
**External Evaluation of
International Justice Mission's
Program to Combat Sex Trafficking of
Children in Cambodia, 2004-2014**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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About the Consultant

Dr. Robin N. Haarr has been working for more than 15 years with UN organizations and government entities to conduct assessment, mapping, and evaluation research and to develop data-driven policy and programme recommendations. She also has expertise in conducting capacity building trainings related to research and policy and program development. She has worked extensively on child protection and social welfare systems of alternative care institutions/shelters; violence against children and women; human trafficking and exploitation; victim support services and protections; access to justice and justice system responses; and women's and child rights. She has worked on these issues with UN Women, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, International Labour Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation of Europe, Swiss Cooperation Office, and the US Department of State/US Embassies in countries throughout Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, the Pacific, and in Africa. Her dedication and leadership to address women and children's issues has led to important legislative and policy changes, program development, and resources allocation that benefits children, women, families, and communities. Contact: robinhaarr@yahoo.com

Executive Summary

International Justice Mission Overview

International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global organization with headquarters (HQ) in Washington, DC, USA that works to protect the poor from various forms of violence throughout the developing world. IJM employs a global team of attorneys, investigators, social workers, and community activists who work in nearly 20 communities throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia. To accomplish their mission, IJM partners with local authorities to rescue victims of violence, bring criminals to justice, restore survivors, and strengthen justice systems.

International Justice Mission in Cambodia

In 2000, IJM began documenting and investigating cases of CSEC in Cambodia. Initial assessments conducted by IJM staff revealed the prevalence of CSEC was quite high and children easily accessible, and it was openly available in certain areas of Svay Pak, Toul Kork, and along Street 63 in Phnom Penh. In 2002, IJM began talks with the Royal Cambodia Government about the CSEC problem; and in 2004, IJM officially opened its Cambodia Field Office in Phnom Penh and began implementing its Program to Combat Sex Trafficking of Children in Cambodia (hereinafter referred to as “Program”). Over the past decade (2004-2014) IJM’s Cambodia Field Office has focused the Program in three target areas - Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville.

IJM’s aim is to build political will and capacity to protect the poor from the targeted form of violence, and to train, resource, and mobilize government and community partners to do the same. IJM’s unique model is called *Justice System Transformation (JST)*. IJM provides direct services by working in partnership with government leaders and public justice system entities to improve the capacities of the public justice system to effectively respond to CSEC, but also to address gaps and barriers that exist in the public justice system in an effort to change the system as a whole. IJM’s Program focused on using *Collaborative Casework* to identify and investigate suspected cases of CSEC, provide collected evidence to local authorities, advocate for the arrest and prosecution of sex traffickers, and facilitate the rescue and referral of child sex trafficking victims to agencies that provide assistance for recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration. IJM coupled their *Collaborative Casework* with a *System Reform Approach* which included capacity building of government partners and public justice system entities to change and strengthen the public justice system to handle and respond to CSEC. In IJM’s system reform phase, IJM continues collaborative casework and adds an intense focus on strengthening the criminal justice system.

This approach has enabled IJM to identify places in the public justice system where laws are not being enforced in CSEC cases, knowledge gaps and patterns of dysfunction exist, incidents of corruption occur, and gaps exist in the legal frameworks to effectively address CSEC; each of which keeps the public justice system from functioning and performing effectively in cases of CSEC.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

In 2015, IJM concluded its Program and called for an external summative evaluation. In keeping with the Terms of Reference (TOR), the purpose of this external evaluation was to provide an independent, in-depth evaluation of the Program in terms of relevance, effectiveness and impact during the implementation period from 2004 to 2014, and to assess the potential for sustainability of IJM’s work and results achieved in Cambodia. In accordance, the evaluation scope is summative and focused on the Program’s approach, results achieved, lessons learned, challenges encountered, and adjustments made in each of the three project areas of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville during the implementation period from 2004 to 2014.

