given a module that contains different activities to assess students' mental and well-being during this times. It also provides the students tips and suggestions on how they will be able to adapt to the current situation that we have and to how thet [they] will be able to manage their own mental health in this difficult situation.'

Service Manager, Government, Philippines

Effective Responses in Own Work or Organisation

Online justice administered for survivors of sexual harassment (Philippines);

'we ensure safe spaces for children online and offline thru privacy protection'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

'We have been able to guide parents on how to protect their children, especially while they are online'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'We are trying our best to learn from children, from other people, organizations, and also from our targets and misses in the application of childrens participation [participation]. These inputs into our continuing work with other stakeholders.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'I think it is the shift to providing relief and response work. We are not good at it as we have been doing advocacy but still we learned so much'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Facilitators of Effective Responses in Own Work

'the administration is supportive of our efforts, financially, policy wise and morally'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

'the leadership fully supports our mechanism in delivering justice online through budget and moral support'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

'In our past experiences during emergencies, we observed that most relief packs address to the needs of the entire family like rice, canned goods, although these are basic necessities, too, we felt that children's needs during these times are most often neglected or not prioritized. Thus, we tried to fill-in this gap.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Several respondents highlighted the importance of mobilising community resources such as community health volunteers:

'Mobilizing our community leaders and staff as response team,clustering of areas, baselining of affected families and resource generation.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The community health volunteers first went through the basic regulations of COVID 19, hand washing,mask wearing and keeping distance so they were able to disseminate the same to the caregivers and their children through household demonstrations of the same'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Biggest Challenges

'The biggest challenge was supporting children mostly on online means. At the start you will need to check their connectivity access and teach them how to use online platforms for more formal meetings, consultations and learning activities.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Second is how priorities and budgets are centered on the pandemic, exacerbating my first point about access to services restriction.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Concerns about staff also related to providers' own wellbeing and coping. For example, a service manager working for the government from the U.S. shared that staff had been struggling with balancing childcare and other personal responsibilities with work duties. A direct service provider working at a civil society organisation from the Philippines also raised concerns about staff coping and wellbeing during the pandemic and the impact of this on staff's capacities to provide for children and young people:

'We advocates and activists should also take care of ourselves as we grapple with the pandemic. We should practice it also when we preach to children and young people about mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. This real life social and economic impact of the pandemic has also affected us, limiting our capacities to actively promote children's rights and well-being. How do we pour out when we don't have enough resources to support our own families? How do we maintain the campaigns and advocacies when funders cut back on their support to local NGOs? What do we do about people and children suffering when we ourselves are suffering too? These are challenging questions we had to respond to especially in the early months of the lockdown.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Third, this may be particular to our context and in countries all around the world, social movements are also challenged due to the shrinking civic spaces, sadly, socially and now even physically. Social protests are now difficult to mount and even when we express ourselves in social media, it may not also be safe. This time also endangers our lives as activists and the future of activism.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Effective Practices and Lessons Learned in Supporting Children's Wellbeing During COVID-19

'We are trying our best to learn from children, from other people, organizations, and also from our targets and misses in the application of childrens participation. These inputs into our continuing work with other stakeholders.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

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Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

www.InspiringChildrensFutures.org

Impact on Children

A direct service provider working at an NGO in the Philippines highlighted the pros and cons of children's increased social media use during the pandemic:

'As observed, children became engaged more in social media in which they can share their feelings and thoughts, but in the other side it also became a medium for online sexual abuse and exploitation especially for children in the communities.'

Breaches of Children's Rights

'However, there were reports of breaches in children's protection as a result of the quarantine measures imposed by the government. The pandemic also brought about challenges in child protection (e.g. online abuse and exploitation) and child participation (restriction in children's movement or not being informed or consulted at all).'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Other respondents shared that children's right to be heard had often been violated:

'Children's right to be heard / child participation has always been difficult to uphold'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Because even though they are children, they still have the right to be heard and to be given the chance to air out what they wanted the adults to do for them..'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

Lessons Learned

One example was setting up a mobile health clinic giving out free medical care in poor communities (Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines).

