



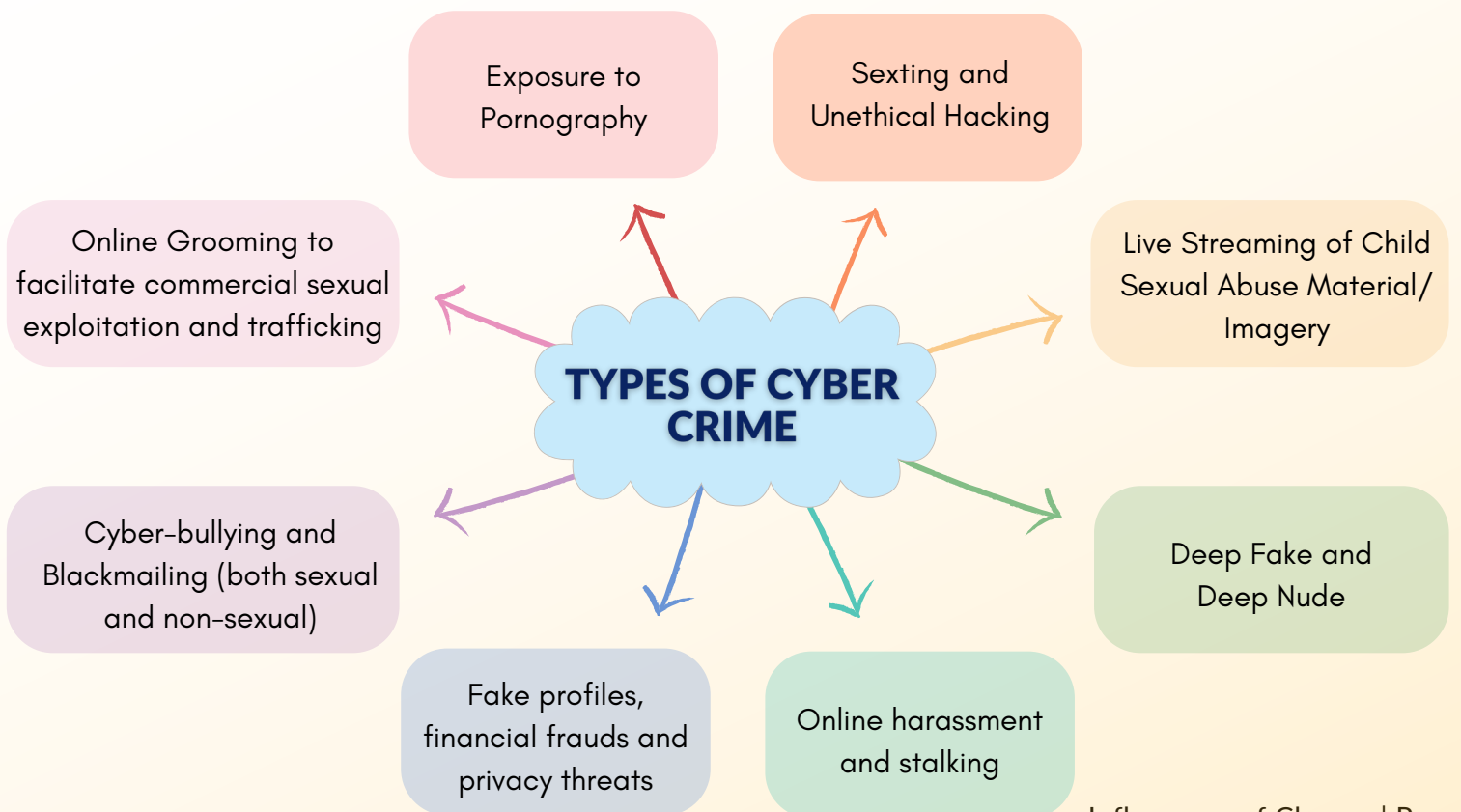
The Problem

It has been almost 04 years since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the most marginalized communities are still facing its aftermath. During the time of the pandemic-induced lockdown, many experienced emotional, physical and financial distress. An emerging challenge was born out of it: the shift from offline to online. Smartphones and internet became a survival necessity for adults, youth and children, which meant an increased access to online space and an enhanced exposure to the pros and cons of the virtual world. Children and youth were now at greater risk of being exposed to online forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, and cyber frauds due to limited or no knowledge of protection against it.

As per the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB)



More than 400 per cent increase in cyber crime cases committed against children was reported in 2020 in comparison to 2019, with most of them relating to publishing or transmitting of materials depicting children in sexually explicit act.