Evaluation Approach

To ensure the evaluation approach was as thorough and reliable as possible, different data collection methods and tools were employed. The evaluation methods and tools were in keeping with the TOR for this consultancy. These included (each of these are described in more detailed in the sections that follow):

- Desk review of research on CSEC in Cambodia and IJM Program documents and reports
- Consultations with IJM HQ staff in Washington, DC, USA and Field Office staff in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Sample of and interviews with key stakeholders and IJM staff
- Focus group discussions with faith-based communities
- Interviews with adult survivors of CSEC
- Assessment of IJM police and social service trainings
- Consultation on preliminary findings and conclusions with IJM HQ and FO staff

The evaluation team used a participatory approach that recognizes key stakeholders and beneficiaries as important and active participants that contribute to the production of knowledge and understanding. Triangulation was also a part of the evaluation approach to ensure not only the credibility of information and data collected, but also to allow diverse perspectives and experiences to be captured and to come to the forefront and reveal the full influence or impact and range or reach IJM's Program activities in Cambodia.

Sample of Key Stakeholders and IJM Staff

An important component of this evaluation approach was to interview key stakeholders who have a working knowledge of IJM's Program in Cambodia. IJM Cambodia provided a list of 148 representatives from various Cambodian governmental agencies, local and international NGOs, IOs, international governmental agencies (IGOs), and foreign Embassies in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville that had been identified as key stakeholders in the Program. Given the field work for this evaluation was carried out over a three-week period from June 22 to July 10, 2015, the external evaluators were unable to interview all 148 persons and representatives from each of the governmental agencies, local and international NGOs, IOs, IGOs, and foreign Embassies; therefore, the external evaluators worked in collaboration with IJM Cambodia staff to prioritize and identify which persons and representatives from each should be interviewed. A stratified purposive sampling approach was used to ensure a sample of representatives from as many of the various groupings of agencies/organizations as possible. IJM staff in IJM HQ and the Field Office were also interviewed.

A total of 54 key stakeholders and IJM staff were sampled via stratified and snowball sampling, and interviewed using the standardized data collection tools. In terms of organization type, the sample was fairly equally distributed to include 37.0% of respondents in the Royal Cambodian Government, 38.9% in NGO/IO/Other, and 24.1% in IJM. In regard to focus of work, the sample of respondents included aftercare service providers (46.3%), police and/or those engaged in investigation activities (38.9%), legal advocacy and/or the courts (9.3%), and community outreach (1.9%, i.e., working with faith-based communities). In terms of location, 70.4% of the sample was from Phnom Penh, 16.7% from Siem Reap, 9.3% from Sihanoukville, and 3.7% were from outside Cambodia.

Evaluation Findings

IJM's Program Goal and Outcomes

The overall goal of IJM's Program was to reduce the prevalence of CSEC in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Siem Reap, and to improve outcomes for victims. In Cambodia, IJM implemented its *Justice System Transformation Programming Model* through collaborative casework and targeted justice system reform initiatives in the law enforcement and aftercare sectors. Two key outcomes included: 1) increased performance of the Cambodia's National Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police (AHTJP Police) to identify and rescue victims, arrest suspects, and treat victims appropriately; and 2) increased performance of the Department of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY)¹ and the private aftercare network to refer victims and provide quality aftercare services.

¹ The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) is one of the few government supported national networks providing social welfare services across Cambodia. DoSVY is MoSVY's local community-based direct service provider branch; however, local DoSVY staff face capacity challenges in training, authority, and funding to carry out their work.

[Relevance of IJM's Program and Goal](#)

IJM's Program to reduce the prevalence of CSEC in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siem Reap, and to improve outcome for victims in Cambodia was relevant at the time of the program's inception in 2004, and remained relevant over the ten years of program implementation (2004-2014). IJM has been among the leading NGOs working to combat CSEC in Cambodia; although not the only NGO working in this space. Moreover, IJM's *Justice System Transformation* approach through the combination of Collaborative Casework and targeted justice System Reform initiatives have proven relevant and successful to contributing to a reduction in the prevalence of CSEC in Cambodia, and capacity building of public justice actors, including police and courts, to suppress CSEC through investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of CSEC cases.

