

THE LINK

The Official Newsletter of the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

200 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60601 U.S.A.



Volume 10, Number 2

Northern Fall / Southern Spring

FEATURE STORY:

Youth on the Internet: Who is at Risk?

The Internet has rapidly become a central component in the lives of many children and adolescents, offering numerous benefits as well as potential risks. Concern about possible dangers has been fueled by media attention to stories of young people being preyed upon by adults and encountering sexual material on the Internet. However, research suggests such cases may be just one extreme end of a more diverse scope of problematic online experiences. In order for professionals working with this population to effectively understand this new technology and its impact on youth, it is crucial to gain an understanding of the types of experiences youth encounter online and what factors place youth at risk for Internet perils.

This article focuses on the two perils youth encounter online that have received the greatest attention and evoked the most concern -- sexual solicitations and exposure to sexual material. Sexual solicitation includes requests by adults or unwanted requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or to give personal sexual information. Unwanted exposure to sexual material includes unexpected or unsolicited exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex when conducting online searches, surfing the web, or opening e-mail or e-mail links.

Scope of the Problem

More than 25 million U.S. children under the age of 18 currently use the Internet, a number that has tripled since 1997.¹ Given these numbers, findings from a national study of online youth victimization we recently conducted raise concerns about the perils youth are encountering online.² Of the youth we surveyed, 3% of youth ages 10 to 17 reported aggressive solicitation where the solicitor attempted or made offline contact, 19% reported sexual solicitation, and 25% reported unwanted exposure to sexual material while using the Internet in the past year.

The sexual solicitation youth experienced ranged from requests for bra (breast) size to more concerning requests for offline meetings by adults for sexual purposes. The types of pornography youth were exposed to also vary, ranging from pictures of naked people to images that involved sex in combination with violence. Other studies have reported rates ranging from 25% to 44% of youth, 13 to 17 years of age, ever encountering websites that were x-rated or had sexual content.³

"Competing views of the youth who are most at risk for Internet victimization pose a challenge for professionals."

An understanding of the impact of these experiences is just beginning to develop. While most youth appear to brush off these experiences, there is a group of youth who report distress from online sexual solicitations and unwanted exposure. In our study 5% of youth (about 1 in 4 solicited) were very or extremely upset or afraid as a direct result of sexual solicitations and 6% of youth (about 1 in 4 exposed) were very or extremely upset from an unwanted exposure to sexual material.

Who's at Risk

Competing views of the youth who are most at risk for Internet victimization pose a challenge for professionals. One view portrays the youth at highest risk for being ambushed by pornography as those who are naive and troubled. An alternative view suggests that youth who are victimized have substantial online experience and have engaged in risky and even deviant behavior on the Internet. Both of these images are likely to have some truth but present different challenges for professionals.

Identifying the vulnerable population of youth is an important first step in the development of effective prevention and intervention programs surrounding online sexual solicitations and in inform-

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A New Concept to Address CAN in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the Confidential Doctors Offices (CDO) have long been the main reporting centres for child abuse and neglect. The CDOs were created in 1972 in reaction to the Child Care and Protection Boards' inability to respond adequately to the phenomenon of child abuse which had been 'rediscovered' a few years before. The CDOs were a low-threshold provision characterized by a strong emphasis on voluntary assistance and accessibility for doctors. An indirect approach was often taken with families by initiating assistance through professionals in the family's envi-

ronment, such as general practitioners (GPs) and teachers.

In some ways the success of the CDO approach was, in a manner of speaking, its downfall.

"Reporting increased dramatically from approximately 200 reports in 1972 to 15,000 in 1996 while funds lagged behind."

Reporting increased dramatically from approximately 200 reports in 1972 to 15,000 in 1996 while

funds lagged behind, causing major arrears in dealing with the reports. An additional problem was the lack of legal basis for the CDO's mode of operation. The necessary gathering of data in the context of investigation of reports was at odds with privacy

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Child exploitation and the Internet: Responses from the Field

Against Child Abuse - Hong Kong

As in other countries, Hong Kong children and families are facing the threat of child abuse and child exploitation generated through the Internet. With growing numbers of media reports of such cases, ACA has made submissions to two government consultations designed to explore and prevent child abuse and child exploitation on the Internet.

In 1998, ACA made a submission regarding the government's proposed draft Anti-Child Pornography and Child Sex Tourism legislation. More recently (2000), ACA submitted material in response to the government's review of the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance, designed to protect youth from exposure to obscene and indecent materials. However, the government has not yet reached any firm conclusions regarding the adequacy of existing Hong Kong legislation to deal with the issue of internet-based child abuse and child exploitation.

As a more direct response to the issue of child safety and the internet, ACA has created a number of 'Child Safety' Ambassadors -- children and young people who have been trained to educate other young people about safe surfing and of the Internet dangers.

Finally, in a related project, one non-government agency in Hong Kong has attempted to develop a better understanding of youth attitudes and values via the investigation of youth behaviour on the Internet.

Priscilla Lui, Executive Director, ACA, Hong Kong

NAPCAN - Australia

It is clear the Internet is being used by a number of persons across the world to engage children for their own sexual gratification and/or to link up with other persons who have an interest in the exploitation of children and young people.

