Aselo®

# **Evaluation** of the Aselo Platform

**Final Report** December 2025

TECH MATTERS

Safe Online

## About Aselo

Aselo is an open-source Software as a Service (SaaS) platform, which has been designed specifically to support child helplines around the globe. Developed by US-based nonprofit organization Tech Matters, Aselo supports helplines by integrating multiple communication channels – including phone, SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Line, Telegram, and webchat – into a single browser-based interface. Aselo also provides key helpline functions such as secure data collection, referral databases, customizable workflows, and data visualization dashboards. Aselo's aim is to encompass a wide range of child protection and safeguarding concerns, activities and workflows.

## About Safe Online

In 2022, Safe Online established the Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG) to strengthen the global evidence base on what works to prevent and respond to online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA). Composed of experts, academics, donors, and practitioners, the EAG provides technical guidance to ensure that high-potential interventions are rigorously evaluated and generate actionable learning to inform future policy, practice, and investment decisions.

Safe Online's evaluation efforts build on its broader global commitment to children's online safety. Since 2017, Safe Online has invested more than US$100 million across 100+ countries, catalyzing systems change through technology development, research, and evidence generation. As part of this portfolio, Aselo has received multiple rounds of Safe Online funding to support its development, launch, and expansion across several countries. This sustained investment reflects confidence in Aselo's potential to scale and strengthen helpline responses to online CSEA.

Selected through Safe Online's targeted evaluation funding call, Aselo is one of a small number of interventions being evaluated for impact, scalability, and effectiveness. Guided by the EAG, this evaluation aims to generate robust evidence on how Aselo contributes to improving access to child helplines, strengthening responses to online CSEA, and informing future investments in digital child protection globally.

# Glossary of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| AWS | Amazon Web Services |
| CA | Contribution Analysis |
| CHI | Child Helpline International |
| CSAM | Child Sexual Abuse Material |
| CSEA | Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| GBV | Gender-Based Violence |
| KOM | Kick-Off Meeting |
| M&E | Monitoring & Evaluation |
| MSC | Most Significant Change |
| OCSEA | Online Child Exploitation and Abuse |
| TF-CSA | Technology-Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse |
| OC | Outcome |
| OP | Output |
| PII | Personally Identifiable Information |
| PRD | Product Requirements Document |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| SLA | Service Level Agreement |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| SOW | Statement Of Work |
| SSO | Single Sign-On |

| | |
|---|---|
| TOC | Theory of Change |
| UI/UX | User Interface / User Experience |
| UXR | User Experience Research |

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Report Purpose

This evaluation assesses the Aselo platform, which is an open-source software solution developed by Tech Matters to support child helplines around the world. The evaluation was undertaken at a pivotal point in Aselo's journey. The platform has matured from initial deployment in 2021 to operating in 19 countries (at the time of writing - October 2025), with ambitions to scale further.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of three independent consultants[1] ('the evaluation team') and had three key objectives:

1. Evaluate Aselo's contribution to improving the **accessibility**, **responsiveness**, and **efficiency** of helpline services;

2. Evaluate Aselo's **operational benefits**, such as case management, data collection, and counselor support;

3. Evaluate Aselo's **scalability**, **sustainability**, and ability to inform broader **industry learning** on building tech solutions for social impact.




[1] Dr Julia Muraszkiewicz, Dr Lorleen Farrugia, Mr Toby Fenton.

To this effect, the evaluation was guided by five core research questions. These questions reflect both the scope of the evaluation and the strategic interests of Tech Matters and its stakeholders. These questions are as follows:

1. **How effective is Aselo's onboarding process**, particularly regarding implementation, training, and feature adoption?

2. **How has Aselo impacted helplines' operations**, particularly regarding workflow efficiency, case handling, data management, and service responsiveness?

3. **Has Aselo improved helpline services' accessibility** for children and vulnerable users, including through multichannel access?

4. **How sustainable is Aselo**, considering factors such as organisational ownership, funding models, and long-term operational integration?

5. **How scalable is Aselo** (both within existing helpline contexts and in new geographies) and what lessons from its development and implementation are transferable to other tech-based social impact initiatives?

This deliverable represents the evaluation report for Aselo using Contribution Analysis (CA). It builds directly on the Inception Report submitted May 2025 and on a series of in-depth, anonymous interviews conducted throughout April, May, June, and July 2025. The interviewees included Tech Matters staff (the CEO, product management, and engineering); representatives of helplines, both those using Aselo and those who explored the platform but ultimately decided against adoption; and external stakeholders (including funders, Child Helpline International (CHI), and technology partner Twilio).

## 1.2 Structure

The report follows the chronological stages of the independent evaluation.

> **Section 2** outlines the **evaluation methodology**, including the overall approach, the four evaluation themes (implementation, outcomes and impacts, capability, sustainability), and the use of contribution analysis. It discusses the ethical principles guiding the evaluation and highlights the reconstruction of the theory of change as a key task.

**Section 3** summarises the original **theory of change** and introduces the first reconstructed draft and accompanying results framework, both of which were shared earlier in Deliverable 2.

**Section 4** presents the third step of the **contribution analysis**: reviewing existing evidence on Aselo and its context. It provides an overview of the platform's components, objectives, global reach, and findings from previous feedback, including youth testing.

**Section 5** synthesises evidence into a **contribution story** and presents updated versions of the ToC and results framework, noting that indicators remain flexible based on data availability.

**Section 6** presents **findings** organised by the four evaluation themes, drawing on interviews, quantitative data, and subject expertise. Interview quotes are included to illustrate stakeholder perspectives.