[IJM Program Aligns with NPA to Suppress Human Trafficking](#)

IJM's Program has been appropriately and clearly aligned with relevant national plans and strategies of Cambodia for countering trafficking in persons, including the Cambodian National Plan of Action (NPA) to Suppress Human Trafficking for 2011-2013 and 2015. In particular, IJM's focus on building the capacities of government agencies to be able to identify victims of sex trafficking, provide victims with protection and support services, and to improve prosecutions in sex trafficking cases has been aligned with national plans and strategies. In addition, IJM through their working relationships with AHTJP and the National Committee was able to have an influence on the NPA for 2015; in particular, IJM was able to ensure that undercover investigative authority (UIA) was included as Outcome 1.3.7, "Develop undercover investigation guidelines, including audio-visual recording, in compliance with national law," in the NPA for 2014-2018.

[Building the Capacities of Police to Suppress CSEC](#)

In the early 2000s, Cambodian law enforcement anti-trafficking efforts were marked by inadequate training on basic investigative techniques, poor knowledge of the law, mistreatment of suspected traffickers and victims, severe lack of resources, widespread corruption and abuse of powers, and a lack of interest from the government's side to take the matter seriously. These factors resulted in an environment in which successful anti-trafficking operations leading to the rescue of victims and arrest of suspected traffickers were the exception.

Since 2004, IJM's Program has built the capacities of police, particularly the AHTJP, to aggressively pursue reported cases of CSEC. Findings from this evaluation revealed IJM's Program has made significant and meaningful contributions to building the capacities of police to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation, CSEC in particular, including:

- Production and delivery of professional and high quality training for police, particularly the AHTJP;
- Technical expertise/assistance to police in the area of operations and enforcement, including to conduct raids and close the open brothels where CSEC was occurring;
- Improvements in police knowledge, awareness, and skills and abilities to identify trafficking in persons, in general, and CSEC, in particular;
- IJM's efforts to strengthen AHTJP's and collaboration with other public justice agencies in CSEC cases has contributed to a reduction in CSEC; and
- Improvements made to AHTJP's response to CSEC that can be sustained over time.

IJM has developed and delivered 17 different training modules to AHTJP and other provincial police in the three target areas and surrounding areas. From 2003 to 2013, IJM used the 17 different training modules to conduct 90 different trainings. Most were one-week trainings and the majority were conducted between 2004 and 2011. While most of these trainings involved police officials, some were joint trainings with officials from DoSVY, representatives from NGOs, and Deputy Governors of Districts in Siem Reap Province. Between 2003 and 2013, IJM trained a total of 504 persons, including 481 police officials and 23 other trainees, including DoSVY, NGO partners, and Deputy Governors of Districts in Siem Reap Province. Among the trainees, 274 were in the three

target areas and 230 were in the surrounding areas. Many trainees participated in more than one of IJM's trainings over the course of 10 years.

IJM also provided AHTJP with information about CSEC in the three target areas and provided technical expertise/assistance and mentoring in the office and in the field to gather criminal intelligence, conduct criminal investigations and raids, rescue and interview victims, identify and interview suspects, and prepare cases for prosecution. IJM has also provided AHTJP with technology and equipment to maintain evidence needed for investigations and raids. IJM's trainings and technical expertise/assistance has also helped to build AHTJPs capacities to use more victim-centered and child friendly approaches when working with rescued sex trafficking and CSEC victims.

[Improvements to the Courts' Handling of CSEC Cases](#)

Another important component of IJM's Program has been to ensure the evidentiary materials gathered through investigations and joint activities with police are used to prosecute perpetrators of CSEC. Thus, IJM focused their activities on providing professional legal representation to CSEC survivors, preparing CSEC survivors for court, and advocating for child friendly courts in CSEC cases. In addition, IJM conducted case management of legal cases and monitoring of the criminal proceedings of CSEC cases, from the point at which the case enters the court system to the prosecutors handling of the investigation, including the judicial investigation, and throughout the trial and appeals processes. IJM's legal case management and monitoring practices are designed to ensure legal cases are handled properly at every stage and that perpetrators of CSEC are prosecuted and convicted.