As the only Australian national non-government organisation advocating for the care and protection of children, NAPCAN believes that it has a role in the care and protection of children and young persons on the Internet. NAPCAN therefore works to ensure the following with regard to the Internet-related exploitation of children:

- Raise awareness and encourage the reporting of child pornography and exploitation of children on the Internet.
- Highlight the dangers to children using 'chatrooms' and engaging with adults on the Internet and the need to better supervise children while they are using the Internet.
- Educate the community about the laws relating to the broadcast and downloading of child pornography on the Internet.

In order to achieve these aims, in 2001 NAPCAN will be hosting a visit to Australia by Kenneth Lanning, recently retired as Special Agent of the FBI in the United States who has specialised in investigating the exploitation of children.

He will be presenting seminars in August and September for child protection specialists and the wider community on the theme of 'Protecting Children From The Hazards of the 21st Century: Exploitation, Pornography and Stalking On The Internet and In The Community'.

John Heslop, NAPCAN Board President, Australia

Editor's Note:

Are efforts underway in your country to address the incidence and consequences of sexual exploitation over the Internet? If so, please let us know so we can share your efforts with other ISPCAN members. Please send us an e-mail at: ispcan@ispcan.org.



Through member efforts, ISPCAN's influence grows at high-level forums

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from Brazil. I am pleased to bring you further encouraging news about ISPCAN's continuing effort to support individuals and organizations working to prevent child abuse and neglect. In June, I traveled with our Executive Director to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS) Preparatory Meeting working to finalize a document that will be presented at the September meeting for governments worldwide to sign and support. This document will establish our global efforts to creating a World Fit for Children and outline the subsequent work needed to design and fully fund a comprehensive implementation plan. ISPCAN participated with affiliated organizations in the NGO Committee on Violence Against Children and the NGO Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation of Children to ensure that these world leaders fully understand the scope of the child abuse and neglect problem and are prepared to make child abuse a global priority.

It is very important for ISPCAN members to understand the importance of our participation in these types of international policy setting meetings. ISPCAN has not traditionally been as active in such forums. However, as a professional organization with members who are experts in such diverse areas as medicine, mental health, judicial and law enforcement, education, sociology, NGO management, government policy, ISPCAN has a unique and important leadership role to play in these forums.

We can contribute critical information for setting short and long-term strategic priorities, in developing solutions and effective implementation plans, and in prioritizing

resource allocations. ISPCAN is proud to have joined our colleagues and their organizations in working on this level with UNICEF and the United Nations.

We will soon initiate a discussion on our ISPCAN Member Listserv asking our members for their valuable input on ideas of how ISPCAN's professional members can contribute locally within

their communities, nationally and internationally - to building effective multidisciplinary approaches to child abuse and neglect. Please plan now to participate - you, our members, are ISPCAN's most important resource - and much needed by so many of the world's children.

One last important note on the work being done by ISPCAN members around the world. You can read separately of the important training going on worldwide through our Oak Foundation-funded training projects in Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, Malaysia, South Africa and Thailand.

I would like to thank each of you for the work you have done, and are doing, on behalf of the Society. We have made greater strides in the prevention, reporting and treating of child abuse and neglect thanks to the efforts of our members in the area of training, public awareness and mutual cooperation. The deeper we delve into this area, the more we realize how pervasive this syndrome is. There is a lot of hard work still to do before we can see an end to child abuse worldwide. I urge you to continue to support ISPCAN and to inform your colleagues of our efforts. We can use more members from all parts of the globe to expand our efforts and impacts.

Thank you for being part of this organization, of which I have the honor to be President at this exciting time.

Franklin Farinati, MD, ISPCAN President, Brazil

"It is very important for ISPCAN members to understand the importance of our participation in international policy setting meetings."

Youth on the Internet: Who is at Risk?

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ing debates about policies regarding youth exposure to Internet pornography. Youth at risk for both online sexual solicitation and unwanted exposure to sexual material tend to be older (14 to 17 years of age); troubled, engage in a high rate of Internet use; frequent chat rooms; talk with strangers online; and use the Internet in households other than their own.⁴ Additionally, females are at an increased risk for online sexual solicitations while youth who use e-mail tend to be at risk for unwanted exposure to sexual material. While these findings suggest that troubled youth and youth with high Internet use and risk behavior may be at increased risk for victimization, caution needs to be taken not to focus exclusively on these groups of youth. Overall, 42% of the youth that reported sexual solicitations and 45% of those reporting unwanted exposure to sexual material were not troubled, high Internet users, or high online risk takers.

Recommendations

As the Internet continues to play an important role in the lives of children and adolescents, professionals will be called upon to develop prevention and intervention strategies to counteract the potential dangers associated with its use. Therefore, expanded research and

training for professionals is necessary concerning Internet perils and how such perils contribute to distress and other psychological and interpersonal problems faced by youth.

Although most of our knowledge about Internet victimization currently comes from U.S.-based statistics, the Internet is part of a global culture. Some aspects, like exposure to pornography, are likely to be encountered by all those using the Internet regularly. More so than other aspects of crime and child maltreatment, these risks may be generalized across countries among young people using the Internet.

It is still not known whether the Internet poses qualitatively new perils to youth or perils that are similar to those we have already been contending with surrounding the problem of child maltreatment. It is necessary to understand the perils of the Internet but important to make sure this concern does not overshadow efforts to combat other conventional forms of child maltreatment. Efforts to address Internet victimization should try to combine with, and not displace, efforts to prevent youth victimization in general.