**Section 7** concludes with **recommendations**, followed by appendices containing materials such as interview and survey questions, quantitative data tools, and the participant information sheet.

## 1.3 Limitations

As with any evaluation, this study had limitations that should be acknowledged.

**First**, not all helplines or external stakeholders participated in the evaluation—for example, the Internet Watch Foundation and the helpline from India. The absence of this helpline in particular means that evidence relating to the reporting of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is limited, and their perspectives are not reflected in the findings.

**Second**, participation was voluntary, which may have introduced sampling and response bias. It is possible that respondents with more positive experiences or stronger engagement with Aselo were more inclined to take part, potentially skewing the findings.

**Third**, the helplines included in the evaluation vary considerably in size, resources, and stage of Aselo adoption. This heterogeneity makes direct comparison

challenging and limits the extent to which conclusions can be generalised across the wider helpline network.

**Fourth**, several interviewees referred to organisational or contextual factors—such as political or funding challenges—that extend beyond the Aselo platform itself. Quantitative data was not consistently available across all themes, limiting opportunities to triangulate qualitative insights with numerical evidence.

**Fifth**, the evaluators used, as per the ToR, the contribution analysis method (see below), which offers flexibility and adaptability, however its lack of standard procedures and performance indicators can pose execution challenges and introduce positive bias, which the evaluation mitigated by focusing on the theory of change's weakest links and systematically considering alternative explanations (Budhwani & McDavid, 2017; Nakrošis, 2014; Noltze et al., 2014; Mayne, 2015; Delahais & Toulemonde, 2012).

**Finally**, the absence of robust baseline data constrained the ability to measure change over time.

Taken together, these limitations mean that while the findings offer valuable insights into the implementation and effects of Aselo, they should be interpreted with caution.

# 2 Evaluation Methodology

## 2.1 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation used a theory-based, participatory design grounded in Contribution Analysis (CA) to understand how and to what extent Aselo contributes to helpline outcomes, for whom, and under what conditions. CA was selected because multiple actors and contextual factors jointly shape results; it enables testing a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) against triangulated evidence and other plausible drivers.

Specifically, the evaluation applied a direct and indirect influence CA (appropriate for near-term operational outcomes and emerging system impacts) and followed the following established CA steps:

**1. Define the Attribution Problem:** The evaluation examined how and to what extent Aselo plausibly contributed to improvements in accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency, and counsellor support, considering contextual factors such as capacity, infrastructure, and funding.

**2. Refine the Theory of Change:** The ToC was updated to reflect Aselo's logic and implementation across contexts, mapping causal pathways and clarifying assumptions, risks, and outcomes.

**3. Review Existing Evidence:** Documentation and data from Tech Matters were analysed to test the plausibility of the ToC and identify preliminary support or gaps in evidence.

**4. Develop the Contribution Story:** A draft narrative outlined how Aselo may have influenced outcomes and where evidence was weak or uncertain.

**5. Collect Additional Evidence:** Interviews were conducted with Tech Matters staff, helpline users (ranging from active to discontinued), and stakeholders to test and enrich the contribution story. Quantitative data was collected from Tech Matters.

**6. Refine and Validate Findings:** New evidence was integrated to strengthen causal claims, assess alternative explanations, and confirm the plausibility of Aselo's contribution within its wider ecosystem.

## 2.2 Evaluation Themes

The evaluation organised data collection and analysis around four agreed themes, each mapped to specific research questions, indicators and sources. Each theme is divided across two axes, as detailed in the boxes below.

**THEME 1: Implementation: Processes and Experiences**

**Tech Integration and Operational Readiness:** Focuses on technology adoption and utilization, including how effectively Aselo has been implemented, how prepared helpline staff were, and what challenges they faced. This includes analysis of system use metrics (e.g., user login frequency, session durations, feature use).

**Platform Usability and Workflow Impact:** Examines user experience and accessibility, particularly how the platform has affected workflow, case management, data collection, and counselor oversight. This will draw on usability metrics such as error rates, time taken to wrap-up contacts, etc.

**THEME 2: Outcomes and Impacts**

**Service Enhancement Potential**: Identifies opportunities for greater impact, especially in improving helpline responsiveness and service reach.

**Perceived Value and Advocacy Support**: Explores perceptions and effectiveness, gauging how helpline staff perceive the platform's value in supporting service delivery and advocacy.

**THEME 3: Opportunities for Improvement and Scalability**

**Scalability Enablers and Barriers:** Investigates the scalability and sustainability of Aselo, including how it adapts to local contexts and the key facilitators/blockers to expansion.

**Strategic Alignment and Organisational Fit:** Assesses alignment with organisational goals, including how well the platform fits into the strategic vision and theory of change of implementing organisations.

**THEME 4: Sustainability and Lessons Learned**

**Structural Viability and Continuity Factors:** Examining the structural, financial, and operational enablers that support Aselo's long-term viability.

**Cost Sustainability:** Exploring the conditions that affect the platform's ability to sustain itself in the long term, including the cost-effectiveness of the model, and funding mechanisms for helplines.

