



Marie Collins
Foundation

Safe Online Case Study



This case study provides an example of the work undertaken in Namibia by Marie Collins Foundation (MCF) as a direct result of the funding provided through the Safe Online. This involved a partnership with Lifeline/Childline, Namibia to upskill child protection professionals across both the professional landscape and the country, to improve the response to children harmed through child abuse, particularly when technology has enabled or facilitated that abuse. It highlights work which has taken place across the GPN2 project, building on successes from the previous project, Global Protection Online Network (GPN).

Lifeline/Childline is based in Windhoek, Namibia. It is an internationally recognised organisation which forms part of the Child Helpline International network. It is a non-governmental organisation providing counselling to people all over Namibia with the aim of promoting resilience and wellbeing. It also acts as an organisation undertaking capacity building to support the Namibian government's agenda to tackle child protection, social and mental health issues. Lifeline/Childline operates the national 116 helpline from which support is available for child protection issues and disclosure of abuse. It also hosts the Internet Watch Foundation reporting portal for the removal of CSAM.

MCF developed the relationship with Lifeline/Childline at the beginning of the Safe Online collaboration in 2019. It has been a successful collaboration that has enabled the development of the professional response to victims and survivors of abuse, so that it is one that does no further harm and promotes recovery. This upskilling of the frontline child protection professionals in Namibia through targeted training initiatives was identified as the most impactful way to bring about positive change in the response to victims and survivors of gender-based violence and technology-assisted child sexual abuse (TACSA). As crimes against women and children continue to increase, Namibia has sought to improve its response to victims and survivors of these crimes. It became a signatory to the WeProtect Global Alliance indicating the importance given to tackling this issue. MCF and Lifeline/Childline, Namibia's partnership is one that feeds into this overarching objective and has been done in a way that endeavours to ensure the appropriate response to victims and survivors by utilising MCF's expertise in best practice in this area.

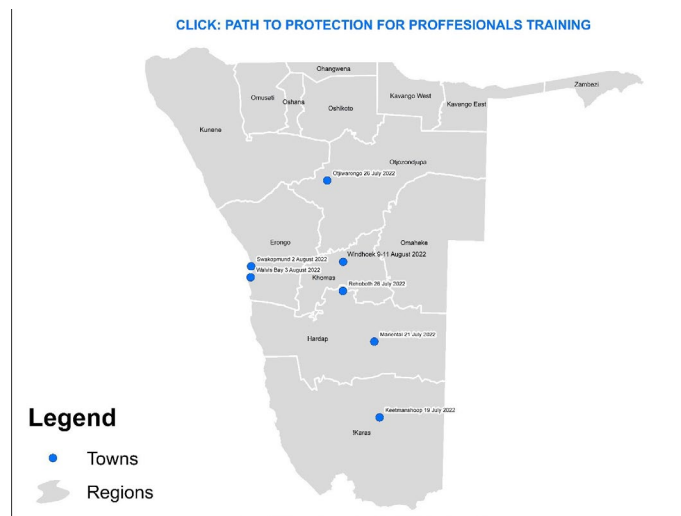
MCF recognised that key front line child protection response stakeholders did not have adequate training and knowledge needed to best respond consistently to the needs of victims and survivors of TACSA. MCF proposed using the Click: Path to Protection training resource. This is a multi-agency model of training to equip professionals from law enforcement, children services, health, education, legal and other relevant stakeholders with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to ensure that their professional response is one that places the needs of victims and their families at the centre of any investigation and/or intervention. The training package was adapted from the UK version to be country relevant. Namibia was the first English speaking country to receive this training through the Train-the-trainer program which was designed to support the training to be delivered widely across the country, thereby creating both sustainability and a greater consistency in the level and quality of response that victims receive.

In February 2022, 12 professionals in Namibia became certified trainers and were accredited to disseminate training across the country to front line professionals. Eight of those trainers

were based at Lifeline/Childline. The majority of the trainers were social workers. MCF provided both professional and financial support to enable them to cover their transportation, administration and accommodation costs during the dissemination.

Dissemination did not happen as quickly as we wanted due to the need to obtain governmental permission to engage with statutory bodies such as police officers and education professionals.

The trainers aimed to equip professionals in both urban and rural areas, travelling great distances to bring the training material where most needed. The map below highlights locations involved in the first stage of delivery.



The table below outlines the professionals who benefitted from the Click: Path to Protection training during 2023.

Profession	Male	Female
Social Workers	0	9
Social Work Students	4	23
Student Nurses	1	3
Community Health Workers	1	4
Registered Nurses	2	4
TCE Field Officer	1	0
Heath Assistants	3	6
Early Childhood Development Teachers	3	23
LLCL Volunteer Counsellors	11	1
Volunteers from Development Workshop and Heritage Counselling Students	6	16
Other (School board Chairperson/Administrative Secretary, Community Liaison officer, Security Guard)	4	6
Total	103	206

289 completed course evaluations, with 176 rating it as excellent and 108 as good or very good. All the participants stated that the examples and illustrations given helped them learn. Most of them felt that the examples gave them more understanding as they were practical and relatable. Other participants mentioned that the examples were helpful because they were real life events within their line of work. Many asked for follow up training and sought opportunities to widen their knowledge of technology-assisted child sexual abuse.

While resources are constrained, the team at Lifeline/Childline continue to show their dedication to building the capacity to respond to child abuse. We hope they can continue the training delivery without the ongoing financial support provided by MCF. The GPN platform is there to continue to support all efforts in this area, and promote good practice.

One unintended outcome from this training delivery is facilitation of networking opportunities. MCF have been approached by some participants and organisations who attended the training with requests for opportunities to collaborate going forward. One such organisation is the Ombetja Yehinga Organisation, Windhoek, which is a Namibian Trust that aims to create change through raising social awareness and child participation through the visual arts like dance, drama and painting.

Lifeline/Childline, Namibia continues to be a beacon of hope for Namibians, their commitment to improving outcomes for children is evident. Following MCF's deployment to Namibia in 2023, it was plain that this partnership has meant a great deal to Lifeline/Childline and that it has benefited many. Despite championing separate, but interconnected activities with a very small team, Lifeline/Childline's work has been outstanding.



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