

# Collaboration as a path for advocacy: working with government to effect change

CPTCSA - Philippines



## THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Across the Philippines, 1 in 5 children, both boys and girls equally, have reported being victims of sexual violence (the National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children). A woman or child is raped every 53 minutes and 7 out of 10 victims of violence are children (the Philippine Center for Women's Resources (PCWR), 2016).

In CPTCSA's early days, non-governmental organisations in the Philippines held a 'watchdog' role; they worked separately to the government, lobbying for their goals from the outside. CPTCSA was ahead of its peers in the advocacy sphere. Today's advocacy environment is very different with large amounts of competition between NGOs and INGOs.

## ABOUT CPTCSA

CPTCSA is a non-governmental organisation working in the Philippines since 1995. It provides therapeutic support to young perpetrators and survivors of child sexual abuse, and trains foster care providers for children who have been sexually abused. It operates under the principle that prevention and treatment are interdependent.

Find out more about CPTCSA: [www.cptcsaph.org](http://www.cptcsaph.org)  
Or contact Zeny Rosales, Executive Director: [cptcsa20@gmail.com](mailto:cptcsa20@gmail.com)

## MODEL

The Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse (CPTCSA) was set up in 1995 to address child sexual abuse issues, from prevention to intervention and treatment. It saw that the general approach in the Philippines to child sexual abuse and sexual violence against children was very reactive; services were provided once abuse had already taken place. Treatment services were institution-based, which led to additional layers of trauma for those who had to leave their homes and families for treatment. CPTCSA believed that fundamental change was needed and that prevention needed to be at the heart of all services in this area.

Being a small organisation CPTCSA knew that although it held extensive knowledge, expertise and data, and it was clear about its mission, it needed to collaborate with major stakeholders and duty bearers in order to fund and deliver large initiatives. As long as its agenda was taken forward by those who had the capacity to do so CPTCSA didn't mind being in the background, so coalition building became a strategic focus for the organisation.

CPTCSA's mantra for effecting change is "We plant the seeds and let major stakeholders and duty bearers take over the seed once it's ready to grow".

CPTCSA engaged in advocacy work from the outset, and partnering with the government was the organisation's chosen form of lobbying. It works at both national and local levels: for policy development and legal reform it works closely with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Council for the Welfare of Children, as well as the Department of Education, and once policies and laws are in place it advocates to Local Government Units where responsibility for implementation and service delivery sits.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In CPTCSA's early days it decided to build connections with the Department of Education (DoE) and included a DoE representative on its Board. Throughout the planning stages for its [Personal Safety Lessons](#) programme, which is at the centre of its work on prevention, it worked closely with the DoE.

Over time CPTCSA developed a reputation as the expert around topics of sexual abuse, violence and exploitation; its 2018 research conducted with other Family for Every Child members, '[Caring for boys affected by sexual violence](#)', consolidated and built on its position as the holder of important data and evidence.

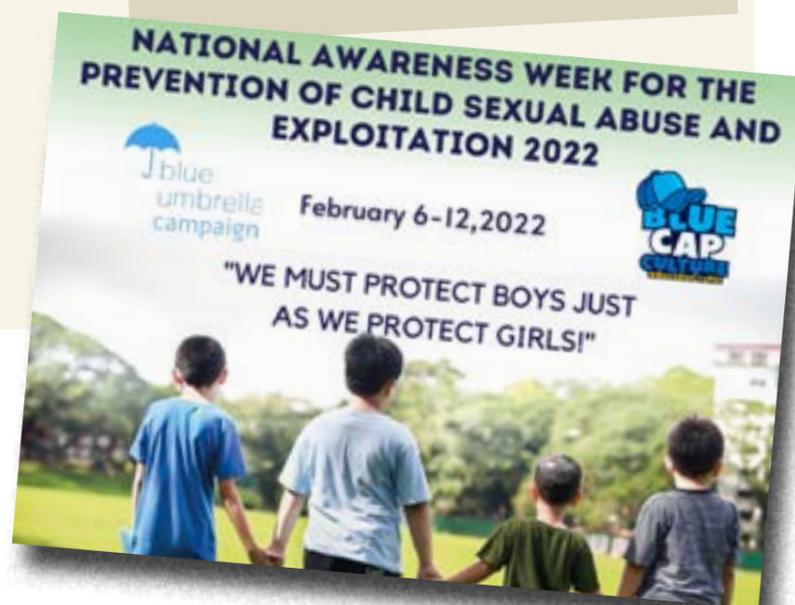
The organisation is regularly invited by Congress to provide input into legal and policy processes, and as a result of its close relationship with government partners it was able to influence policy and declare the second week of February as an annual national awareness week for the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation. An overseeing committee is still chaired by a government representative and co-chaired by CPTCSA.

## IMPACT

- 1 The prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse has become mainstreamed in both the policy and practice of target institutions in the Philippines; child protection programmes and services developed by CPTCSA are incorporated in the Annual Investment Plan and Budget of the Local Government.
- 2 CPTCSA led the process of securing Presidential Decree 731 which declared every second week of February as the National Awareness Week for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation; CPTCSA's strong relationship with government partners played a key role in this success.
- 3 Since 2016 the government has agreed to match any funds raised by CPTCSA for its programmes, which means that project ownership becomes shared and the government is invested in its success.

## CHALLENGES FACED

- 1 In the years since CPTCSA was established, the number of NGOs and INGOs in the Philippines has grown significantly; agencies which were once allies have become competitors in advocacy and funding opportunities.
- 2 Staff changeover within government can be disruptive, but CPTCSA continuously looks for new individuals to champion its cause; lobbying needs to be persistent.



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## FURTHER INFORMATION

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