ECPAT-USA
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
YOUTH AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING PROGRAM 2018 – 2019
ABOUT ECPAT-USA

ECPAT-USA is the leading anti-child trafficking organization in the United States. We are a member of ECPAT International, a network of international organizations with over 100 member countries, all working to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Our mission is to protect every child’s human right to grow up free from the threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking; our vision is a world in which no child is bought, sold, or used for sex. To accomplish these goals, ECPAT-USA:

1. Advocates for federal and state policy and legislation that prevent exploitation, protect children, and guarantee that any child who is subjected to sex trafficking or exploitation will not be prosecuted in the courts for prostitution.
2. Promotes corporate responsibility among private companies with a strong focus on the tourism sector.
3. Educates first responders and ordinary citizens about this issue so that they can identify victims and join us in the fight to better protect children.
4. Empowers youth to take the lead against human trafficking by equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to help them become activists against trafficking.
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Program Description
Educating Youth to Take the Lead

ECPAT-USA developed our Youth Against Child Trafficking (Y-ACT) program to prevent child trafficking through youth education and empowerment. In doing so, Y-ACT educates, mobilizes, and develops the leadership skills of young people. Y-ACT trains youth to be spokespeople in their communities, advocating against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Y-ACT’s interactive, skills-based curriculum utilizes a holistic, trauma-informed approach. Through facilitated workshops and guided conversations, middle school and high school students throughout New York City learn about the realities of child sexual exploitation in their communities, how they can protect themselves, and what they can do to raise awareness about the issue.

The three workshops are:

1. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 101
   For many people, the term “human trafficking” conjures up images of kidnapping or physical restraint of girls in developing countries. Students learn about popular misconceptions, vulnerable populations, and warning signs of child sex trafficking so that they can identify it locally and serve as advocates for their peers. The session closes out with a “call to action” so that participants leave with concrete steps they can take to help raise awareness about this human rights abuse happening in our backyard.

2. Healthy Relationships (HR) 101
   Many survivors of sex trafficking report having been groomed to view their trafficker as a romantic partner. With this in mind, HR 101 explores the components of healthy and unhealthy relationships (romantic and platonic), power, and control within relationships, consent, and related topics. Youth especially enjoy this workshop, as the session includes a self-reflection piece that encourages students to strategize on improving the health of their existing relationships and to leave any unhealthy relationships.

3. Healthy Virtual Identities (HVI) 101
   With the growth of the technology, sex trafficking is rapidly moving from the streets to online venues; traffickers are savvy at using social media platforms to lure in and recruit new victims. To protect our youth from online predators, HVI 101 explores the components of “healthy virtual identities,” addresses the “do’s & don’ts” of social media, catfishing, warning signs of online predators, and related topics. Participants are encouraged to think of ways to make their online identity healthier, while still having fun and participating online.
Guiding Principles

Diversity
Every year, thousands of people of every age, race, creed, class, gender, and sexual orientation fall victim to trafficking. Y-ACT takes the position that all youth deserve inclusive, responsive learning experiences. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and therefore have different cultural influences on their belief systems, especially about sexuality and the sex industry. Materials used in our workshops incorporate different perspectives and consciously avoid perpetuating cultural or ethnic stereotypes.

Empathy
Each student’s own experience demands respect in the classroom. Y-ACT accommodates youth who have undergone adverse childhood experiences while acknowledging the potential influence of these experiences on their risk for exploitation. We aim to create a trauma-informed framework that reduces triggering students who may have suffered through traumatic events. Language, visuals, structure, and policies in the classroom respect the reality of the students’ experiences.

Empowerment
We believe in the voice of every young person and that every child has the right to advocate for healthy decisions about their well-being. We aim to elucidate the nature of trafficking and provide protective behaviors so that students have the tools to stand up for themselves and their peers.