Previous IJM research documented that in the early 2000s, the judicial system was institutionally weak and backlogged, and in the early stages of reform. Judges and prosecutors were poorly trained, lacked sufficient resources to properly operate, and had an insufficient understanding of the laws, judicial procedures, and ethics. Components such as child friendly procedures, victim sensitivity, use of electronic or forensic evidence in court cases, and computerized case and data tracking were non-existent. In addition, the judicial system was significantly influenced by government leaders and corruption. Due to these realities, citizens distrusted the judicial system and tended to avoid engagement with the judicial system.²

The early 2000s was also marked by poor working relationships between the police and courts, and there was limited transparency and cooperation between the courts and NGOs who legally represented clients (e.g., sex trafficking victims). The result was that victims were often unwilling to cooperate or to participate in legal proceedings because they were uncertain as to the outcome and did not want to retell their trauma experience within the public court settings and risk further shame or threats to themselves or their families. Families were also more likely to settle the case with the perpetrator; a settlement that was often illegally accepted by the court.³

Data from this evaluation revealed IJM has played an important role in helping to improve the courts handling of human trafficking cases, including prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of CSEC, by monitoring and advocating that the courts use the proper child friendly criminal court proceedings in their role as legal representative to CSEC survivors. Some Government respondents recognized that IJM's monitoring of the courts handling of CSEC cases has contributed to improvements in the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of CSEC. Although the majority of NGO/IO/Other respondents recognized improvements in the courts handling of CSEC cases and prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of CSEC, some respondents were still critical of the courts and maintained there is still room for improving the courts handling of CSEC cases.

² Van der Keur, D. (2013). Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia and the Public Justice System Response: A stakeholder analysis of change between 2000-2012 (Summary Report), p. 8.

³ Van der Keur, 2013, p. 8.

One of the challenges IJM faced when it came to working with the courts, including prosecutors and judges, was that IJM never established an MOU with MoJ; nevertheless, IJM has managed to bring AHTJP police officials together with prosecutors through joint coordination meetings, trainings, and workshops.

Confidence in the Public Justice System

IJM's capacity building activities and monitoring of the public justice system's handling of CSEC cases has contributed to increased confidence in the public justice system's capacity to properly investigate and prosecute CSEC cases. IJM's monitoring of the courts handling of CSEC cases has contributed to improvements in the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of CSEC. Improvements to the public justice system's handling of CSEC cases most likely contributed to the reduction in the prevalence of CSEC in the three target areas. Despite increased confidence in public justice systems, respondents recognize there is still room for improving the abilities of the public justice system actors, including the AHTJP and courts' handling of CSEC cases.

Establishing Quality Crisis Aftercare for CSEC Survivors

Since 2004, IJM's Program has focused significantly on the identification and rescue of CSEC victims, as well as ensuring CSEC survivors are provided with protection and adequate care and support, reducing their risk of being re-trafficked and re-victimized. Between late 2004 and 2008, improvements within aftercare services and programming began to occur when a large number of local and international NGOs launched services within Cambodia to address the needs of trafficking and sexual exploitation victims. At the time, the majority of newly arrived NGOs launched shelter programs that included a protection, aftercare, and reintegration services.⁴

In 2011, IJM established an MOU with MoSVY to: a) improve the quality of care and support to CSEC victims during intervention, post-operation (after a raid), and legal proceeding in order to reduce the impact of trauma and ensure that victims' rights are upheld; b) facilitate successful and sustainable rehabilitation for victims through partnership with governmental and nongovernmental social service organizations; and c) promote collaboration and coordination between government social services and the IJM Aftercare Department through provision of training and coordinated assistance. IJM also had MOUs with NGO service providers to establish a collaborative working arrangement on all IJM CSEC cases for the protection and provision of quality aftercare services for survivors.