## 2.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Quantitative Data

The evaluation team sent out requests for participation to 31 individuals in total, 11 from Tech Matters, 14 child helplines and 6 additional stakeholders. Out of these, the evaluation

team conducted 23 interview sessions with those who accepted to participate in this evaluation. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. The stakeholders engaged with are:

| Who and Why | Roles |
|---|---|
| Aselo Leadership Team<br>Senior staff from Tech Matters responsible for the strategic direction of Aselo. They provided insight into the platform's vision, priorities, funding strategy, and plans. These interviews helped us understand decisions related to scaling, sustainability, and the balance between feature innovation and core stability. | • CEO<br>• Senior Product Manager<br>• Partnerships Manager<br>• Executive Director<br>• Director of Product & Operations |
| Aselo Product and Technology Team<br>Engaging technical stakeholders was key to understanding how user feedback is integrated into development cycles, how scalability and localization are managed, and how platform choices impact helpline operations. | • User Experience Designer<br>• Senior Software Engineer<br>• Software Engineer<br>• Solutions Engineer,<br>• Senior Solutions Engineer |
| Child Helpline Managers<br>These stakeholders oversee national helplines and were key informants on implementation success, change management, resource allocation, and strategic fit. | • Managers from helplines using Aselo<br>• Manager from a helpline not using Aselo |
| Child Helpline Case Workers / counselors<br>Frontline users of Aselo to understand its real-world utility. Counselors provided feedback on the platform's usability, training adequacy, workflow efficiency, and the emotional/operational response to the technology. Their input helped identify both pain points and areas of strong alignment. | • Staff from helplines using Aselo |
| External Stakeholders<br>Funders and other organizations who are fundamental to the operation and sustainment of Aselo. | • Safe Online<br>• Oak Foundation<br>• Twilio<br>• Child Helpline International |

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement

In addition, the evaluation carried out a secondary analysis of quantitative data from the Aselo platform, which was requested from Tech Matters. This data included metrics about system usage metrics, helpline benchmark statistics, and available performance indicators, and was used to identify patterns of adoption, usage intensity, and operational outcomes across different helplines.

Consequently, insights from the quantitative data was complemented and contextualised by qualitative data gathered through interviews with the stakeholders, along with document reviews to provide explanatory depth on user experiences, implementation challenges, organisational dynamics, and perceived outcomes. Where possible, the evaluation team compared and contrasted findings from both data types to validate conclusions or highlight discrepancies. This integrative process was guided by the Results Framework and the ToC to ensure the findings were synthesised meaningfully and contribute to robust, evidence-based conclusions. The findings were then used to revise and strengthen the contribution story of the Aselo platform.

## 2.4 Evaluation Principles

The evaluation was guided by the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation[2] and adhered to rigorous research ethics principles, with a strong emphasis on informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data minimization. This aspect of the evaluation was elaborated in previous Deliverables and as such will not be repeated here.

# 3 Reconstructing the Theory of Change

At the start of the project, the evaluation team received an early version of a Theory of Change (ToC), and it was understood that this needed revising, so that it can better support the work of Tech Matters and also this evaluation.[3] This section addresses the reconstruction process.

[2] United Nations Evaluation Group. (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* [PDF]. UNEG. Retrieved from https://www.unevaluation.org/sites/default/files/file_uploads/UNEGNormsStandardsforEvaluation_English-2017_1914_11512579289962.pdf

[3] According to Better Evaluation a good ToC can be useful to "develop better key evaluation questions, identify key indicators for monitoring, identify gaps in available data, prioritize additional data collection, and provide a structure for data analysis and reporting." Better Evaluation. (n.d.). *Describe the theory of change* (Manager's Guide to Evaluation). Retrieved May 24, 2023, from https://www.betterevaluation.org/frameworks-guides/managers-guide-evaluation/scope-evaluation/describe-theory-change

## 3.1 The Original ToC

The original ToC that was provided to the evaluation team is presented in the figure below. The following strengths in the original ToC were observed:

**Clear Logic Flow**: The ToC has a logical structure connecting Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact.

**Relevance to Target Issues:** The activities and outputs were well-aligned with critical challenges in digital service delivery for people in crisis. This includes leveraging technology such as chatbots to enhance access to information and support, tools that facilitate secure reporting of sensitive content, and integration with existing systems to improve case management, referral processes, and data use across diverse contexts.

**Systemic and Service-Level Outcomes:** Outcomes extend beyond individual interactions, pointing to system-level improvements such as data governance, referral accuracy, and counselor capacity.

**Integration of Technology and Safeguarding:** The ToC highlights both the technical and human-facing aspects of the platform, important in tech for good.

**Acknowledgement of Contribution rather than Attribution:** The ToC implicitly recognizes that Aselo is part of a broader ecosystem of support services and does not position the platform as the sole driver of change.