Kimberly J. Mitchell, Ph.D., David Finkelhor, Ph.D., and Janis Wolak, J.D.
Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

its approach from the way the problem is tackled in many other countries. Three starting points form the basis of the new system:

- Whenever possible abusive families should be offered assistance on a voluntary basis.
- Every citizen and professional has a responsibility for dealing with abused children and their families. The scope of each person's responsibility, however, should be balanced with their skills and qualifications.
- Investigating reports of child abuse and neglect should be based on a maximum of openness toward all parties.

Based on these points the CDOs have been transformed into Advice and Reporting Centres for Child Abuse and Neglect (ARCAN), the central reporting offices for CAN. The ARCANS receive and investigate CAN reports

- 1 Grunwald Associates (2001). Children, families and the internet: The groundbreaking nationwide survey of parents and their children. Available at: <http://www.grunwald.com/survey/download.html>.
- 2 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K.J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth (6-00-020). National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Alexandria, VA.
- 3 Websense. (1999). A study of teens and their use of the internet. Prepared by Yankelovich Partners. Okrent, D. (1999, May 10). Raising kids online: What can parents do? Time, 38-43. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2000). National survey of American adults on technology and national survey of American kids on technology. Menlo Park, CA: National Public Radio, Kaiser Family Foundation, Kennedy School of Government.
- 4 Mitchell, K.J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. Risk factors for and impact of online sexual solicitation of youth. Journal of the American Medical Association, 285 (23), 3011-3014. Mitchell, K.J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2001b). The exposure of youth to unwanted sexual material on the internet: A national study of risk, impact and prevention. Crimes Against Children Research Center, Durham, NH.

and promptly refer investigated reports to social work, child protection, or the police. In addition, the model provides the public and professionals with the opportunity to talk to confidential doctors or social workers from the ARCAN about their insecurities in dealing with suspicions and cases of child maltreatment.

In consultation with the person seeking advice, the ARCAN considers whether or not the suspicion of child maltreatment can be dealt with responsibly by the person reporting. If this is the case, the efforts of the ARCAN are restricted to advice and consult. The responsibility for dealing with the case then rests with the reporter. Often, the advice is to share concerns with the parents or other professionals that are in contact with the same family.

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A New Concept to Address CAN in the Netherlands

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laws passed in 1986. Further, the CDOs were incapable of acquiring the degree of publicity necessary to operate as a central reporting office. Cases of child abuse were reported to several agencies, such as GPs, the police, child protection, or the CDOs. Depending on the more or less arbitrary location of where reports were made, reports could result in voluntary assistance, civil-law protective measures, or criminal prosecution.

A New System

In response to this situation, the Dutch government made changes in the reporting system that differentiate

Editor note:

ISPCAN'S National Partners play a vital role in their respective countries in improving conditions for children and building effective response systems to child abuse and neglect. In order to ensure that ISPCAN members are kept well informed of this work, each issue of The Link will include updates prepared by representatives of these organizations.

We encourage all National Partners to use this opportunity to educate our members about your efforts. If you have not already done so, please contact with Adam Tomison, Associate Editor, National Partners section at: adamt@aifs.org.au to discuss your future submissions.

Cameroon society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (CASPCAN)

In February, 2000, CASPCAN and UNESCO jointly organized a sub-regional seminar in Yaounde (the national capital of Cameroon) entitled the 'Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at School: The Role of Teachers, Parents and the Media'. Following this event five French-speaking African countries began organizing the African French-speaking countries Network on the Abuse of Children (RAFCANE/AFNAC – RAFCANE being the French abbreviation), which is coordinated by the President of CASPCAN.

Working with the Geneva based non-government organisation, Focal Point on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, and with the support of the UNICEF regional office for Central and West Africa, RAFCANE/AFNAC organised a meeting last February of NGO's to discuss the sexual exploitation of children in the region. The meeting was held in Dakar, Senegal. Ten African countries were present: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Niger, RDC (Democratic Republic of Congo), Rwanda, Senegal and Togo.

This meeting also was used to prepare for the UNGASS (UN General Assembly Special Session) on children which will be held this September and the African governments regional conference which will be held in Morocco the following month. With the generous support of the Oak Foundation, RAFCANE/AFNAC will organize a follow-up seminar on child sexual exploitation in schools in Kigali/Rwanda early next year.

The Oak Foundation also has funded the development of a new child abuse treatment center in Yaounde that officially opened this June. This center will serve as a resource for child care providers and professionals. In preparation for the center's launch, CASPCAN organized a training seminar on managing child victims of abuse in general and sexual abuse in particular. To date, CASPCAN has trained 22 professionals, and it is expected that at least seven of the trainees will work as volunteers in the center.

Finally, CASPCAN has been active publishing and disseminating new studies on child maltreatment issues nationally and internationally within the French-speaking region.

Daniel Mbassa Menick, President, CASPCAN, Coordinator of RAFCANE/AFNAC, Cameroon

NAPCAN Australia

NAPCAN is involved in developing and running an ever-growing variety of community education programs and activities across Australia. Perhaps the most important of these is Australia's National Child Protection Week. In 2001, under the theme: "Being a Father is the Most Important Job You'll Ever Do," NAPCAN initiatives around Australia will focus on the following:

- a targeted communication initiative to highlight the importance and positive role of fathering;
- motivating families and communities to become actively involved in creating an environment that is family friendly, supportive and free from violence; and,
- raising awareness in indigenous and multicultural communities of the benefit of a strong nurturing society.