Over the past decade (2004-2014), IJM's Program has made some important contributions in each of the aforementioned MOU areas. Since 2008, IJM provided MoSVY/DoSVY and NGO service providers with a series of capacity building trainings and coordination assistance that has promoted improved knowledge and understanding of human trafficking and concepts and practices related to crisis care, aftercare, and case management. The capacity building trainings have also served to improve collaboration and coordination among governmental and nongovernmental aftercare service providers and the IJM Aftercare Department. IJM has also established minimum standards of care for CSEC survivors and structured aftercare treatment plans and case management protocols, forms, checklists. IJM has established their own protocols and assessment forms for assessing successful outcomes for CSEC survivors, including recovery, reintegration, and restoration. They also designed case management software that allows them to track and monitor all of their cases, including rescues, victim identification, intakes, referrals, legal proceedings, and victim outcomes.

Efforts of IJM to coordinate AHTJP and MoSVY/DoSVY to ensure proper protection and referral of CSEC survivors to quality aftercare services has not always been easy and likely required a great deal of lobbying and advocacy on the part of IJM with the government. IJM engaged the government in the long, slow process of change and capacity building, which also included improving communication and cooperation between the governmental agencies, such as AHTJP and MoSVY/DoSVY, as well as with NGOs to ensure protection and quality aftercare for trafficking and sexual exploitation victims.⁵

⁴ Van der Keur, 2013, p. 9.

⁵ Van der Kuer, 2013, p. 9.

Improvements in Victim Outcomes

IJM's Program also focused on improving outcomes for CSEC survivors. This was accomplished by establishing effective case management practices to confirm that rescued CSEC victims are provided with protection and aftercare services to reduce their risks of re-victimization and increase their opportunities for effective rehabilitation and recovery. IJM's case management approach involves collaboration with NGO shelter and aftercare service providers to ensure victims' needs are properly assessed and addressed at each of the various stages of protection and care, and progress is being made to support the recovery and rehabilitation of CSEC survivors. IJM has also established standards for determining when CSEC victims have been rehabilitated and recovered, and are ready for reintegration. At the stage of reintegration, IJM's aftercare case workers continue case management and follow-up directly with the survivors to monitor their progress and provide continued psycho-social support and other forms of needed support (e.g., sometimes temporary financial support) and access to services (e.g., assistance with accessing vocational skills training and employment services).

Confidence in Coordination of Aftercare for CSEC Survivors

IJM has made important contributions to increasing stakeholder's confidence in the performance of DoSVY to provide crisis care and to refer CSEC victims to quality aftercare. In addition, IJM has helped to improve the coordinated aftercare network, particularly among their partners, and provision of quality aftercare services to CSEC survivors. At the same time, this evaluation found there is still room for improvement. However, given the significant reduction in the number of CSEC cases and victim being referred for shelter and aftercare services many NGO-operated shelters are closing and NGO aftercare service providers are ending or limiting their services in Cambodia. Also, the documented reduction in the prevalence of CSEC cases in Cambodia has also led to a reduction in donor funding for CSEC projects and programs. Thus, the sustainability of quality aftercare service for CSEC survivors is unknown and will likely be much more limited in the future.

Mobilization of Faith-Based Communities

Although mobilizing community groups, particularly faith-based communities, for prevention of CSEC was not one of IJM's primary outcomes, it was an objective. IJM was focused on strengthening partnerships and networking with churches in IJM's three target areas to raise their awareness of CSEC in Cambodia and to mobilize church leaders to engage them in prevention of CSEC, including reporting suspected cases of CSEC in their communities. To accomplish this, IJM provided churches with trainings and materials to disseminate information in their churches specifically related to CSEC, and more generally to concepts of biblical justice and social injustices. This evaluation found faith-based communities are an important partner in the effort prevent and suppress CSEC in local communities, and helping church leaders to understand their roles and responsibilities to suppress CSEC within a framework of biblical justice was very meaningful to church leaders.