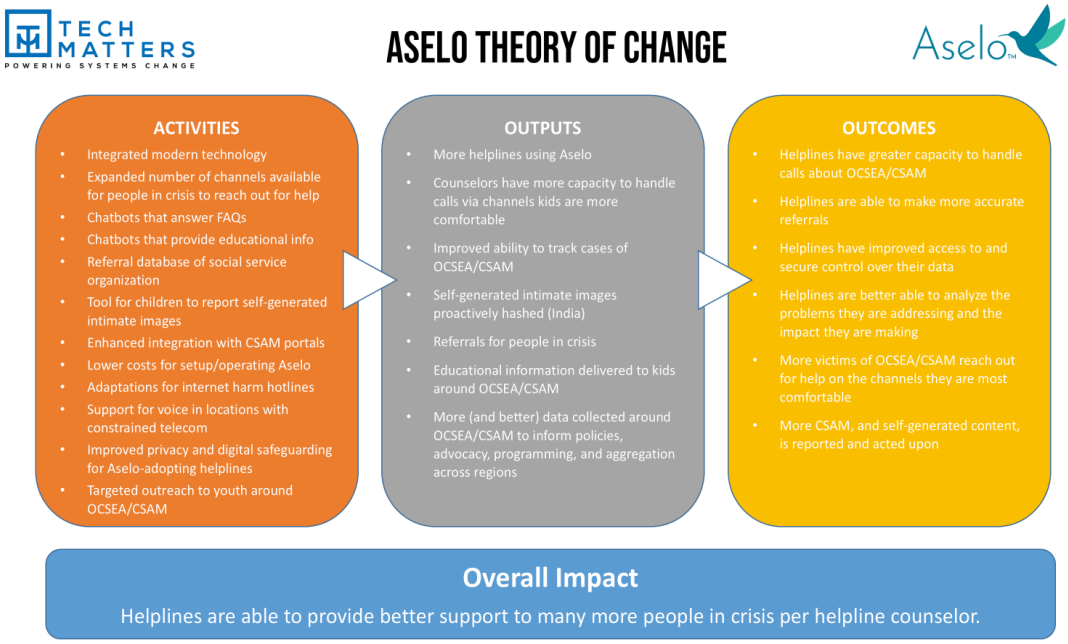



Figure 1: Original Aselo ToC

The original ToC had limitations that may have reduced its usefulness for guiding implementation and evaluation. The following areas need to be redeveloped:

**Assumptions and risks need to be made explicit:** The fact that the ToC does not identify key assumptions reduces its utility for CA or risk mitigation planning.

**External factors need to be considered**: The ToC makes little reference to explicit contextual factors that might affect the platform uptake and outcomes. These might include cultural, social, political, and economic factors.

**Stakeholder change pathways could be included:** While ToC clearly focuses on helpline capacity and platform performance, it lacks the behavior change expected/needed from other stakeholders.

**Timeframes:** Timeframes could be added to provide a stronger understanding of the sequence of events.

**Results Framework:** Lack of a Results Framework with indicators that identify which data needs to be collected to verify whether the outcome was achieved.

**Impact statement:** An additional thought to be posed here is whether the impact statement is too narrow in scope and if it should be widened to operationalize what "better support" entails, and whether it should focus only on counselor load.

To inform the analysis and reconstruction of the Aselo ToC, the evaluation team interviewed one of its developers to understand its origins, purpose, and use. The discussion explored the ToC's design process, underlying assumptions, and how it guides monitoring and evaluation. Three topline insights emerged:

The Aselo ToC was **developed to address major operational inefficiencies** faced by crisis helplines, such as fragmented technology and burdensome manual data entry.

It **evolved collaboratively** through engagement with around 30 helplines and key partners such as Child Helpline International and the Internet Watch Foundation, gradually expanding to include priorities such as countering CSAM.

While the ToC articulates intended outcomes such as increased helpline capacity, its **assumptions** (for example, around helplines' readiness and capacity to adopt cloud-based systems) **remain largely implicit** and warrant further clarification.

## 3.2 Theory of Change

The reconstruction of the ToC required the development of a problem statement that will underpin the ToC and broaden its scope beyond the original focus on CSAM. The evaluation team developed the following problem statement. Please note, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, the problem statement was then refined, hence this is a first draft:

**Problem Statement (First Draft)**

Child helplines face barriers to effectively supporting children in crisis. Many helplines operate with fragmented systems that do not integrate voice, chat, and social media channels, thereby limiting responsiveness to how children seek help. Low counselor capacity, including due to the burdens of data entry and dealing with abusive calls, means that many children are left waiting or unsupported. Furthermore, poor data collection and integration systems prevent helplines from tracking cases effectively,

making timely referrals difficult and undermining strategic advocacy and coordination with law enforcement, social services, and policy actors. These challenges are especially acute in responding to complex, evolving threats like /technology-facilitated child sexual abuse (TF-CSA) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

In a Theory of Change, assumptions describe the external conditions that must hold true for the intervention's causal pathways to function as intended. For Aselo, the evaluation identified several assumptions that underpin the expected links between activities, outputs, and outcomes. These will be examined throughout the evaluation to assess their validity and influence on results. The key assumptions to be tested are:

**Adoption and sustainability:** Helplines will adopt and sustain use of Aselo if the platform is within their budgets, aligns with operational needs, and is supported by relevant training and technical assistance.

**Institutional capacity and resources:** The effectiveness of Aselo depends on helplines and partner organisations having the financial, human, and technical capacity to implement and maintain the system, including adequate referral mechanisms.

**User engagement and accessibility:** Children and young people are more likely to contact helplines through digital channels (e.g., chat, messaging, or social media) when these options are trusted, accessible, and user-friendly in their context.

**Systemic response:** Enhanced reporting of technology-facilitated child sexual abuse (TF-CSA) will contribute to tangible reductions only if matched by timely and effective responses from law enforcement and child protection systems.

**Data governance and compliance:** The continued use and scaling of Aselo relies on its adaptability to diverse data protection and privacy laws.

Further assumptions informing the reconstruction of the Theory of Change, including those related to platform design, usability, and long-term value, are presented in the Annex.

To ensure that Aselo is grounded in the real-world environments in which child helplines operate, it is essential to account for contextual factors. These factors influence not only the uptake of the platform but also the nature and quality of the services delivered through

it. Political climate, regulatory frameworks, cultural norms, infrastructure, and technological capacity can significantly enable or constrain implementation and outcomes. The evaluation took into consideration the following contextual factors:

1. **Legal and Regulatory Frameworks**: Helplines are embedded within national child protection ecosystems that are shaped by highly variable legal and policy frameworks. These influence how data can be collected, stored, and shared; what services can be offered; and how cross-sector referrals are managed. In some contexts, strict data protection laws (e.g., GDPR) may limit certain platform functionalities, while in others, the absence of clear data governance legislation may pose risks to children's rights and safety. Moreover, differing interpretations of mandatory reporting laws or legal definitions of abuse may shape the protocols integrated into Aselo and the degree of automation or discretion afforded to frontline staff.