Impact
Long-term success requires reflection, innovation, and sustained effort. To further our impact, we evaluate our successes and challenges openly and act based on what we learn.
Program Highlights

Since the program’s genesis in 2014, our free workshop series has been shared with over 6,500 young people at schools and youth-based organizations. Y-ACT works closely with youth so that they can become the generation to end human trafficking and exploitation. Additionally, in conjunction with our workshops, Y-ACT leaders across NYC participate in activities such as:

**Advocacy**
For the fifth consecutive year, Y-ACT student leaders participated in the Girls Stand Up to Stop Sexual Violence panel during the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. This panel was remarkable as it also featured Barbara Amaya, a policy expert and survivor of sexual exploitation. Ms. Amaya is an award-winning advocate, speaker, trainer, and author of Amazon’s best selling memoir *Nobody’s Girl* and the graphic novel *The Destiny of Zoe Carpenter*. The panelists elucidated strategies to support the anti-sex trafficking movement, what makes girls susceptible to traffickers, and how they can combat these tactics by encouraging young girls to be confident and bold, to stand up for themselves and their peers.

**Service**
Y-ACT co-sponsored our sister anti-trafficking organization, Saving Jane, for their end-of-summer cultural bash for under-served youth in NYC. After months of collaborating with producers, cast, and crew of the interactive, acclaimed musical OSCAR at The Crown, Y-ACT co-presented a free performance for NYC youth who are homeless, survivors of human trafficking, LGBTQ+, immigrant, in recovery, or a member of other under-served populations. The immersive musical included singing, dancing, and moving stage platforms – all happening inches from the crowd. Over 25 youth organizations, representing over 100 at-risk young people, attended the show!

**Activism**
Students from our Y-ACT clubs from Brooklyn Technical High School and Stuyvesant High School raised funds and conducted clothing and food drives to benefit anti-trafficking organizations. Students at Poly Prep Country Day School created bracelets for survivors of trafficking, wrote letters to encourage Congress to support anti-trafficking legislation, and wrote notes to encourage travel and tourism organizations to become a part of The Code. These Y-ACT trained youth leaders were honored with the Next Generation award at ECPAT-USA’s annual Freedom Awards Gala.
“Y-ACT trains youth to be spokespeople in their communities, advocating against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.”
a. Methods

For the 2017-2018 academic school year (September 2017 - June 2018), the Y-ACT program served 2,187 youths between the ages of 12 - 22 years. Y-ACT workshops were conducted at 30 organizations, including middle schools and high schools across New York City, and other not-for-profit institutions.

Of the 2,187 youths who received our workshops, 1,664 (76%) youths received and completed the 3 question, pre/post-test survey for our Child Sexual Exploitation Workshop, 1,365 (62%) for our Healthy Relationships workshop, and 1,494 (68%) for our Healthy Virtual Identities Workshop. Comprehensively, the data showed that there was a positive increase in scores on the post-test illustrating the effectiveness of the workshops as an intervention.

b. Demographics

For the 2018-2019 academic year, Y-ACT served 1,454 youth ranging from sixth to twelfth grade, with the average student age of 15 years old. Y-ACT workshops were conducted at 14 locations, including middle schools and high schools across New York City and other non-profit institutions. 465 students received and fully completed the three-question pre/post-test survey for our Child Sexual Exploitation workshop, 787 for our Healthy Relationships workshop, and 211 for our Healthy Virtual Identities Workshop. Comprehensively, the data showed a positive increase in post-test scores, illustrating the effectiveness of the workshops as an intervention tool.

c. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 101

- 465 students received both the CSE 101 workshop and completed the pre- and post-test assessments.
- The average age for this workshop was 15 years old. The gender distribution is highlighted in the pie chart below.
- There was a significant, positive increase in the average grade on the survey from 62% on the pre-evaluation to 88% on the post-evaluation.
Gender Distribution, CSE 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67% of students who initially did not know or incorrectly answered “What is sex trafficking?” were able to define it correctly on the post-evaluation as “a person under 18 is convinced to participate in commercial sex.” 90% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

80% of the participants who initially did not know or incorrectly answered whether or not, “Boys and girls are victims of child sex trafficking” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation as “True.” 83% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

81% of the participants who did not know or incorrectly answered “How do traffickers usually lure in their victims?” were able to correctly answer on the post-evaluation “Targeting specific individuals then building trusting relationships with them.” 88% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

70% of the participants who initially did not know or incorrectly answered whether or not, “Sex trafficking only occurs in other countries” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation as “False.” 89% of youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.
CSE Survey

Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is child sex trafficking</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the United States, girls and boys are victims of child sex trafficking</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do traffickers usually lure in their victims?</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex trafficking only happens in other countries?</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**d. Healthy Relationships (HR) 101**