Reduction in Prevalence of CSEC in Target Areas

Since 2004, IJM's Program's overall goal has been to contribute to the reduction of CSEC in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, and Siem Reap. In 2012, following eight years of implementing program activities, IJM conducted its first CSEC prevalence study. IJM collected data from 232 commercial sex establishments in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville, including karaoke clubs (KTVs), beer gardens, hostess bars, massage parlors, brothels, and brothels fronting as coffee shops. Based upon the sample IJM estimated the total prevalence of CSEC to be 8.16%, and the prevalence of children age 15 years or younger was estimated to be .75% (see Table 11). Based upon available historic data, IJM concluded the prevalence of CSEC in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville had decreased substantially between 2000 and 2012, with the most notable decreased observed among children age 15 years or younger.⁶

In 2015, IJM conducted its second CSEC prevalence study. Again, IJM collected data in the three target areas – Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville – using the same methodology from their 2012 prevalence study.

⁶ International Justice Mission (2013). Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia.

Data collectors surveyed 287 randomly selected commercial sex establishments in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville and estimated the total prevalence of CSEC to be 2.22% (see Table 11). Based upon the findings from the two prevalence studies, IJM concluded that from 2012 to 2015, the overall prevalence of CSEC in commercial sex establishments across the three target areas declined by 73% (from 8.16% to 2.22%).

Respondents that were in Cambodia in the early half of the 2000s recalled that CSEC was prevalent and occurring openly on the streets; thus, they recognized a reduction in the situation of CSEC in Cambodia over the past 10 years. At the same time that respondents recognized a reduction in CSEC, many were not fully convinced that there had been such a drastic reduction in CSEC over the past 10 years (particularly as maintained in IJM's prevalence studies) because as they maintained, the demand for CSEC is still present in Cambodia. Many respondents contend the situation of CSEC in Cambodia has simply changed, it has become more clandestine, it is not as open as it was in the past, so it is more difficult to measure.

IJM's Ability to Adapt to Changes in the Situation of CSEC in Cambodia

IJM's Program has been able to adapt to the changing situation of CSEC in Cambodia, including changes in the operating environment and political landscape in which IJM was operating. Overtime, IJM was able to establish MOUs with MoI and MoSVY, and a few NGO aftercare service providers, which enabled them to contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of CSEC, and to build the capacities of public justice actors. It was also evidenced in the modifications of program objectives, outputs, and activities from 2004-2007 to the logframes of 2008-2011 and 2012-2014 that IJM was able to effectively adapt to the changing situation of CSEC, and the changing operating environment and political landscape in Cambodia. In addition, over time, IJM's Program activities and outputs remained consistent with the intended objectives, outcomes and impacts as defined in the logframes and work plans.

Of course, the ability to adapt has not been without challenges. Challenges IJM has faced are that CSEC activities largely became more clandestine and MoJ issued court orders denying MoI the use of UIA in sex trafficking cases. From 2012 to 2014, IJM petitioned MoJ on 16 different occasions to request the right of AHTJP to use UIA to pursue sex trafficking cases in the three target areas.

Conclusions

The findings from this summative evaluation revealed IJM Program to reduce the prevalence of CSEC in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siem Reap, and to improve outcome for victims in Cambodia was relevant at the time of the program's inception in 2004, and remained relevant over the ten years of program implementation (2004-2014). Moreover, IJM's *Justice System Transformation* approach through the combination of collaborative casework and targeted justice system reform initiatives have proven relevant and successful to contributing to a reduction in the prevalence of CSEC in Cambodia, and capacity building of public justice actors, including police and courts, to suppress CSEC through investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of CSEC cases. Over the years, IJM has been among the leading NGOs working to combat CSEC in Cambodia; although not the only NGO working in this space.

Among the best practices identified by respondents was that IJM was able to remain continuously focused over the ten-year period of 2004 to 2014 on CSEC, to the point that IJM was able to contribute to and demonstrate a significant reduction in the prevalence of CSEC in Cambodia which IJM has documented in their prevalence studies of 2012 and 2015. Other best practices have included: IJM's efforts to build the capacities of the police to suppress CSEC, and to facilitate collaboration among government agencies to provide crisis care and quality aftercare to CSEC victims following police raids and rescue; IJM's efforts to ensure CSEC survivors are identified and provided with protection and access to quality aftercare, and monitored for recovery are other best practices; and IJM's efforts to provide CSEC survivors with legal advocacy and to promote child friendly police and court proceedings.