2. **Digital Infrastructure and Technological Capacity**: The ability of helplines to adopt and fully leverage a platform like Aselo is closely tied to the digital infrastructure and technological literacy available in their setting. This includes factors such as internet connectivity, power reliability, device availability, cybersecurity risks, and staff digital skills. In lower-resource contexts, even basic functionalities like real-time chat or cloud-based storage may be limited by bandwidth or hardware constraints, requiring offline-compatible or low-tech adaptations of the platform. These constraints may also affect evaluation approaches (e.g., limiting real-time monitoring or data integration).

3. **Prevalence and Nature of Technology-Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse (TF-CSA) and CSAM**: The urgency, focus, and design of helpline services can be influenced by the local patterns of OCSEA and the circulation CSAM. In countries with high levels of online exploitation, helplines may need advanced triaging tools, data management protocols, and connections to law enforcement. These needs should inform both the platform's modular features and the evaluation framework, such as measuring the system's ability to support timely response and coordination in complex, high-risk cases.

4. **Social and Cultural Norms**: Attitudes toward child abuse, especially violence against children (VAC) and sexual abuse, can significantly shape both the demand for helpline services and the acceptability of digital engagement. In settings where stigma, taboos, or mistrust of formal institutions prevail, children and families may

be less likely to disclose abuse or use digital channels for help-seeking. Gender norms and parental gatekeeping may further affect which children can access services, particularly for girls or LGBTIQ+ youth. The evaluation team will assess not only service delivery outcomes but also how social context mediates user engagement, platform trust, and reporting behaviors.

5. **Funding Stability and Institutional Capacity**: Most child helplines rely on external funding. This financial dependency introduces operational volatility, particularly during times of economic downturn, donor transition, or political change, such as the current situation around the beginning of the evaluation. Budget limitations may affect staffing, training, licensing costs, IT support, and the ability to maintain or scale Aselo. Institutional readiness particularly aspects around governance, leadership commitment, and project management capacity, also play a crucial role in successful implementation. These factors are critical for sustainability planning and will be considered in the evaluation.

The ToC was initially reconstructed as follows:

### Inputs and Activities

| Technology Development & Implementation | Capacity Building & Outreach | System Support |
|---|---|---|
| – Integrate modern technology.<br>– Implement configurable case management systems.<br>– Enable multi-channel access (e.g., messaging apps, chat, voice) for people in crises to reach out for help.<br>– Develop (AI-powered?) chatbots for FAQs and education.<br>– Integrate referral systems and databases of social service organisations (helpline).<br>– Adapt platform for local language and accessibility needs.<br>– Develop the data capturing and reporting tools within the platform. | – Train counselors and helpline staff on platform use, TF-CSA and CSAM.<br>– Provide ongoing technical support and localized training. | – Reduce costs for onboarding and operating Aselo.<br>– Ensure cybersecurity, privacy and digital safeguarding for Aselo-adopting helplines.<br>– Enable voice/chat in low-bandwidth or high-risk contexts. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| – Ensure alignment with local laws on privacy and data protection. | | |

## Outputs

1. More helplines use Aselo.
2. Helplines use Aselo effectively and consistently.
3. Counselors are trained and confident in using multi-channel tools where they receive contacts.
4. Referral systems are functional, integrated, and used.
5. TF-CSA/CSAM cases are more efficiently identified and tracked.
6. Data collection is streamlined for analysis, advocacy, and reporting.

## Outcomes

| Short-Term | Intermediate | System-Level[4] |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Helplines manage more contacts with lower wait times.<br>2. Improved referral accuracy and follow-through.<br>3. Helplines and users have better access to secure, trusted channels.<br>4. Increased reporting of CSAM and TF-CSA.<br>5. Helplines have improved access to and secure control over their data. | 6. Children and youth more frequently use helplines via preferred channels (chat, social media).<br>7. Helplines better analyze their user needs and own impact.<br>8. Higher counselor productivity results in more children receiving timely support.*<br>9. Improved supervisor and assessment controls results in higher quality counselling.<br>10. Having access to repeat caller history can be beneficial to callers.* | 11. Helpline data informs national child protection strategies and policies.<br>12. Improved coordination between helplines, law enforcement, and social services.<br>13. Advocacy for child protection and digital safety is more evidence driven. |

Table 2: Original Theory of Change

(*These are included to make the ToC comprehensive, but their assessment is beyond the scope of this evaluation since the evaluation team is not engaging with service users.)

[4] These outcomes may be beyond the scope of the present evaluation.

**Long-Term (or Overall) Impact:** Helplines can provide faster, safer, and more effective support to more children per helpline counselor by using modern, integrated, and data-informed systems that meet children where they are. Additionally, child protection systems are more responsive, evidence-based and accessible, leading to safer environments for children.