Parenting education seminars, advertising and community education brochures will be used to communicate a number of key messages including:

- the importance of fathering: incorporating Positive Parenting/Learning and Respect;
 - safety on the internet
- Ken Lanning will present a series of seminars around Australia (see separate article);
- information on all forms of family violence, (eg: spouse abuse, child abuse, inappropriate child discipline); and
 - non-violent ways of dealing with conflict targeting aggressive behaviour in schools.

NAPCAN also undertakes a number of activities that run year round. At present, these include Family and Community Workshops which will be held around Australia, starting with New South Wales and followed by Northern Territory and the remaining states. The workshops are based on Aboriginal traditional culture and are structured around child protection issues designed to promote stronger and safer families and communities. In addition, a travelling art exhibition is currently making its way across Australia. The exhibition conveys powerful messages about the benefits of a nurturing environment, community responsibility, learning and respect, strong families and child protection.

NAPCAN will be sponsoring or participating in a number of conferences across the country to educate professionals and raise public awareness of the child abuse problem in Australia. These events include:

- National Australian Conference on Shaken Baby Syndrome, 2-4 September 2001, Sydney -- A conference for practitioners, parents and community members focused on the risk of brain damage that can occur from shaking a baby.
- The 8th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, 19-22 November, 2001, Melbourne -- The conference theme is 'One Child's Reality – Everybody's Responsibility', with presentations organized in three major domains: building capacity; practice leadership; and child protection reform.
- The 15th ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, September, 2004, Brisbane -- NAPCAN is a member of the Steering Committee that is planning the proceedings.

For more information on our organization or activities, please visit our website at: <http://www.napcan.org.au/>

Jean Lombard, NAPCAN National Coordinator, Australia

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National Partner Focus: Against Child Abuse, Hong Kong

Editor's note:

This is the first of in-depth interviews The Link will be conducting with the leadership of ISPCAN's National Partners. We are pleased to begin this series with Ms. Priscilla Lui, Executive Director, Against Child Abuse (ACA) Hong Kong

Against Child Abuse (ACA) Hong Kong

Since its inception in 1979, Against Child Abuse (ACA) has maintained its uniqueness among Hong Kong non-government agencies, providing services solely in the area of child protection and child abuse prevention, with a strong emphasis on advocacy.

Q What is the role of Against Child Abuse (ACA) Hong Kong?

A The mission of ACA is to promote a caring and non-violent environment for the optimal growth of our children. It is our belief that children's survival, protection and development should be given priority, their views should be heard and given due weight. And in the application of these principles, children of every race, creed and colour should be given equal treatment.

ACA's vision is to equip and establish ourselves as one of the leading non-government organisations (NGO's) in the East Asian region, providing quality child protection programs, both remedial and preventive. ACA has four main aims:

- to strive for the removal of all forms of child abuse and/or child neglect in Hong Kong;
- to establish, maintain and support a professional service for the assistance of abused or neglected

children or parents having problems with their children;

- to promote the awareness of the general public in Hong Kong towards prevention of child abuse; and
- to take all lawful and necessary actions that are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives.

Q What is the current membership of ACA?

A ACA currently has approximately 300 members comprised of both parents/families and professionals. The latter are drawn from the medical, legal, child welfare and public relations spheres.

Q How was ACA started and who were the 'key players'?

A The case of Lai Shuk Mee, a 10-year-old girl who had been severely abused, hit the headlines of local

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Profiles of Current ISPCAN National Partners

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South African Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (SASPCAN)

As one of ISPCAN's new partners, SASPCAN is pleased to be able to introduce itself through The Link.

SASPCAN was established in the early 1980's and currently has five established branches across the country, with five additional branches in the process of being established. SASPCAN concentrates its resources around the provision of information and training on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the coordination of such activities, and advocating for children's rights at regional and national levels. Since its establishment, SASPCAN has had a positive influence on the policies and laws affecting children in South Africa.

One of SASPCAN's key activities is an annual training conference. This year the conference will be held from 4-5 October in Johannesburg and will focus on the theme Child Protection and Disability. This is an area that is relatively unexplored in our country. As such, the event will offer a significant educational opportunity to local professionals and policy makers.

Last September, SASPCAN hosted ISPCAN's 13th International Congress on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Durban. One of the commitments made by SASPCAN following the Congress was to continue to pursue the concept of inter-sectoral training, specifically in the management of child sexual abuse. To this end, and in partnership with ISPCAN and the Oak Foundation in Geneva, who are funding this process, we have undertaken a two and a half year program to develop national standards for training in this field, and to train professionals working in the provinces to more effectively manage child abuse cases. The first phase of the training program is to be initiated in the latter part of this year; we are currently involved in collating materials and the planning process. All national government departments working in this field have committed themselves to the process and are actively working with SASPCAN.

Another outcome of the 2000 Congress for SASPCAN was a renewed sense of the importance of children and young people's participation in discussing and working for solutions on issues that impact them personally and directly. At the Youth Forum held at the Congress, SASPCAN resolved to actively consult with young people on issues that affect them. To that end, SASPCAN recently committed itself to consultations with youth around the UN Outcome Document and Global Movement for Children which are current-

ly being discussed around the world, with feedback to be collated and presented to Heads of State at the UN meeting to be held in September 2001. Focusing on young people within the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, SASPCAN has sought input from young people on these documents. The comments and feedback from youth in this region are presently being collated for submission to the South African Government and UNICEF (South Africa) Office.