- **787 students** received both the HR 101 workshop and completed the pre- and post-test assessments.
- The average student age for this workshop was 15 years old. The gender distribution is highlighted in the pie chart, below.
- There was a significant, positive increase in the average grade on the survey from 74% on the pre-evaluation to 85% on the post-evaluation.
Gender Distribution, HR 101

58% of students who initially did not know or incorrectly answered, “What is dating violence/abuse?” were able to define it correctly on the post-evaluation as, “A pattern of behaviors used to show power & control over a romantic partner.” 85% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

55% of the youth who initially did not know or incorrectly answered “You know someone has given consent if,” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation, “They give enthusiastic, verbal permission without being tricked or pressured.” 84% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

68% of the youth who initially did not know or incorrectly answered whether or not, “What is a good way to help a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship?” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation as, “Tell your friend that you are concerned and offer support.” 94% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

60% of the youth who initially did not know or incorrectly answered whether or not, “Why do people abuse their partner/friend/family?” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation as, “Because they are trying to show power and control over them.” 84% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.
HR Survey

**Survey Questions**

- **Dating violence/abuse** is ONLY when someone physically abuses their partner?
- **What is consent?**
- **What is a good way to help a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship?**
- **Why do people abuse their partner/friend/family?**

**Number of Correct Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating violence/abuse is ONLY when someone physically abuses their partner?</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is consent?</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a good way to help a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship?</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do people abuse their partner/friend/family?</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>660</td>
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**Healthy Virtual Identities (HVI) 101**

- 211 students received both the HVI 101 workshop and completed the pre- and post-test assessments.
- The average age for this workshop was 16 years old. The gender distribution is highlighted in the pie chart below.
- There was a significant, positive increase in the average grade on the survey from 67% on the pre-evaluation to 84% on the post-evaluation.
Gender Distribution, HVI

73% of students who initially did not know or incorrectly answered, “Traffickers use social media to recruit and identify their victims” were able to define it correctly on the post-evaluation as, “true.” 90% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

64% of participants who initially did not know or incorrectly answered whether or not, “Sending or receiving sexual images, videos, or messages (sexting) of someone under 18 years old is illegal and may result in criminal charges” were able to answer correctly on the post-evaluation as, “true.” 90% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

63% of the youth who initially did not know or incorrectly answered “Who owns the information you post on your social media accounts?” were able to correctly answer the post-evaluation, “You do not own any information you post on social media” 75% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.

43% of the youth who initially did not know or incorrectly answered “Which statement represents an example of what would be on a healthy online social media account?” were able to correctly answer the post-evaluation, “Posting a photo of you and your best friend at prom together.” 79% of all participating youth answered this question correctly on the post-evaluation.
f. Student Feedback

On their questionnaires, participants had the option to provide feedback on the workshop.

This year, students’ comments generally fell into four categories:
1. They were grateful for the information that most other people do not discuss with them;
2. They appreciated the presenters who were conducting the workshops;
3. They appreciated the style, activities, and spirit of the workshop and activities;
4. They shared a better understanding of content relevant to their own life experiences.

For CSE 101, 66% of students were interested in learning more about child trafficking and 69% were interested in raising awareness about child sex trafficking.
Students interested in learning more about child sex trafficking

- Yes: 66.7%
- No: 33.3%

Interested in raising awareness about sex trafficking

- Yes: 64.6%
- No: 35.4%
Students were also able to write any comments they had about the workshop. Selected comments are listed below.

“I like it, it was breathtaking, it was awesome. I'm sure I would like to learn more about it.”

——
FEMALE, 17

“I really liked being able to hear an actual victim's story, as it really shows the true, raw ending that comes with this.”

——
FEMALE, 17

“I think learning about this kind of thing is good because if you're getting abused you would see the signs of abuse and know what to do.”

——
FEMALE, 14

“You never really get to hear people talking about sex-trafficking, it's more slipped under the rug. I believe everyone should do a workshop like this.”

——
FEMALE, 16

“I liked today's workshop it put things into view, even the nitty gritty of sex trafficking.”

——
FEMALE, 17

For HR 101, our most popular workshops this year, 72% of young people said they will use the knowledge learned from the session, and 68% said they will share this knowledge with people they know.
I will use the knowledge gained today in my personal life

- Yes: 72.7%
- No: 27.3%

I will share the knowledge gained today with people I know

- Yes: 68.7%
- No: 31.3%
Student Comments:

“The workshop that we did today was ok cause we learned how to defend ourselves in a toxic relationship.”