## 3.3 Proposed Results Framework

The following results framework lists indicators specific to each of these outputs and outcomes:

| **OUTPUTS (OP)** | |
|---|---|
| **Output** | **Indicators** |
| 1. More helplines use Aselo | 1.1 Number of helplines that have onboarded and activated Aselo accounts and number of user-accounts.<br>1.2 Percentage increase in helplines using Aselo.** |
| 2. Helplines use Aselo effectively and consistently | 2.1 Percentage of helplines using Aselo daily or weekly (as per usage logs).<br>2.2 Percentage of functions/modules within Aselo actively used by helplines (e.g., chat, referrals, analytics). |
| 3. Counselors are trained and confident in using multi-channel tools | 3.1 Number of counselors trained on Aselo's multi-channel interface (chat, social media, etc.).<br>3.2 Evidence of trained counselors reporting confidence in using Aselo.<br>3.3 Reduction in proportion of counsel or support requests that relate to basic platform use. |
| 4. Referral systems are functional, integrated, and used | 4.1 Number of cases requiring referrals that are successfully logged and tracked in Aselo. |
| 5. TF-CSA/CSAM cases are more efficiently identified and tracked | 5.1 Number of TF-CSA/CSAM-related cases flagged through Aselo.<br>5.2 Percentage of TF-CSA/CSAM cases successfully referred or acted upon. |
| 6. Data collection is streamlined for analysis, | 6.1 Percentage/Number of helplines regularly exporting and reviewing data through dashboards or reports. |

| | |
|---|---|
| advocacy, and reporting | 6.2 Evidence of advocacy or operational decisions influenced by Aselo-generated data.<br>6.3 Evidence of helplines meeting data quality standards (completeness, accuracy, timeliness). |

Table 2: Proposed Outputs within Results Framework

| **OUTCOMES (OC)** | |
|---|---|
| **Short-Term Outcomes** | **Indicators** |
| 1. Helplines manage more contacts with lower wait times | 1.1 Percentage increase in number of contacts handled per counselor*.<br>1.2 Average wait time per user contact (via chat, message, or voice). |
| 2. Improved referral accuracy and follow-through | 2.1 Percentage of referrals resulting in confirmed service provision. |
| 3. Helplines and users have better access to secure, trusted channels | 3.1 Number of secure, encrypted communication channels available to users.<br>3.2 Evidence of service users rating communication channels as “safe” or “easy to use”.*<br>3.3 Incidents of data breaches or access violations reported. |
| 4. Increased reporting of CSAM andTF-CSA | 4.1 Percentage increase in reported cases tagged as CSAM/TF-CSA. |
| 5. Helplines have improved access to and secure control over their data | 5.1 Helplines demonstrate greater control over their data versus prior systems/processes.**<br>5.2 Evidence of data-informed policy or funding proposals generated by helplines. |
| Intermediate Outcomes | Indicators |
| 6. Children and youth more frequently use helplines via preferred channels | 6.1 Percentage of contacts received via digital-first channels (e.g., chat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). |
| 7. Helplines better analyse their user needs and own impact | 7.1 Percentage of helplines generating periodic data reports in Aselo on service usage and gaps. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 7.2 Evidence of helplines using the raw data to build their own reports.<br>7.3 Evidence of service improvements implemented based on data insights.<br>7.4 Evidence of helplines reporting increased understanding of user demographics and needs. |
| 8. Higher counselor productivity results in more children receiving timely support | 8.1 Increase in average number of children supported per counselor per day/week.**<br>8.2 Reduction in average time taken to respond to requests received.**<br>8.3 Reduction in average time taken to "close" a support request.** |

Table 3: Proposed Outcomes with Results Framework

(**If baseline data is available.)

# 4 Existing Evidence on the ToC

This section summarizes **pre-existing** evidence relevant to the ToC and assesses its quality. The evaluators reviewed user-experience research (UXR), monitoring interviews, Most Significant Change (MSC) stories, usability notes from post-beta implementations, and youth testing to check if the underlying assumptions of the ToC hold true. Readers should remember that the *evidence* is defined as that which existed prior to the evaluation. Product components, pricing, implementation process, and global footprint are provided as contextual annexes (Annexes E-H) and referenced where necessary to interpret ToC assumptions.

The review of the existing evidence is organised around the five ToC assumption themes, each linking activities, outputs and the outcomes. Some of the intermediate and long-term outcomes are beyond this evaluation's scope, but are briefly noted where relevant as dependencies.

## 4.1 Problems Aselo is Trying to Solve

Reviewed evidence shows that Aselo was developed to address the following core problems:

**Outdated and Fragmented Technology:** Helplines continue to operate with outdated or makeshift systems, such as spreadsheets, manual note-taking, or juggling multiple tabs for different social media platforms. These fragmented tools are not designed for the specific needs of counselling and referral services, leading to inefficiencies, duplication of effort, and increased risk of data leakage or loss. Existing off-the-shelf systems are often ill-suited to the unique workflows of helplines, leaving organizations with brittle solutions that are often causing data duplication, leakage and loss.

**Limited Resources and Unanswered Calls:** Due to a combination of insufficient staffing and inefficient technological infrastructure, a significant proportion of calls and messages to child helplines go unanswered. As demand for support services continues to rise, many children and young people in crisis are left without timely access to help.

**Inability to Support Modern Communication Channels:** While most helplines still rely heavily on voice calls, children and youth increasingly prefer text-based communication methods such as WhatsApp, and webchat. elplines lack the resources and tools to integrate and manage these newer communication channels, significantly reducing their accessibility and effectiveness for the populations they aim to serve.

**Inefficient Workflows for counselors:** counselors spend excessive time on administrative tasks, such as manually logging caller data. These inefficiencies reduce the time available for direct engagement with children in need, increase counselor stress, and lower the overall quality of service delivery.

**Poor Data Utilisation for Service Improvement and Advocacy:** Current helpline systems generally fail to capture, structure, and analyse data in a way that supports decision-making. This limits the ability of helplines to optimise services, demonstrate impact, or generate insights that can inform advocacy and policy reform in child protection systems. Without reliable and actionable data, opportunities to improve outcomes at both the individual and systemic level are lost.

**Challenges in Managing Repeat and Abusive Callers:** Helplines encounter repeat or abusive callers but often lack integrated caller history systems. As a result, counselors must ask individuals to recount their circumstances repeatedly, which

can retraumatize vulnerable children. Moreover, the inability to identify and manage abusive interactions wastes valuable resources and diminishes the capacity to serve genuine callers in crisis.