For more information about our organization or our activities, please visit our website: <http://www.saspcan.org.za> or contact us by e-mail: 092sasp@chiron.wits.ac.za

Zelda Kruger, SASPCAN National Chairperson

Julie Todd, National Vice-Chairperson

South Africa

Japanese Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (JaSPCAN)

Child abuse and neglect is one of the most serious social issues in Japan, as it is in many countries around the world. While the socio-economic status and family structure may be different within different countries, all of us have the same potential to protect children from child abuse and neglect. JaSPCAN's goal is to insure that the issue is recognized and effectively address in all parts of our country.

As part of our educational mission, JaSPCAN, in partnership with ISPCAN, will sponsor an International Symposium of Child Abuse and Neglect - For the Survival, Development and Protection of All the Children in the New Century in Kobe on Thursday, 13 December, 2001. The WHO Kobe Center is providing support for this event. This free symposium is designed to encourage international and multidisciplinary discussion on the prevention of child abuse neglect. The symposium will be conducted in English and international participants are most welcome. Prof. Hajime Nakamura (Kobe University) is coordinating the event. Key speakers include Ms. Meredith S. Wiley (U.S.A.); Prof. Charles Felzen Johnson (U.S.A.); Dr David Gough (U.K.); and Prof. Perla D. Santos-Ocampo (Philippines). Commentators are Dr. Christopher Hobbs (U.K.) and Ms. Yumiko Kirino (JaSPCAN, Japan). The event is free.

For further information, please contact the symposium organisers at the Department of Pediatrics, Kobe University, 7-5-2, Kusunoki-cho, Chuo-ku, Kobe 657-0017 JAPAN. TEL: 078-382-6090 FAX: 078-383-6096 E-mail: children@med.kobe-u.ac.jp

Yasuhide Nakamura, MD, International Committee, JaSPCAN, Hong Kong

National Partner Focus

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newspapers in October, 1978. Moved by the sad case, Priscilla Penn, a freelance journalist donated funds and facilitated the development of a multidisciplinary group of concerned professionals who saw the need to address the problem of child abuse in Hong Kong. This group was the precursor for Against Child Abuse.

Growing out of this group, ACA was initially set up in Kowloon as a pilot project in 1979, the International Year of the Child, with funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club (then the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club). ACA's original mission was to document the extent of child abuse in Hong Kong, but its objectives were extended to cover intervention and prevention services.

In 1982, ACA became a member of the Community Chest of Hong Kong, still ACA's principal source of funding. Supported by the Keswick Foundation, ACA subsequently extended its service to Tuen Mun (New Territories) in August 1986 with a greater emphasis on developing a community education approach to prevent child abuse.

Upon gaining recognition from the Hong Kong Government, ACA was designated a Government Subsidised Agency and began receiving government support in January 1993. In October that year, ACA headquarters was relocated to its current site in the Chuk Yuen (North) Estate in Wong Tai Sin (Kowloon).

Q How has ACA changed or expanded its role over the years?

A Although ACA has expanded into two major centres (Kowloon and the New Territories), the agency has not attempted to dramatically expand its interests or work areas. Rather, the approach has been one of

consolidation and continued, gradual growth. This has been driven mainly by ACA's identification and response to emerging child maltreatment issues and the shift from community education work to a stronger advocacy role in the 1980s.

Growing awareness among ACA members of the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the problems confronting our children, combined with recognition that a strategic and comprehensive plan was required to guide our actions, led to the formation of a children's rights advocacy group within ACA. This group subsequently became the Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights in 1992. A major goal of the Committee was to lobby for the extension of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to Hong Kong. With the Convention ratified in 1994, the Committee established itself as an independent body in December, 1995 (although a strong relationship remains between the agencies).

Q How visible is ACA in Hong Kong (and throughout Asia)?

A First, ACA has developed into one of the key agencies operating to prevent abuse and protect children in Hong Kong. As part of this role ACA has established a strong relationship (and often works in partnership) with the Social Welfare Department (HK statutory agency). ACA's Telephone Hotline service is another form of reaching out to community, providing direct service to children and families and providing a means of enhancing ACA's visibility.

Second, ACA has undertaken mass media campaigns, including a number of campaigns conducted in partnership with other key agencies. In addition, ACA has a strong role developing and assisting with the promotion of child abuse prevention messages across the Asia region. This is supplemented by ACA's

involvement in the provision of training and education internationally, particularly in the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Finally, local and international recognition of ACA's progress in combating child abuse and promoting children's rights and perhaps more broadly, the progress made by Hong Kong, is reflected by a number of awards that have been presented to ACA staff. Our founding member and current vice chairperson, Dr Patricia Ip was awarded ISPCAN's C. Henry Kempe Award in 2000. In 1990, Priscilla Lui received one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons Awards; in 2000 she was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Award by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government.

Q What do you believe have been the greatest challenges ACA has had to face?

A We have had to work hard to overcome our society's tolerance for child abuse and neglect and to working through public, professional and government resistance to acknowledging the child maltreatment problem. The community assumption has been that Hong Kong is an affluent society, combined with a failure to recognise that this is not everyone's reality.

Q What have been ACA's greatest accomplishments?

A First, the Hong Kong community's greater awareness of the various forms of child abuse and neglect and knowledge of what are appropriate and inappropriate forms of childrearing. Second, ACA's lead role in developing research and educational campaigns relating to child abuse and neglect in Hong Kong.

Q What are the key components of ACA today?

A In addition to providing a wide array of direct services (e.g., hot lines, casework counseling, group work and

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INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME OF ISPCAN (ITPI)

ISPCAN initiated the ITPI this year to train future professionals in child abuse prevention and treatment. Through the generous support of the Oak Foundation, ISPCAN is working with Project Leaders in six developing countries -- Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand and Malaysia-- to develop professional training programs and expand local capacity to respond more effectively to the challenge of child abuse. The project will be implemented in each area over the next 24 to 36 months.

In each country, sessions and workshops will be organized to address different aspects of the child maltreatment problem. Specific project goals include the following:

- to provide training and support to local professionals working in the area of child abuse and neglect;
- to better integrate local professionals with the broader array of other professional and educational opportunities existing within and outside their immediate regions; and
- to ensure the sustainability of professional and training resources within each country beyond the three-year period.

Each country's project objectives are determined by the specific needs of their region. Brief overviews for each country are as follows:

Argentina

The objective of the project is to train the law enforcement, medical, social work, policy making and mass media representatives who are actively involved in the process of putting to work a new legislation proce-

dures regarding children's rights and child protection that have recently passed in Argentina. The main goal of the training is to address those actively involved in order to enhance the attention and assistance delivered to CAN cases.

Brazil

The community-based training project will address multidisciplinary professionals. The main focus will be placed on intrafamilial sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect, and especially intervention and protection. Objectives will include identifying and analyzing the barriers of effective child protection within the community; motivating universities to integrate CAN prevention/treatment focus into their curriculum, and raising awareness of CAN in communities.

Kenya

Building multidisciplinary teams through trainings targeting professional regional audience forms a priority focus in Kenya. Apart from the main topic other issues to be addressed include developing a clear definition of child abuse and neglect; developing a profile of the child abuse problem in Kenya (causes, consequences, current response); examining the legal system for insuring child protection; and developing effective prevention strategies.

South Africa

Intersectoral training of at least 40 professionals per workshop will be conducted in various regions. The main focus of the training will be placed on improvement of the management of child sexual abuse cases by developing a

more integrated team approach. SCAN teams will be formed in various communities in order to manage child abuse cases more effectively. Government and other national organizations in the child protection field will be involved in the planning and implementation of the project.

Malaysia

The country project priority focus will be positioned on training of disciplines involved in assessment, follow-up and treatment, and legal interventions concentrating on social workers, doctors, police officers, public prosecutors and magistrates. The Malaysian country leaders will focus on training magistrates to more consistently focus on "child interests" in court.

Thailand

The country project will focus on national implementation of a training program titled "Building a Caring Society for Child Care and Protection". Priority focus will be placed on social reintegration of child victims by expanding the use of multidisciplinary team, training communities on how to organize child and family services at the local level, and training families on how to organize child and family services at hospitals, schools, and other settings.

For specific information on the projects and specific dates of training events in each country, please visit the ISPCAN web site at www.ispcan.org. The ITPI is listed under Training Events.

Anna Quintanilla, ISPCAN Education Manager, U.S.A.



Calendar of Events

2001 ISPCAN Latin American Regional Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect

Dates: 17 - 20 October 2001

Venue: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Contact: asapmi@hotmail.com

14th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect

Dates: 7 - 10 July 2002

Venue: Denver, Colorado USA

Theme: Charting our progress toward children worldwide.

Organized by: President of Congress Franklin Farinati, Chairperson Richard Krugman, Co-chairs, Scientific Advisory Committee Jon Conte, and Donald C. Bross

Contact: 2002@kempecenter.org

A Chance to Host 2006 International Congress

ISPCAN invites applications from groups and organizations interested in hosting the Society's 2006 International Congress. Applicants must work in the area of child protection.

Potential applicants should contact Kimberly Svevo, ISPCAN Executive Director, at the address below, for guidelines and an application form.

Completed applications must reach Ms. Svevo by 5 December 2001. Applications are especially welcome from parts of the world where there has not yet been an ISPCAN International Congress.

Past and Upcoming Congresses have been held in:

Australia (2004)	Brazil (1988)
USA (2002)	Australia (1986)
South Africa (2000)	Canada (1984)
New Zealand (1998)	France (1982)
Ireland (1996)	The Netherlands (1980)
Malaysia (1994)	England (1978)
USA (1992)	Switzerland (1976)
Germany (1990)	

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 ISPCAN website: www.ispcan.org

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The Oak Foundation

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NEW ISPCAN MEMBERS

ISPCAN warmly welcomes new members joining from March through June 2001

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Joan Peterson

AUSTRALIA

Catherine Harman

BOTSWANA

Munyae M. Mulinge

BRAZIL

Jose Carlos de Andrade Duarte

CAMEROON

Forzi George Ngu

CANADA

Sonia Gentile

Lynn Huizer

Alex Levin

Judythe Little

Judi Shields

COLOMBIA

Carlos Alberto

Montoya

DOMINICA

Doreen Francis

ENGLAND

Margaret Adcock

Terry Murphy

Jean Price

FRANCE

Nicole Ageneau-

Duniau

Dominique Girodet

Francoise Hochart

Janine Oxley

Gaby Taub

ICELAND

Gudrun Erna

Hreidarsdottir

IRELAND

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JAPAN

Reigetsu Kaku

Yumiko Kirino

Seiji Sakai

KYRGYZSTAN

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Gerrit C. Barnard

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NIGERIA

Tewo Bakare

Chika G. Ugochukwu

NORWAY

Jan Herman Rorvik

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Isabel Pinto Ribeiro

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Luis Sanchez-Caso

SINGAPORE

John Elliott

Gerardine Nonis-Yap

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Don Snyder

Deanne Tilton-Durfee

Patricia Toth

Craig Zacuto



As ISPCAN expands our member services and activities, and in response to members' interest in a low-cost and timely communication forum among themselves worldwide, we have created ISPCAN's newest membership benefit - ISPCAN's Membership Community Listserv. This group email for interactive member discussions affords members the opportunity to share information in a professional manner regardless of geographical boundaries.