Influencers of Change Program

During a conversation with the youth about the increasing reliance on technology and social media, the crimes related to the same, and its effects on their well-being, the idea of organizing training sessions on online safety emerged. This cohort of skilled young individuals wanted to enhance their understanding on cyber crime and cyber well-being, build awareness among their peers and the community, and contribute to the society at large. Considering these factors, Prerana collaborated with **Responsible Netism** as a **knowledge partner** to design and conduct a training initiative for the **cohort of 25 youth**. After an in-depth discussion about the objective of the program, the youth collectively decided to name it **'Influencers of Change'**; a program that empowers them as **'Ambassadors of Online Safety and Well-Being'** responsible for spreading awareness in their communities and amongst their peers, thereby bringing about change and fostering long-term impact.

**INFLUENCERS OF
C#CHANGE**

An initiative of



Objective of the Program

Spread across 12 sessions, the program aimed to:



- Equip these young individuals to be “**Online Safety Ambassadors**” who later leverage their knowledge to educate their peers.
- Instil critical thinking skills and cultivate a culture of **responsible online behaviour**.
- Foster cross-learning about the existing laws in India about **online safety and cybercrime**.
- Build an understanding of **responsible participation** in the digital realm and promote cyber wellbeing.
- Utilize social media effectively to create content around digital safety and build **social awareness**.

The youth already had the skill-set and expertise to utilise social media effectively and they created informative and consumable content to build awareness. Each of these youth have an average of **500+ active followers** on their individual Instagram accounts, which worked brilliantly for them and the program. Some of them were already influencers, and they shaped their content around digital safety and well-being to become ‘**social and responsible influencers**’.

Topics covered during the Program

Over the course of the training, the program addressed some key issues pertaining to cyber safety:

Session Focus:

- Introduction to Responsible Netism, online safety, and the need for awareness building.
- Deeper discussion on cybercrime, hacking, fake profiles, and ways to identify red flags for online safety.
- In-depth discussion on cyber stalking, bullying, and ways to identify fake news.
- Understand crucial issues like deep fake, deep nude, and online child sexual abuse, and equip oneself with methods to respond to such situations.
- Create individual content based on knowledge gained in previous sessions.

Content Creation:

- Use of communication mediums like rapping, dancing, singing, nukkad nataks, awareness posters, informative videos.
- Reels on hacking, ethical vs. unethical hacking, awareness about online scams.
- Videos on cyber stalking, online privacy, identifying fake news, reporting morphed pictures.
- Videos on news verification, deep fake, deep nude, creating awareness about fake news and cybercrimes.
- Content varied based on individual preferences and knowledge gained during the sessions.



Impact and Achievements

- **Social Media Activity**

The cohort collectively created an Instagram handle 'Influencers.Of.Change' to amplify their learnings and share it effectively with their audiences. Being a diverse group, most of them came up with creative posters, rap songs, memes and short plays to build awareness about cyber safety. These young educators successfully generated over 1800 views on their posts and have since been consistent with awareness building



80

Total no. of followers



60

Total no. of posts



2000

Highest no. of views



After consistent and immersive sessions, the youth decided to amplify their awareness efforts with a music video focused on online safety. The youth along with support from **Muso Magic** will work on the lyrics, followed by the recording and release of the video during the final phase of the program.



On 5th December 2023, the youth were invited at the US Consulate General Mumbai Office where they interacted with Mr. Greg Pardo (Spokesperson, U.S. Consulate General-Mumbai, India. Foreign Service Officer at U.S. Department of State) and share about their journey, and their vision for the Influencers of Change Program.

Recently, some members from the cohort who are ex-residents of Naunihal (Prerana's Children's Home for Girls) attended a get-together. They utilized the platform to speak about their experiences and learnings from the Influencers of Change program and focused on how one can protect themselves from the dangers of the digital world. Another member of the cohort spoke about the importance of such programs and the need to be aware. The **Youth ambassadors** have lined up a few more awareness programs for adolescents and youth between March 2024 and June 2024.





'Before coming for this session, I thought websites took credentials for their database. After understanding cybercrimes, I wonder if they use our information for unlawful activities.' -

Tanya, a Influencers of Change Participant*

'These youth were extremely empathetic not only towards people who fell prey to cyber threats but also towards those who committed crimes due to lack of education and high unchanneled technology quotient, absence of job opportunities and yet having to earn a living.' -

Team, Responsible Netism