**Barriers to Scalability and Collaboration:** Many helplines operate independently, relying on bespoke or mismatched technologies that are difficult to maintain and expand. This fragmentation prevents them from scaling effectively, sharing resources, or learning from best practices across the sector. The absence of a standardised, scalable system hampers growth, efficiency, and the collective impact of child helplines globally.

These gaps highlight the usefulness of a purpose-built platform like Aselo, designed to modernise helpline operations, integrate diverse communication channels, reduce inefficiencies, and empower helplines to protect more children, more effectively.

## 4.2 Adoption and Sustainability

The cluster of assumptions focusing on adoption and sustainability are testing the activities related to platform integration and configuration, technical support, training, cost reduction and cybersecurity efforts as being related to the outputs of having more helplines onboarded, and that these helplines use Aselo effectively.

A key feature of Aselo's sustainability approach is its scalability. Once the core platform has been developed and established, the incremental costs of onboarding additional helplines are meant to be relatively modest. This should enable the platform to grow its global reach while avoiding the financial burdens often associated with proprietary systems. Importantly, this cost efficiency ought to allow Aselo to direct its resources toward continuous improvement of the platform, ensuring that helplines benefit from ongoing innovation. The independent evaluation focuses on this in its findings.

However, while Aselo refers to its pricing as "modest," this should be understood in relative terms. The financial capacity of helplines varies widely across countries, and what may be considered affordable for some can represent a significant burden for others. Aselo's financial foundation is backed by over $6 million in funding secured from organisations committed to child protection. This strong backing signals not only confidence in the platform but also alignment with the values and priorities of stakeholders who are invested in safeguarding children. Aselo has cultivated collaborative relationships with helplines and funders alike, creating a shared commitment to sustainability.

When combining financial backing, cost-efficient scalability, collaborative partnerships, and demonstrable value to helplines, before the evaluation **Aselo was already trying to position itself to achieve long-term sustainability while expanding its reach to serve more children in need.**

Apart from affordability, several helplines raised concerns about the technical stability of the platform. Childline Thailand reported serious reliability issues, noting frequent cases where new contacts did not appear for all available counselors, or where the loading time was lengthy, affecting the counselors' responsiveness. This led to uneven workloads and operational stress, forcing them to keep their old platform running in parallel as a safeguard. Other helplines, including SafeSpot and Youthline New Zealand, experienced glitches during chat transfers between counselors, which sometimes caused messages to be lost or made handovers difficult. This was also mentioned in the MSC exercise, where supervisors noted several challenges with the system's consistency and stability.

Technical issues meant that not all available counselors were notified of incoming contacts, leading to an unbalanced workload and additional demands on supervisors to manage team allocations. Furthermore, media used by service users did not appear in the chat interface and failed to trigger notifications for counselors, resulting in longer wait times for children and a lack of full contextual information for counselors responding to cases. These limitations were seen as reducing the overall effectiveness of the platform and, in some cases, creating additional stress for both counselors and supervisors.

The evidence strength on adoption is moderate while it is low to moderate in relation to long-term affordability and sustainability. This implies that sustainability before this evaluation remained uncertain and thus was a key feature for this evaluation.

## 4.3 Institutional Capacity and Resources

Existing evidence indicates that Aselo strengthens its value proposition by directly addressing operational inefficiencies that often drain helpline resources. Features such as streamlined workflows, integrated communication channels, and optimised counsellor support (outlined in Appendix E) help helplines make better use of limited staff and funding. This creates a reinforcing cycle: as helplines see measurable improvements in efficiency and impact, they become more committed to sustaining Aselo as an essential tool.

Below is a list of the positive impacts noted by previous research as to institutional capacity and resources:

**Workflow Efficiency and Daily Operations:** Counsellors across helplines highlighted in previous research improvements in their day-to-day workflows, allowing them to spend more time supporting children and less time on administrative tasks. Key benefits included:

- The ability to enter data simultaneously whilst handling chats, eliminating additional steps after calls or messages
- Easier access to caller history and past interactions, improving continuity of care for repeat callers
- More structured workflows that helped teams define clear roles and responsibilities, improving coordination during busy periods
- Time-tracking features (e.g., displaying when a chat started) that aided focus and time management.

**Platform Usability**: After four rounds of training, counsellors reported confidence using the platform. The interface was described as modern and user-friendly compared to older text-based systems. Transfer actions were considered clear and easy to use, and counsellors valued the responsive support from the Aselo team, with support requests addressed quickly.

**Data Management and Supervision:** For supervisors, Aselo's monthly data exports proved valuable for:

- Monitoring counsellor performance and reducing errors
- Improving service quality through objective tracking
- Enabling remote work with accountability through accurate hour tracking
- Understanding employee experiences and driving wellbeing initiatives
- Identifying prevalent issues to tailor support strategies and coping mechanisms
- Basing team meetings and professional development on data-driven priorities
- Creating individual improvement plans with reduced micromanagement

When reviewing existing evidence on the ToC and to support its reconstruction,we reviewed the Most Significant Change (MSC) exercise carried out in 2022 and 2023 with the

helplines in Jamaica, Malta, Thailand, and Zambia.[5] The exercise also showed positive impacts:

| **For counsellors** | **For organisations** |
|---|---|
| • Smooth data input processes and clear client group distinctions<br>• Pre-engagement surveys supporting more complete data collection<br>• Ability to edit case information improving monitoring and evaluation efficiency<br>• Access to case documentation encouraging self-reflection and professional learning<br>• Better organisation of chats and improved workload balance<br>• User registration feature enabling efficient referencing of previous conversations<br>• Parallel data capture reducing stress and increasing efficiency | • Centralised data supporting easier analysis and manipulation<br>• Strengthened reporting processes and decision-making<br>• Improved data quality<br>• Insights into peak call times enabling effective staffing and resource allocation<br>• Identification of common issues informing tailored training and topic-specific coping mechanisms<br>• Objective tracking improving accountability and financial oversight<br>• Support for remote work through verified hours worked |