Former ISPCAN President elected to lead UN's CRC

ISPCAN is proud to announce that ISPCAN Past President Jaap E. Doek (The Netherlands), previously Rapporteur of the Committee on the Rights of the Child has been elected the New Committee President. ISPCAN members and staff join in congratulating Jaap and look forward to how ISPCAN and the Committee can mutually support our common goals by working together in future. Jaap was the contributor of The LINK's previous 3-part series on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ISPCAN forges new relationships and adds new member services



Dear ISPCAN Members,

First, ISPCAN would like to thank our USA National Partner - the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children - for hosting us at their recent (19-23 June) Annual Colloquium in Washington, D.C. ISPCAN provided an international track of professional speakers from Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Mexico, and the USA, as well as staffed our membership booth throughout the event. While at the APSAC Colloquium, we brought together a prestigious group of professionals affiliated with APSAC, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, the American Bar Association and the National Counsel for Children, to talk about the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). U.S.A. ISPCAN members and partners were very interested in discussing the CRC and other UN Protocols being debated by the United Nations to explore their potential impacts on children in the United States. The meeting was very interesting and ongoing discussions by our American colleagues will continue.

I'm pleased to introduce three new staff members in this issue: Membership Manager - Dornubari John-Miller (originally from Nigeria); Office Manager/Accountant - John Hill; and Administrative/ Communication Coordinator - Suzan Gheith. All three joined our staff between 1 March and 1 June 2001. These positions represent an increase in our staff by one additional person, an increase that will provide greater staff support for

our educational and training events and allow us to further expand membership services.

More online services

A key part of improving services to our members has been the development and expansion of our Web/Internet Services program. If you have not visited the ISPCAN web page <www.ispcan.org> lately (especially our searchable Membership Database) - we hope you will do so today! We think you will be very pleased with the appearance and content.

Our most recent new member benefit is the ISPCAN Member Listserv (in English), which we introduced 1 July 2001. This Listserv will enable our ISPCAN Community (members only), which is composed of over 1800 CAN prevention/treatment professionals from more than 100 countries, to actively exchange information and experiences to support one another's efforts. Further, this important new service will allow ISPCAN to communicate to you on a timely basis - regarding news, announcements, ISPCAN affairs/events and information on our National Partners. How else can you ask other mental health professionals worldwide to comment on a new issue you are facing or request multidisciplinary feedback on a child protection concern you have?

If you have not already participated in these on-line discussions, we invite you to do so. If you have already used this service, please let us know what you think and provide any ideas you might have for improving the system. And what do you think about the potential value of an additional SPANISH LANGUAGE LISTSERV (tentatively planned to start late this year)? I will look forward to your feedback!

If you have not given us your email address yet - and have not yet received an ISPCAN Member Listserv announcement - please email Membership Manager Dornubari John-Miller at Membership@ISPCAN.org.

Warm regards,

Kimberly Svevo, CAE,
ISPCAN Executive Director, U.S.A.

New Associate Editors Join LINK Team

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new Associate Editors for The Link. Each of these individuals will be responsible for organizing our coverage of specific areas of interest to ISPCAN members. The new Associate Editors and their responsibilities are:

Adam Tomison Ph.D., Associate Editor for National Partner News

Adam is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies where he acts as the Research Advisor for Australia's National Child Protection Clearinghouse. He is currently an advisor to the Australian Council for Children and Parenting; a member of the Prevention and Education, and Research and Advocacy Committees of Australians Against Child Abuse; the Australian Family Research Network; the Coalition for Australia's Children; President of the Board of Management of the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (CSAPP); and a Director of the UNESCO 'Innocence in Danger' South Pacific Regional Action group.

Michelle Johnson MSW., Associate Editor for Special Interest Articles

Michelle is with Hawaii's Child Welfare Services Branch, Department of Human Services, USA. In her capacity as a planner, she works with communities statewide to plan and implement CAN prevention and treatment programs that are responsive to local needs. Using performance data, she works with Department staff and community partners to improve outcomes for abused and neglected children through advances in management and systems coordination. She currently staffs Hawaii's Citizen Review Panels for Child Protection.

Sally Nyandiya-Bundy, Ph.D. Associate Editor for Training

Sally is a researcher and educator at the University of Zimbabwe. She was a founder of the Zimbabwe ANPPCAN Chapter and is currently coordinating a formal affiliation of the Zimbabwe ANPPCAN Chapter with ISPCAN as part of our National Partner Program. She was an ISPCAN sponsored scholar at the ISPCAN International Congress in Durban South Africa (September 2000). Sally has experience training and has worked to influence practice standards throughout her own country as well as in the region.

National Partner Focus: Hong Kong

(continued from page 4)

professional training), ACA manages several large prevention efforts. Some of these efforts include:

- **Let the Dolphin Lead:** an empowerment program for children and young people. The dolphin symbolises children who are unique, energetic, dynamic but endangered by the surrounding environment.