The need for more effective collaboration and stakeholder involvement was also highlighted:

'we would have been more effective in working with our partners at the national and local levels for the provision of immediate services and support to children and their families.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

The need to involve children in service design and delivery was mentioned by several respondents:

'To include the children and their inputs and insights in all activities related to children, from conception, execution and assessment.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'We trained children who willingly to volunteer in tutoring other children. It's a peer to peer approach or child to child approach for education and awareness raising on children's Rights'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Maybe consult all stakeholders, especially the children, before doing a plan...'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

Creativity was also highlighted as being important:

'We could not really do more during this time, we had to be creative to be able to do more because of all the movement restrictions.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Recommended Actions

'Understanding the different situations of children/adolescents', children with disabilities, children in street situations, children in rural areas, girls, children who identify as LGBT, children with migrant parents, etc'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Asking them to them directly and not assume that as adults we know what they want'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Through online Children's consultation that we have gathered information About How Children think and feel About their situation and observations in the community during this time of pandemic. These information helps us understand and see emerging issues of Children so we can also develop plans and actions accordingly to their needs.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Third, this may be particular to our context and in countries all around the world, social movements are also challenged due to the shrinking civic spaces, sadly, socially and now even physically. Social protests are now difficult to mount and even when we express ourselves in social media, it may not also be safe. This time also endangers our lives as activists and the future of activism.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Because even though they are children, they still have the right to be heard and to be given the chance to air out what they wanted the adults to do for them..'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

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Protecting Children from Violence (Week 2)

This set of responses was logged in Week 2 of the survey, and concerns respondents' experiences of protecting children from violence during the pandemic – including changed practices, innovations, barriers and impact on children.

Innovative Practices in Response to Child Protection Challenges

'Learning modules for parents, specifically positive discipline in everyday parenting, was revised to adapt key messages and tips for parents on how to support their children given the pandemic.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The youth are now involved in disseminating information on child abuse and where/who to report cases that they know of. They advocate messages online with their peers.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Good Practices in Protecting Children from Violence

Self-help groups of parents with disabilities promoting the rights of children with disabilities and working with the local authorities through online activities (Service Manager, NGO, Philippines);

One direct service provider working at a civil society organisation in the Philippines, however, shared:

'I did not see any innovative approach at least from my purview. Those that were working before the pandemic are now working double time. Examples of which are the child protection units in the hospitals and helplines.'

Good Practices and Impact on Children

One respondent, however, commented that hotlines were insufficient to address those challenges and that more accessible services were required:

'The provision of hotlines might not be enough as many times children tend to report late or not at all, what the children need are services within their reach.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Mainly webinars given to parents and carers'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'the organization of peer to peer counseling among children and the multidisciplinary child protection units in hospitals'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Provision of the basic needs of children during pandemic.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Use of social media to report abuses, neglect and exploitation against children'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Online consultations with children were also reported:

'Online Consultation with children [...] conducting child friendly activities online'[3][4]

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Policies and Systems Put in Place to Protect Children

One respondent, a direct service provider from an NGO in the Philippines, highlighted that policies and systems at the local government and NGO levels had been put in place to protect children:

'I've experienced that some local government units and some NGOs at the local level are ensuring that systems and policies (i.e. ordinance, iec) are in placed to fully protect and safeguard the children. [...] Although this aspect is more of at the response level, it's somehow lessen the potential effect of violence to the children since they ensure that the system is in place.'

Participation of Children and Adults

'Children have people to talk about their worries, not only to report about violations.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'the organization of peer to peer counseling among children'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Ineffective Child Protection Laws, Policies and Service Responses

'Let me cite a specific case. So there was a case of extreme violence against children in our country. You can google Fabel Pineda's case. It was really challenging not only could we not stage a protest as expression of our indignation, but it was also particularly difficult during this time because of the preeminence of politics in the country. The case died just like that. It is sad

because even when we promote child helplines and tell children to 'report, report, report' the existing laws and mechanisms could not protect them.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The challenge is really the effectiveness of the government policies and services in place that are supposed to protect children. Until now, the best services are still being provided by private NGO service providers. There is also no trust in the police and public social work provision'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Abuses against Children in the Home

Those included neglect, exposure to violence and poor parenting practices:

'Challenges in immediate response to VAC [violence against children] at home'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Verbal abuse physical abuse when for the families in the community is normal because that is how they discipline their children. Neglect too because sometimes they just lived their children going outside just to play without mask sometimes without dress. Playing mud, dirty water.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Barriers to Home Visits and Child and Family Monitoring

'Home visit can facilitate transmission of virus. It is very high risk to field implementers as well as to the people to be visited in the houses. Failure to do home visits would lead increased in number of children continued to be abused inside their homes'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Health System Pressures

'For primary care, this has been made difficult by the lack of investment in a trained and robust health human resources even before covid-19. The other thing is that the health system was not really prepared even at the tertiary level, displacing children and young people of the health and child protection services when the health facilities took over in the care of covid patients.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

3. https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/stories/pandemic-participation-youth-activism-online-covid-19-crisis
4. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2020/12/young-human-rights-defenders-adapting-to-covid-19/

Perspectives on Protecting Children from Violence During COVID-19

'I've experienced that some local government units and some NGOs at the local level are ensuring that systems and policies (i.e. ordinance, iec) are in placed to fully protect and safeguard the children. [...] Although this aspect is more of at the response level, it's somehow lessen the potential effect of violence to the children since they ensure that the system is in place.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'Poor implementation of programs and services, quarantine guidelines, community awareness, data, politics and economics, and very dependent at the national government'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The provision of hotlines might not be enough as many times children tend to report late or not at all, what the children need are services within their reach.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

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Impact on Children

'Since we are notbalso [not also] allowed to do home visitations due to tge [the] pandemic, it is really hard to check on the children's welfare especially those who have no means to communicate. It is hard for them to report cases of abuse especially those happening in their homes and if perpetrators are their own family members. What we did is to ask some neighbors to check on some children who we are suspecting to be suffering in their homes.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Innovative Solutions

'What we did is to ask some neighbors to check on some children who we are suspecting to be suffering in their homes.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Adapting Positive Parenting Training

'Learning modules for parents, specifically positive discipline in everyday parenting, was revised to adapt key messages and tips for parents on how to support their children given the pandemic.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The youth are now involved in disseminating information on child abuse and where/who to report cases that they know of. They advocate messages online with their peers.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

No Changes in Practices

'There is no changes in practices when it comes to ways of working during this pandemic'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'I haven't seen one yet'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

Barriers to the Delivery of Good Practice

'Poor implementation of programs and services, quarantine guidelines, community awareness, data, politics and economics, and very dependent at the national government'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Staff Supervision and Wellbeing

This set of responses captures our respondents' experiences of receiving professional supervision during the pandemic and engaging in peer support and self-care practices.

Impact of Professional Supervision Received During the Pandemic

'My supervisor's openness to innovative ideas and worker's wellbeing was instrumental to our ability to think creatively about the situation and how we can do our work better.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

One respondent described the negative impact hindered supervision had on their work:

'I have a supervisor but she was not able to do her job as she used to. She said that her stress level was negatively affected by the pandemic, so I have to take that into consideration and can work around it. Especially with the pandemic issues being relatively new, it was harder for me to do my job because I I was, in a way, left to my own devices.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

The Impact of Not Having Had Supervision

'It caused different understanding on certain strategic points which makes decision making difficult'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Impact of Stresses and Anxieties on Respondents' Work and Wellbeing

'It is hard to say because my work is actually the reason for the stress. There is so much to do related to child rights during this pandemic and everything seems to be urgent.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Impact of Engaging in Self-care and/or Peer Support

'Stress Debriefing with Colleagues/Rest'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'It gives me the feeling of not being alone and gives me company and love and secured'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Impact of Not Having Received Adequate Care or Support During the Pandemic

'Feeling down and unproductive'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Im unmotivated, possible i quit my job and go home to the province'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Mental fatigue increased'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'burnout/feeling the weight of the work'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Children's Access to Basic Necessities, Health Care and Schooling (Week 3)

This set of questions in Week 3 focused on how children's access to food and basic necessities, health care and schooling had been hindered during the pandemic, as well as what had been done to address those issues. Respondents were also asked to share examples of innovative practices in those areas.