— MALE, 14

“I think that what we talked about today about abusive relationships and everything will help people in the future. I liked what we learned about today.”

— FEMALE, 14

“The workshop that we did today was ok cause we learned how to defend ourselves in a toxic relationship.”

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“I think that what we talked about today about abusive relationships and everything will help people in the future. I liked what we learned about today.”

— FEMALE, 14

“I learned a lot about things that I didn't even know was important for my relationships.”

— FEMALE, 16

“I like this because it’s real in a lot of cases people think they have power over you.”

— FEMALE, 14

“I like this because it’s real in a lot of cases people think they have power over you.”

— FEMALE, 14

“I learned a lot about things that I didn't even know was important for my relationships.”

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“I learned a lot about things that I didn't even know was important for my relationships.”

— FEMALE, 16

“I like this because it’s real in a lot of cases people think they have power over you.”

— FEMALE, 14

“Today the thing I was told was very informative. I learned what it means to trust someone. I learned about how to leave unhealthy relationships.”

— MALE, 18

“Today the thing I was told was very informative. I learned what it means to trust someone. I learned about how to leave unhealthy relationships.”

— MALE, 18

“I like that we had plenty of our questions answered and were given respect and the right to an opinion.”

— MALE, 16

“I liked how she gave real-life scenarios to elaborate on her points about safer sex and trust in a relationship.”

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“I liked how she gave real-life scenarios to elaborate on her points about safer sex and trust in a relationship.”

— MALE, 17

“Liked the physical activity, moving across the room for the healthy/unhealthy relationship scenarios.”

— FEMALE, 14

“Liked the physical activity, moving across the room for the healthy/unhealthy relationship scenarios.”

— FEMALE, 14

For HVI 101, 63% of students were interested in learning more about child trafficking online and 69% were interested in raising awareness about child sex trafficking.
Students interested in learning more about child sex trafficking online

41.0% No

59.1% Yes

Students interested in raising awareness about child sexual exploitation

49.1% No

51.0% Yes
Student Comments:

“I love how we talked about what will happen if you do something and enlighten us on what not to do and what to stay away from. Hopefully, we have more workshops like this.”

FEMALE, 15

“It was helpful to learn new things because sometimes these things happen in my family and now I can give advice to the victims in my family”

FEMALE, 15

“I like today’s workshop. It helps me better understand catfishing, sexting, etc.”

FEMALE, 14

“I really like this presentation because it helps me learn a little bit more about the risks of social media.”

MALE, 14
Y-ACT will engage with not only youth but also parents, educators, and teachers about online safety measures when young people, now more than ever, are vulnerable to online predators.”
g. Moving Forward

Participants often left the workshops equipped with new language to confront the issue and enthused about what they had just learned. From our findings reported here, as well as from our experiences and interactions with participants, leaders, staff, and stakeholders committed to protecting young people, we believe that our three-workshop series was effective in reaching its objective to enable participants to:

- Define basic concepts and terminology in regards to trafficking, healthy/unhealthy relationships, and online safety
- Discuss their own attitudes, opinions, and experiences about a public health issue found in all cities across the US.
- Raise awareness about trafficking within their own communities.

Before our workshops, we found that many participants were at least somewhat aware of child sex trafficking in the United States, but many did not know that boys can also be a victim of sex trafficking. Through our Child Sex Trafficking workshop, participants were able to understand the luring tactics of traffickers. As Y-ACT continues to develop, we hope to continue to educate young people that anyone, including boys, can be a victim of trafficking.

By the end of our Healthy Relationships workshop, most participants were able to correctly identify intimate partner violence and examples of consent. As Healthy Relationships continues to be the most popular of our workshop series, Y-ACT will continue to emphasize the importance of young people receiving the skills necessary to create and maintain positive relationships and avoid unhealthier ones.

The results of our Healthy Virtual Identities workshop demonstrated that many students were not fully aware of the privacy of their information once it is posted on social media platforms. Y-ACT will engage with not only youth but also parents, educators, and teachers about online safety measures when young people, now more than ever, are vulnerable to online predators.
Protecting every child’s human right to grow up free from the threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking.