

Protect Children

Annual Report 2025





Protect Children
Suojellaan Lapsia

“ —

Thank you for allowing me to be a voice. I have felt voiceless for so long, even with support. - Anonymous adult survivor of child sexual abuse.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
Priorities and Objectives in 2025	4
Operating period: 1 January – 31 December 2025	4
Team	4
Funding	4
Board	5
Support & Serve	6
Promoting Healing for Impacted Families	6
Supporting Young Adult Survivors.....	6
Analysing 3 Million CSAM Images	6
Improving the Global Response for Victims and Survivors of CSAM	6
Prevent & Protect	7
Expanding Efforts to Prevent CSAM Perpetration	7
New Research Initiatives to Understand and Prevent Abuse.....	7
Contributing to High-Quality Impact-Driven Research	7
Exchanging Knowledge and Sharing Expertise	8
Recognition and Awards	8
Empower & Educate	9
Attending Finland’s Leading Education Fair.....	9
Developing New Educational Materials.....	9
Teaching Children Essential Safety Skills	9
Engaging Parents and Caregivers in Digital Safety Skills Education	10
Helping Youth Disclose Sexual Violence	10
Advocate & Amplify	11
Amplifying the Voices and Wisdom of Victims and Survivors globally.....	11
Survivor Advocacy and Policy Engagement	11
Communications	12
Communications	12
Media appearances.....	12
Newsletter	12
Website	12

Introduction

Protect Children is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation and a nationally and internationally respected actor. The aim of the organisation is to promote the rights of the child and, above all, to end all forms of sexual violence against children.

Priorities and Objectives in 2025

The objectives of 2025 have been guided by Protect Children's code of conduct and child protection practices, as well as the action plan for 2025. Protect Children's activities focused on promoting core tasks in accordance with the organisation's basic principles: protecting children from all forms of sexual violence, supporting child victims and their families, conducting innovative research, and promoting the rights of the child.

In 2025, we celebrated half a decade of powerful, research-driven action to protect children from all crimes of sexual violence.



Operating period: 1 January – 31 December 2025

The 2025 activities of Protect Children focused on the organisation's four core themes:

- **Support & Serve**
- **Prevent & Protect**
- **Empower & Educate**
- **Advocate & Amplify**

The work was implemented through various national and international projects. Activities also focused on planning new projects, applying for funding, and strengthening national and international collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Team

In 2025, the following team members were employed at Protect Children:

- Executive Director
- Deputy Director
- Head of Research
- Senior Specialist
- Two Specialists
- Three Junior Specialists
- One Financial Officer
- One Consulting Forensic Psychologist

Our Team:

<https://www.suojellaantapsia.fi/en/tiimimme>

In 2025, Protect Children kicked off Protect Children Internship Program to support young professionals with exploring a challenging field of advancing child rights and preventing sexual violence against children.

Funding

The organisation's activities were carried out with the support of predominantly international and some national grants, and small-scale business activities, as well as a three-year partial core funding. Since 2022, Protect Children has a permanent fundraising license. More detailed information about the organisation's financial situation can be found in the 2025 Financial Statement.

Board

In 2025, the Board of Protect Children met regularly and held the annual spring and autumn meetings. The Board's most important task and greatest added value includes supporting and consulting with the executive management.

Strengthening the Board supports the organisation's vision of being a reliable, brave, and innovative expert organisation and an active actor nationally and internationally. The organisation's strategy and vision were developed in 2025 strategy workshops.

Protect Children Board composition:

Chair of the Board: Ani Ruuskanen

Board Members: Ani Ruuskanen, Taina Pallasvesa, Minna Anttonen, Venla Lehti, Anne Larilahti

Secretary of the Board: Noora Kuisma

Expert Advisor: Simon Bailey

Drawing on our achievements from 2025, we feel inspired and empowered to continue protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation. We extend heartfelt gratitude to our dearest collaboration partners who have been supporting our vision and mission.

Support & Serve

In 2025, supporting victims, survivors, and their families remained at the heart of our work.

Promoting Healing for Impacted Families

When a child experiences sexual violence, the impact reaches far beyond the child alone. Parents are often left feeling isolated and unsure where to turn. In 2025, we focused on ensuring that families did not have to face this alone.

In Finland, we held four **You Are Enough™ peer support groups** for parents of child victims of sexual violence, offering a safe space for connection and healing during one of the most challenging periods a family can face.

Beyond Finland, we expanded our peer support group model to the United Kingdom, Latvia, and Ireland. This meant that more families, across more countries, could access support when they needed it most.



"It has been extremely relieving to talk with other parents who have experienced the same thing, and it has Somehow also helped with my own difficult emotions and dealing with the situation."

– A parent in the You Are Enough™ group.

Supporting Young Adult Survivors

In August 2025, we piloted our first **You Are Not Alone™ peer support group** for young adults aged 18–28 who have experienced sexual violence in childhood. This newly developed group fosters young survivors' healing, resilience, and hope for the future. It marked an important step in ensuring support does not end when childhood does.