Biggest Challenges to Children's Accessing Essential Services and Exercising their Rights

'Poverty! Before pandemic this is the main reason why we are in the communities. At this time, we can only do so little due to the restrictions in many levels ei LGU, Nat Govt.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

Respondents also often cited the long-standing inequities in children's access to food, technology and other basic necessities:

'the confinement measures that need to be made because of the pandemic displaced many children from tertiary hospitals that they go to for their chronic disease, the provision of health services across the lifespan got disrupted, and those children with parents in the informal workforce and insecure jobs in the urban areas were financially affected by the pandemic, hence limiting children's access to food'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'For poor and below the poverty line families who were also employed under the â€œgigâ€ informal economy that was primarily hit by the pandemic, the overall income and the ability to buy food was greatly affected. The local government support was available but with some delays and inequities. The food packages contain only a limited number of food and are usually instant meals that are usually unhealthy.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'For education, it's the access on it considering that classes are being done online... Some children do not have access on gadgets and internet connection for them to study...'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

Those challenges had a range of negative effects on both families and on children's school attendance, performance and pressure:

'Education. Children were shocked about the sudden pause of regular schooling. Though the shift to online schooling had benefits, it also had disadvantages. In the Philippines, there were expectations of parents to help with the online and modular education of their children. This puts children of low-income families in a disadvantageous situation. Parents who have only reached primary-level education say that they are unable to support their children as tutors nor can they hire somebody to do the same. This gap meant a lot to poor children too, as the delay means prolonged schooling that will hinder them from immediately gaining their diplomas and begin to support their families as bread winners. The uncertainty has also caused some children to have uncertainties about their ambitions.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'They need communication, because they are more stress on their modular/online classes. They need to learn how to handle pressure or stress.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Health care - This is the impact that is the most obvious of all. Let me cite some examples. We know a number of children that have chronic diseases through an organized parents' organizations. They report to us that the children needed to be prevented from getting their routine check ups from a public general hospital that caters to covid patients. Though they were given a provisional referral pathway to another facility, it was only a few months after the lockdown began. The children were also unable to take their medications on time. Here is another example. my friend's baby nephew, whose parents are minimum wage earners, had to be admitted to a newborn intensive care unit. The public specialty hospital was physically inaccessible and unavailable as the baby got sick during the extreme lockdown. The parents were forced to bring the baby to a private hospital who charged them exorbitant fees, making them unable to decide to undergo a specialized operation for the child. After a few days and hundred thousand pesos of bills that accumulated, the baby died, leaving the parents with debts and sorrows.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Most Severely Impacted Groups

'Children in street situations, children who do not have favorable living conditions (with risks for mental and any type of stressors)'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Children living in urban poor communities, children with Disabilities'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Changed Practices in Response to Challenges

'Maybe we should have put more work in helping community organizations set up their own community kitchens, community peer to peer education work, and contributed in primary care and strengthening local structures and systems. The problem with some global and regional organizations at times is that our feet are not laid on the ground. I think that should change for a truly coherent advocacies and systems work.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'We started to provide humanitarian support although it was not really part of our program'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'We made some experimental advocacy material on this issue.... It has suggested interventions that the institutions can do.'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

'Influence policies'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Two respondents also shared challenges they had faced in delivering services and support optimally:

'We mainly operate thru our local organization. At this time, support and or monitoring of implementation/s is a great challenge.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'They are demotivated to do what they need to do, they are always tired, they wanted to be alone. That is why being their adult support i need to help them, they just wanted an ear to listen which their parents can't give because both of them are working or they are shy to express what they feel to their parents.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

A service manager from a civil society organisation in the Philippines shared their thoughts about how humanitarian responses could be strengthened:

'Strengthen community mechanisms on educational and health support. During times like this, I am humbled and challenged by how unprepared development and policy advocacy groups are in humanitarian work. While we are limited, it would help to have a humanitarian track for our work to help us contribute well during emergency situations.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Effective Responses

'During relief operation, they should include food for children, toys or any educational for children for them to be entertained and forget what they are facing.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

A number of examples of effective collaboration, communication and prompt responses to children's needs, including child protection issues, were also shared:

'Child friendly materials related to the impacts of the pandemic to children and their families'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Three examples of appropriate policy responses were shared: keeping schools open; no lockdowns; and paid leave for parents:

'Child rights organizations and institutions allowing paid leaves for parents who need to provide support to their children taking online classes'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Economic Assistance Initiatives

'Social Amelioration Program in the form of cash grants to the poorest populace'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Ayuda (funds from government for distribution by LGUs – local government units or barangays in the form of cash and food and safety supplies like hand disinfectants'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

Responses to Children's Restricted Access to Food

Relief distribution:

'We conducted relief distribution to affected communities'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Economic assistance such as cash transfers:

'Provided Cash/Relief Assistance and distribution of vegetables seeds'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

Urban gardening and other livelihood projects:

'Aside of our urban gardening we mobilize a group to participate a livelihood project, we made PPE, masks and other sewing products to provide income to family.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

Awareness-raising and empowerment:

'Some local government units organized orientations for mothers on the importance of breastfeeding'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'The government is providing cash transfer program, however it is not enough.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'I am not sure if the government has taken any success on this'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

What Has Affected How Satisfied You Have Been with the Responses to Children's Restricted Access to Food?

