



An AI-Driven Tool for Case Assessment of Survivors of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation among Children

- Amulya Yadav, College of Information Sciences and Technology
- Samuel Schleipman, World Hope International
- Andy Gatto, Nittany AI Alliance

Abstract: The Philippines is the global epicenter of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) – UNICEF reports that 8 out of 10 children in the Philippines are vulnerable to being victims of online sexual abuse and bullying. Almost ~2.5% of children in the Philippines have had their nude bodies or sexual activities shown on the internet or a cellphone. Unfortunately, the situation has significantly worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic – the number of reported OSAEC cases in the Philippines between March and May 2020 increased by 264% as compared to the same period in 2019. Disturbingly, more than 80% of these OSAEC cases were perpetrated on children by their own parents or relatives. These statistics highlight the critical need to urgently tackle this societal challenge.

Since 2017, World Hope International – Philippines (WHI-PH) has focused on combating OSAEC and protecting survivors. WHI-PH is one of the very few organizations in the world that focuses on the after-care of survivors of OSAEC. In particular, WHI-PH approaches after-care in two ways: (i) training Local Government Units (LGUs), social workers, and shelter managers on the OSAEC specific skills needed to provide targeted care for survivors; and (ii) ensuring the safe and effective reintegration of OSAEC survivors back into a stable family environment, for which WHI-PH either focuses on resolving underlying dysfunctions in the family (e.g., in many cases, destitute poverty and lack of work opportunities causes family members to force their children into sex acts online), or in some cases, WHI-PH may also try to identify financially and emotionally stable relatives of OSAEC survivors who can provide safe and welcoming family environments to survivors.

We aim to tackle the following research question in partnership with World Hope International - Philippines (WHI-PH): Can we build an AI-driven decision support system which can automate the preliminary triage and case assessments of OSAEC survivors?