Analysing 3 Million CSAM Images

This year, Protect Children analysts working within the **Project Arachnid** network reached **over 3 million analysed child sexual abuse material (CSAM) images**, leading to **over 1.95 million takedown requests** sent to electronic service providers. This milestone illustrates our ongoing dedication to ending the cycle of violence and revictimisation.

Improving the Global Response for Victims and Survivors of CSAM

Our survivor-focused work culminated in the launch of the **ECHO Survivor Hub**. This collaborative global initiative will support victims and survivors of CSAM who are no longer part of an investigation. The hub will amplify survivor voices, support efforts to remove CSAM, promote access to justice, and contribute to long term healing.

Prevent & Protect

In 2025, we advanced our research to better understand child sexual abuse and strengthened our efforts to prevent harm before it occurs.

Expanding Efforts to Prevent CSAM Perpetration

A major step in our mission to tackle online child sexual abuse came with the expansion of the [ReDirection program](#) to Poland and Latvia. ReDirection is an anonymous online self-help resource that guides perpetrators to stop using CSAM. This year's evaluation showed that the program effectively reduces CSAM offending. It is currently available in five languages, with many more coming soon.



If your organisation is interested in tackling CSAM use in your country, contact Anna Ovaska, Deputy Director, at: anna.ovaska@suojellaanlapsia.fi to explore becoming a scaling partner.

New Research Initiatives to Understand and Prevent Abuse

In 2025, we built on our research to understand offender behaviour by starting a new research project, [Tell Me More About Tech](#). We surveyed online CSAM offenders to examine how different technology ecosystems facilitate abuse and influence offender behaviour.

We were also proud to launch [Project Lens](#), where we aim to understand and prevent emerging forms of image-based child sexual violence, in particular in the under-focused region of Central Asia.

During the year, we wrapped up a number of collaborative projects funded by the European Commission, including [2KNOW](#), [2PS](#), and [Bridge](#), each contributing lasting tools and insights for the field.

Contributing to High-Quality Impact-Driven Research

Throughout the year, we continued to generate high quality research to inform policy, practice, and prevention.

We contributed to a [peer reviewed research article](#) analysing responses to our surveys on anonymous online CSAM offenders and examining the differences between offenders who have been charged for a crime compared to those who have not.

We also published a [research report](#) on survivors' experiences of image-based child sexual violence, in which we highlighted urgent gaps in prevention and protection.

In addition, we reviewed international literature and practice on deterrence and help-seeking messaging, mapping existing approaches and identifying opportunities for more effective interventions

Visit Protect Children's research library:

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/kirjasto>

Exchanging Knowledge and Sharing Expertise

Throughout the year, our team shared expertise at key events around the world, including IPPPRI, ISPCAN, C0C0N, the World Police Summit, CSARRN, and Interpol conferences. We also hosted our own conference at the European Parliament to mark the conclusion of the 2KNOW project. These moments helped build stronger connections, spark new ideas, and turn research into real world action.



Recognition and Awards

In a true highlight of the year, we were honoured to receive the prestigious Academic Contribution Award at the Excellence in Online Protection gala. The award recognised our holistic, research-based approach to tackling online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

We were also honoured to take on new positions of trust. Protect Children joined the Advisory Group on Research and Development within Europol's European Cybercrime Centre and the European Commission Network for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. Our Executive Director, Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen, joined the INTERPOL Crimes Against Children Unit Safeguarding Advisory Board and became a Patron of the organisation StopSO.



Empower & Educate

Educating children and young people remained a key priority for our work in 2025.

Attending Finland’s Leading Education Fair

Keeping a beloved tradition, we kicked off 2025 at Educa, Finland’s leading event in education and training. At the event, we shared our educational materials and had fruitful discussions with educators from Finland and abroad. We thank everyone who came by our stand.



Developing New Educational Materials

We continued to create accessible, fun, and child-friendly educational resources in multiple languages to support children’s online safety. We developed two new interactive booklets featuring the much-loved Kip Crew characters, helping children practice **emotional regulation skills** and **digital safety skills** in an engaging and age-appropriate way. We also published a **guide** supporting children to recognise signs of inappropriate behaviour online, and a

resource for parents raising awareness about violent online groups.

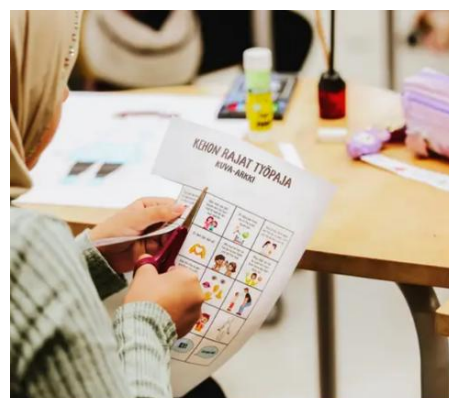


Check our materials:

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/aineistopankki>

Teaching Children Essential Safety Skills

In 2025, over ten thousand children aged 5-9 from across Finland joined our popular **Stop, Slow & Go workshops** to practice essential skills related to digital safety, body boundaries, and emotions in a fun and engaging way.