Long-term programmes were started:

'The breastfeeding orientation program is long-term [...]'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Insufficient resources to satisfy need:

'I'm dissatisfied because we don't have enough resources to cover the needs of affected families'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Considering the finances, the organization can only provide/support our target families in the communities we operate. The reality on the ground is that everyone not only the poorest of the poor is affected.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'The services are not well planned and aren't sustainable. Parents of these children have lost their jobs or source of income yet the government only provided for once or twice release of assistance and the assistance did not cover all those in difficult situations.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Impact of the Restricted Access to Health Care on Children's Wellbeing

Receiving inadequate or no medical treatment:

'Some children died not getting any medical attention'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'I know of children with seizure disorders that has to contend with spasticity because of in availability of medicines hand physical therapy'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Disrupted help-seeking due to fear of COVID-19 and uncertainty about available services:

'Increased anxiety or families that do not know the value of and availability public services (basic vaccines) content themselves with finding their own means of surviving health challenges'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Mostly reported are vaccines, mental health and check ups for younger children. Some were afraid to go to clinics and hospitals knowing the high risks of acquiring COVID-19 in health facilities.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

What Has Affected How Satisfied You Have Been with How the Healthcare Provision Has Adapted During COVID-19?

Delays in the delivery of medical supplies, including PPE and medications:

'Backlog/delays in the delivery of ppe, pcr test kits and needed medicines to the public hospitals'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Limited information:

'Information is limited in reach and also in terms of format and content'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Facilities were ill prepared, on panick mode or were still at confused guidelines.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'It's hard to put blame on anybody. Most are not present most are not prepared for a medical emergency off the scale. Still should have made plans on how to cater to other medical concerns aside from coronavirus'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Impact of the Restricted Access to Schooling on Children's Wellbeing

'In one of consultation with children that I attended, the feel stress since most of them cannot keep up with their classmate who have the means to do online learning (i.e., internet, mobile phone).'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

One respondent commented that there could be a link between child suicides and the access to the Internet:

'There are cases of suicide among school aged children. According to some reports, these cases are attributed to their schooling activities and access to the internet.'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

'There were impacts on developmental/cognitive and social skills of children. Psychologists see that the second wave of COVID-19 will be the long term impact of the pandemic on mental health and psychosocial well-being.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

What Has Affected How Satisfied You Have Been with How the Education Provision Has Adapted During COVID-19?

'The infrastructure for education is very poor'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Not based on who needs what'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Human Rights Violations and Inequities in Accessing Essential Goods and Services During COVID-19

'For poor and below the poverty line families who were also employed under the informal economy that was primarily hit by the pandemic, the overall income and the ability to buy food was greatly affected. The local government support was available but with some delays and inequities. The food packages contain only a limited number of food and are usually instant meals that are usually unhealthy.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Some children died not getting any medical attention'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'For education, it's the access on it considering that classes are being done online... Some children do not have access on gadgets and internet connection for them to study...'

Policymaker, Government, Philippines

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Collaboration, Trust, Flexibility and Transparency (Week 4)

This set of questions sought to understand to what extent positive collaborations had occurred during the pandemic, as well as how well information had been disseminated.

Transparent Communication

'There has not been enough transparency in the communication. The government says there are enough hospital beds and equipment but when there is a person who is sick, you cannot find a bed for that sick person. Also the communication has been mainly threatening and coercive'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'There has been confusing communications from those tasked to implement measures about the pandemic. Data on COVID-19 cases as well are confusing and late.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Trust-Building Actions

'The government issued confusing guidelines, pronouncemens and data about the pandemic situation and blamed the citizen whenever covid cases go higher.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Continued Services During the Pandemic

'There are not enough social services because the needs are so big and we are losing so much due to corruption and ineptitude of high government officials. The leaders of this government don't care about the people, they want to hold on to power. They are more interested in destroying any criticism and dissent, rather than serving the well-being of children and families.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Advocacy Work Impacted

'We have to find new ways to do our work, being able to reach more people and decision makers, how to get the necessary information and how Best to communicate our ideas'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Providing Information about COVID-19