- **Ambassador programs:** ACA mobilises the community by actively training volunteers and a number of UN Child Ambassadors to convey child safety, child protection and child's rights messages and to encourage a healthy and holistic life style in a child and family-friendly environment. ACA has also created a number of 'Child Safety' Ambassadors - children and young people trained to educate other young people about safe surfing and the dangers of the internet.

- **Healthy Start:** a home visitation program initiated by ACA in 1997 that trains volunteer mothers to provide knowledge, skills and support to families in the pre-natal and postnatal stages. Funding and manpower constraints have limited the service to three towns (Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai). Recently, however, a second round of volunteer training for Healthy Start has begun, with sponsorship from the HK Jockey Club. The program evaluation (report available) has demonstrated the program's worth to both volunteers and target families.

- **Rainbow Project:** a three year project launched in January 1999 to assess the nature and extent of child sexual abuse in Hong Kong and to provide prevention and treatment services for needy children and families. The program includes therapeutic groups, a CD-ROM providing information on child sexual abuse and harassment for parents and teachers, and a 'child safety' (personal safety) notebook for children and young people.

- **Train the Trainer (TOT) Project:** to provide child sexual abuse identification and prevention training to professionals working with children and parents. The project seeks to train direct service staff to organise child sexual abuse prevention programs for children and parents and to raise their sensitivity to the need for the early identification of abuse. A recent evaluation of the project (released in March 2001) found that the intervention had a positive impact on parents' and teachers' knowledge and attitudes to reporting sexual abuse.

Q What do you see as the key CAN issues that need to be addressed in Hong Kong?

A ACA has recently moved to adopt a stronger role in the general promotion of children and young people's health and wellbeing - an area that has traditionally been inadequately addressed. Two other areas targeted for further work are:

- emotional abuse and neglect. Such maltreatment is substantially underestimated in Hong Kong, partly because of the community's continued tolerance of such maltreatment; and

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A New Concept to Address CAN in the Netherlands

(continued from page 2)

Sometimes people who call the ARCAN receive advice about the way they can further explore their suspicions or about services to whom they can refer families. The ARCAN also offers advice and support in the way people can talk to a child or parent without being accusatory. If necessary, advice is extended over several contacts to provide more intense support and coaching. In all cases of advice and consult, the name of the child involved remains unknown to the ARCAN.

Everyday ARCAN practice has shifted more and more from investigation of reports to advice given to professionals, neighbours, family members, and others. It is estimated that every year between 50,000 and 80,000 children in The Netherlands are abused or neglected. In 1999, the ARCANS were contacted about 20,000 times. In 14,000 cases, advice was given. The remaining 6,000 cases were investigated by the ARCANS and in the majority of these cases the families involved were offered assistance on a voluntary basis. It is estimated that about 1,200 of the investigated cases were referred to the Child

Care and Protection Board. It is expected that the number of CAN cases referred for state intervention will remain very small.

Cases Increase, Reports Decrease

Over the past few years, we have seen a steady increase in the number of cases handled through advice by the ARCANS, whereas the number of reports made has decreased. To address the concern that this change in practice, although implemented, had never been evaluated, 36 school physicians and 77 teachers who had been advised by an ARCAN were interviewed about the advice given, their intentions, and their actions in handling the case or suspicion of child maltreatment. Six weeks after the advice had been given, 88% of the respondents had undertaken actions to address the problem. Eleven percent had not taken any steps. These results are encouraging but also have some limitations. First, almost half (47%) of the respondents indicate that after these six weeks nothing has changed in the child's situation. The changes that have occurred in 45% of the cases are very often limited to small improvements for the child. Future studies should therefore focus on long term outcomes

and compare the improvement of the child's situation in those cases in which advice is given to those cases that ARCAN investigates.

The Dutch approach means that many people –both professionals and public– are involved in addressing the problem of child abuse and neglect. However, we do link expectations and responsibilities to an individual's knowledge and skills. Professionals such as medical doctors and social workers, who have more possibilities and knowledge, are expected to do more than neighbours and family members. In addition, we believe that we should reach out to abusive families and offer assistance rather than choose state intervention. However, we do not yet know what the outcomes of this approach are for the wellbeing of maltreated children.

We would like to learn from experiences in other countries that have tried to find similar solutions, and welcome any suggestions to improve our approach. Please feel free to e-mail us at P.Baeten@nizw.nl.

Paul Baeten

**Dutch Institute for Care and Welfare
Expertise Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect
The Netherlands**

National Partner Focus

(continued from page 7)

- addressing the current, strong economic rationalist approach adopted by government and the corresponding lesser focus on social issues.

Q What of ACA's future directions? Could you describe any plans for expansion?

A ACA needs to bring about fundamental changes in

attitudes and concepts in child protection which include the introduction of a set of coherent policies and legislation, setting minimum standards on education, health and welfare of children, as well as taking effective measures to educate the public and publicise the protection of children.

Apart from improving the existing service delivery system, ACA will embark on programs that empower children and mobilise the community to better protect our children. Two of our new efforts include advocat-

ing for the development of a Hong Kong Children's Commission and building a model "child safety center." This center will use games and fun activities to tackle environmental, health and well-being concerns. The aim is to develop a "one stop shop" approach for providing interaction and support in a non-stigmatising manner.

**Adam Tomison, Ph.D., National Child Protections
Clearinghouse, Australia**

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Mission: To support individuals and organizations working to protect children from abuse and neglect worldwide.

THE LINK is published three times annually by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)

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