“My class and I participated in a Stop, Slow & Go™ workshop. The second-graders found the topic interesting, and it is. The workshop was just the right length and it sparked a lot of discussion, which we were able to continue even after the workshop.”

– Primary school teacher who participated in the Stop, Slow & Go™ remote workshop

Engaging Parents and Caregivers in Digital Safety Skills Education

Parents often feel overwhelmed by the complexity of topics related to digital safety and lack up-to-date knowledge due to daily responsibilities and rapid technological advancements.

With support from Google.org, we launched the **More Than a Device** initiative to empower parents and caregivers to confidently discuss digital safety skills with their children. The project focuses on understanding how parents prefer to learn and using these insights to pilot digital safety training in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, and Finland.

Helping Youth Disclose Sexual Violence

Research and practice show that children often disclose sexual violence to their friend first, and all too often the abuse never gets reported. This motivated us to develop **#MyFriendToo**, a website empowering young people to help their friends disclose abuse to a safe adult. We are thrilled that in 2025, we expanded the **#MyFriendToo website to the US**.

Visit #MyFriendToo website.

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/myfriendtoo>

Advocate & Amplify

In 2025, we centered survivor voices and fiercely advocated for the rights of children and young people in Europe and globally.

Amplifying the Voices and Wisdom of Victims and Survivors globally

In 2025, Protect Children continued listening to the long-silenced voices of victims and survivors of childhood sexual violence, gathering insights from 25,000 victims and survivors worldwide through the [Global Our Voice Survivor Survey](#). We published powerful reports presenting insights from victims and survivors from the [United Kingdom](#) and the [Nordics](#); [Greek-](#), [Latvian-](#), [Serbian-](#), [Swedish-](#), [Norwegian-](#), and [Italian-](#)speaking victims and survivors, and examined experiences of men subjected to sexual violence in childhood.

“As soon as I found this survey I immediately completed it. We need more knowledge and teaching around the topic of sexual assault/violence, and I hope my responses are helpful.”

– Male survivor in response to the Global Our Voice Survivor Survey.

Read Our Voice Reports:

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/ourvoice-reports>

In June 2025, we co-hosted a [high-level conference in Stockholm](#) with the Justice Initiative and the Nordic Child Tech Policy Alliance to advocate for stronger measures to prevent and end child sexual violence across the Nordic countries.



Survivor Advocacy and Policy Engagement

We continued our work with the [Our Voice Survivor Advocacy Group](#) and hosted an in-person meeting for survivors in Helsinki, where participants had an opportunity to share their experiences in a safe and confidential environment and guide the next steps for the group’s work.

Our [statement submitted to the United Nations](#) highlighted the emerging patterns of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, offering recommendations to improve child protection systems and survivor support.

Read the statement:

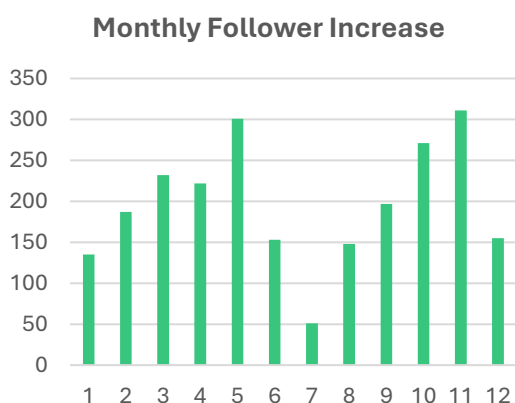
<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/statement-to-the-un-protecting-children-from-sale-sexual-exploitation-and-sexual-abuse-progress>

We advanced our status as an [Observer to the Lanzarote Committee](#) - at its 46th plenary meeting, where our Executive Director Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen spoke to ensure that the voices of survivors inform and shape decision-making even at the highest levels.

Communications

Communications

Protect Children continued communicating about the results of the organisation's work on a daily basis via official social media channels on LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Regular and well-planned social media communications led to continued growth of followers and engagement in 2025. In total, Protect Children received **1,512,319 impressions** on social media and accumulated **11,722 followers**. Similarly to the previous year, LinkedIn was the fastest-growing platform.



Media appearances

Protect Children's activities and expertise in preventing sexual violence against children were widely noted in the mainstream media, both nationally and internationally. In 2025, Protect Children's work was featured in **67 news outlets** in **7 countries**.

Newsletter

Protect Children maintains **6 newsletters** that ensure targeted outreach to different audiences, specifically **two general newsletters** in English and in Finnish to share all updates from Protect Children's work, the **ReDirection newsletter** in English to share updates about research and prevention, the **You Are Enough™**

newsletter in English to share updates about the peer support groups, and two **Teachers' newsletters** in Finnish and in Swedish for educators in Finland. In total, last year, Protect Children sent **56 newsletters** reaching **23,177 recipients**.

Subscribe to Protect Children's newsletters:

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/tilaa- uutiskirje>

Website

In 2025, Protect Children's website was viewed **64,055 times**. The website is available in English, Finnish, and Swedish.

Countries where people viewed Protect Children's website:



Visit Protect Children's website:

<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en>