'Some countries conducted child friendly press conferences which are helpful to children. Other child rights groups, including child-led once, are at the forefront of making sure that the language is understandable to children. They make sure that the information is translated into different languages, including languages of minority and ethnic groups'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Roles (Not) Recognised as Essential Work

'NGOs, DPOs for our particular concerns have important roles in coordinating and networking to inform the government but the government looks at us as nuisance and complaining too much instead of monitors to remind them what affected sectors are excluded in their services. Also the importance of our recommendations as workers on the ground.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Prevention: Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Week 5)

In week 5 of the survey, we asked questions about how children's socio-emotional wellbeing and resilience had been promoted during the pandemic, as well as about the extent to which they had been prioritised.

Children's and Families' Wellbeing Impacted by the Pandemic

'Because of the pandemic, children were not allowed to go out to the communities. Children were not able socialized and develop their well being.'

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'I wonder about these for children across ages. For instance, infant and you g children might have missed out on some services that have irreversible impacts. For instance, in healthcare, the lack of nutrition support for children in their first 1,000 days of life. While a year of non-optimal online education and lack of play and recreation might be short but I believe what the children missed would have a huge impact on their coping skills and psychosocial well-being moving forward.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Also, a policymaker from an NGO in the Philippines shared concerns about the negative impact of home schooling on children and parents:

'Have raised with the Education department how they are unwittingly contributing to child abuse with all the modules they left for parents to assist the learners with. The volume is just so unreasonable, stressing both parent and learner that they clash due to tight deadlines. In the end, it results to forcing the child to comply with the modules deadline, sometimes even get spanking.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Are coping on their own especially those whose parents or breadwinners are experiencing difficulties in finding a source of income for the basic needs of their respective families.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Attending to Children's Wellbeing

Awareness-raising, education, signposting and referrals:

'We have collaborated with groups of psychologists and educators to develop information materials helping people to recognize that psychological and mental health are important, and disseminated numbers where people and children can call for advice, and we got some support from a telecommunications company to provide load so that the psychologists can call those requesting counseling. In addition, webinars have been organized by local community organizations to provide expert advice on how to deal better with stress and avoid depression and excessive anxiety'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'We refer to BCPC officer if there's a concern about children'

Direct Service Provider, NGO, Philippines

Supporting Children's and Parents' Resilience

'Supporting parents and caregivers is important. For example, Working parents who are given flexible working hours or those who are able to keep their jobs, are more equipped with knowledge and skills to Overcome the social and emotional challenges faced by children'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'The outpouring of efforts by individuals, companies and NGO to provide support for children and communities during the pandemic has helped to make our people more resilient. This has also pushed government to become more responsive to the needs of the people'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Role of Digital Technologies

'In a limited way, technology can help children cope up with the stresses they experience, especially if their online time is properly managed.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'I use cellphone for counseling. I also use for sharing information sometimes I accept calls because somebody just need someone to listen to him/her.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Concerns About the Insufficient Support for Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Three respondents stated that there were insufficient resources and support available to support those needs:

'More children and parents are very stressed. There are not enough resources being put into this. There are some NGO efforts to address this but the needs are bigger than what you can put together'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'Children who are empowered are you speaking out. They are bringing the issue for discussion and action. However, Those who Need help the most Do not get the needed support'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'Practitioners of children's wellbeing are not considered as essential service providers even prior to covid. This invisibility made it difficult to make their services a priority, even when the country's meager resources could only afford to provide relief for only the most basic of necessities.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'There is already a growing recognition about the impact of COVID-19 to the Social and emotional well-being of children but the service is available and the measures in place is still lacking'

Policymaker, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

'No because there is a complete ignorance of these concerns. In the Philippines, advocacy groups and NGOs providing services are vibrant and able to identify and advocate to government of these. In addition, I believe that as my mentor used to tell me 'we, advocates and activists do not have the monopoly of love of country, as there are people in the government who are working hard for the people, even behind the scenes. The problem lies in the disjointed and incoherence of policies and systems in place. The government is only slowly recognizing how to operationalize the concept of whole-government approach to health and education which is key to truly delivering for children's well-being and legal rights.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Access to Justice. Children's Participation. Rebuilding Post-COVID-19 (Weeks 6 – 8)

Very few responses were received in the final three weeks of the survey, which aimed to explore children's access to justice and participation, as well as what would be helpful in rebuilding for the future after COVID19.

Justice and Alternative Care

Court delays and their impact:

'Only emergency or urgent motions are entertained for online filing and that has proved to be disadvantageous especially for children in conflict with the law needing judicial action.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Court delays and innovations:

'Online filing, pleadings, hearings for special cases and some reading of court decisions via online.'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

'They can use or adopt online hearing, announcement can be done in thorough text or call. Or with the help of Barangay officials.'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Children's Participation

Children's views about education being sought:

'Some children were mobilized online for dialogues through community partners and with some support like communication and food allowance'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

What support, if any, has been provided to children who, because of COVID19, have not been able to access their education either in person or online?

'None'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Has an assessment of the impact on children's rights been undertaken, which has informed a policy decision related to COVID19? Give us an example:

'There have been sporadic surveys conducted by different non government orgs. I think it is best to somehow harmonize efforts in the conduct of these surveys so that a comprehensive reach of the children in different situations may be consulted.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Partnerships with children and their impact on COVID-19 decision-making:

'The insights of children, their needs and issues, were shared with adult service providers in their communities.'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Plans for improving children's experiences online:

'We are developing safety guidelines for children's participating in online activities and webinars'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

Please tell us how the importance of children's friendships and their right to play have been considered in policy and practice decisions during COVID19:

'Least priority in policy decisions'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

It should be considered and families and communities should facilitate safe ways for children to interact with one another but keeping in mind that the Covid virus is still very prevalent

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

I don't think there is any activity related to reslind [respond?] to this concern.

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

Please tell us about any ways that children's friendships and their right to play could be more effectively prioritised in COVID19 responses?

'A need for open safe spaces for children!'

Service Manager, NGO, Philippines

'Popularize children's right to play among adults'

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

Rebuilding Post-COVID-19

In rebuilding for the future after COVID19, it can be helpful to consider how we can prioritise high quality provision of services for the children and families facing the greatest adversities. This might include emphasising new approaches, services and policies for children. Are you and your colleagues discussing this?

'Mental health services for children and youth need to be prioritized.'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

Please tell us how children, families and carers are involved in these discussions, if at all.

'Their input as stakeholders in accessing mental health services is requested.'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

In rebuilding for the future after COVID19, it can be helpful to consider how to establish the clearest distribution of responsibilities among communities and public administrations to support children facing adversity. Are you and your colleagues already discussing this?

'discussing the mental health needs of youth with staff teachers students (youth) alumni'

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

In rebuilding for the future after COVID19, it can be helpful to consider how political leadership and commitment for children's wellbeing will be secured in the years ahead. Are you and your colleagues already discussing this?

'We are lobbying for government funding to children's rights at the national and sub-national levels'

Policymaker, NGO, Philippines

A Note of Caution

While the survey generated useful insights into the respondents' work in relation to children, young people and families, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to a number of factors.

- **The numbers of respondents are modest, so the findings may not be representative of the experiences and challenges faced in those countries or sectors.**

- **The survey engaged practitioners and policymakers only. The findings may not reflect children's or their caregivers' views.**

- **The findings reported here have been produced by the COVID 4P Log research team and, due to the anonymised format of the smartphone app survey, the findings cannot be shared with the respondents for commentary or review.**

- **The findings are derived from a short-form survey and lack context. Respondents' engagement with the survey varied, which may have affected the completeness of the data.**

- **We are aware some respondents had difficulties with engaging with the app due to workload pressures and technical issues, which might have affected their response rates.**

About this Report

This Learning Report has been produced by the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK. Inspiring Children's Futures, with its many partners, has a strong track record of multi-level, multi-sector global engagement, policy development and practice improvement.

This Learning Report is part of a series of reports on the findings of the COVID 4P Log smartphone app. Together, the reports from this series form the second of a three-part 'Inspiring Children's Futures in Light of COVID 4P Log smartphone app survey.

This programme is gathering evidence on protecting children's wellbeing in past epidemics; informing better policies and practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; and influencing change in the long shadow that COVID-19 will cast over the recovery phases ahead.

With our partners, we are strengthening global, national and local approaches to ensure that we are collectively delivering on the Justice for Children, Justice for All SDG 16+ Call to Action to "respond to children's distinct needs, and realise their full range of rights and opportunities, to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all".

Inspiring Children's Futures support(s) the Sustainable Development Goals