Despite all the above benefits, several challenges were identified:

- Chat window too narrow in Malta, making long messages difficult to read
- Frequent need to manually mark as "online," leading to missed chats
- Confusing navigation (e.g., unclear "cancel" button functionality)
- Uncertainty about search form requirements and entry specificity
- Time and date format confusion due to local computer settings
- Difficulty completing forms during live calls, particularly in Zambia, leading to continued reliance on handwritten notes
- Unclear category definitions making classification difficult
- Uncertain processes for reporting TF-CSA and CSAM

[5] The MSC exercise was designed to collect information about the persons using Aselo, how they were involved with it, and, importantly, to capture the stories of change in their own words. Stories were gathered from participants and, through a participatory process, the significance of these stories was evaluated together with them.

- Absence of internal counsellor chat function (previously available in Malta's old system)
- Poor internet connectivity in Zambia causing login failures
- Power outages requiring manual switches to backup generators
- Responsiveness issues in South Africa (inability to pull new tasks, missing "Connection Lost" banner)
- Timeouts when initialising Twilio through Okta due to slow internet
- Language barriers and time zone differences in Thailand affecting bug reporting
- Need for greater flexibility in role-based permissions for appropriate managerial oversight.

There is a moderate strength of evidence in relation to the institutional capacity and resources assumptions and this is often context-specific. For this evaluation, it means outcomes could be impacted by the institutional readiness and thus a level of variability can be expected.

## 4.4 User Engagement and Accessibility

Under the set of assumptions related to user engagement and accessibility the ToC pathways that are being tested include the availability of multichannel access, adaptations to local languages and accessibility needs, privacy and safety safeguards as leading to having trusted channels for children and young people to contact the helplines and as a result, helplines will have more contacts and shorter waiting times. Previous research shows that:

| **4.4.1 Impact on Client Experience: Aselo's design has had a direct impact on the client experience, particularly regarding efficiency, fairness, and continuity of care.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Increased accessibility and diversity:<br><br>• More service users could reach helplines<br>• Better support for those who prefer to type rather than talk | Improved fairness and efficiency:<br><br>• Faster response times through FIFO (First-In, First-Out) message queuing | Enhanced continuity of care:<br><br>• Clients at SafeSpot Jamaica no longer needed to repeat their stories<br>• Counsellors could access past conversations |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Accommodation of specific platform preferences<br>• Pre-engagement questions saving time on demographic data collection. | • Fairer system preventing disproportionate waiting times<br>• Automated features (e.g., canned responses) improving counsellor efficiency, though requiring refinement for empathy. | • Stronger sense of being heard and understood<br>• Location fields enabling structured navigation through regional hierarchies, improving documentation accuracy. |
| **4.4.2 Organisational Benefits: Helplines observed broader organisational advantages extending beyond immediate service delivery.** | | |
| Operational improvements:<br><br>• More effective use of staff and volunteer time<br>• Strengthened cost-effectiveness and resource allocation<br>• Evidence-based design of awareness campaigns and sensitisation programmes | Enhanced credibility and advocacy:<br><br>• Zambia and Jamaica helplines positioned as credible data sources for government agencies and funders<br>• Improved ability to advocate for child protection priorities<br>• Data gathered directly from children (described as "very rare") shaping service provision | |

However, the youth testing sessions revealed some access barriers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Device and connectivity challenges:<br><br>• Limited availability of personal devices<br>• Reliance on shared family phones or community Wi-Fi<br>• Restricted privacy and confidentiality concerns<br>• Unreliable internet connections.<br>• Inability to receive and send broader range of media (images, stickers, voice messages) | Social and psychological barriers:<br><br>• Fear of judgement from parents, teachers, or peers<br>• Need for discreet and anonymous channels. |

It is also interesting to note what the youth testing showed about their preferences for technologies such as ASELO:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| On preferred channels:<br><br>• **WhatsApp** emerged as the preferred platform due to widespread use and perceived privacy<br>• Ability to take time when explaining problems<br>• Option to revisit advice later<br>• Interest in sharing images, videos, or voice notes to better convey experiences and feelings<br>• Preference for visuals and videos over textual information and links. | On privacy:<br><br>• Strong preference for platforms not requiring personal details disclosure<br>• Appreciation for chat history clearing, but desire for automatic redirects after sessions for greater privacy reassurance. | On response:<br><br>• Expectation of timely responses<br>• Mixed views on chatbots: helpful for quick replies and basic resources, but lacking emotional support<br>• Need for balance between automation (for responsiveness) and human connection (for emotional support). |
| In addition, youth participants noted the need for active and visible social media presence critical for recognition and trust, and that organisations with online presence perceived as more credible and approachable. | | |

There is strong evidence for channel preferences by children and young people, but evidence is less strong for accessibility due to technological constraints. This implies that engagement is plausible but often contingent on reliability and user experience delivery, which requires further exploration in the evaluation.

## 4.5 Systemic Response for TF-CSA/CSAM

In the ToC, the pathway of change under this assumption assumes that the identification and escalation of TF-CSA and CSAM cases will lead to increased reporting and tracking, which will bring about the systemic level outcome of action, protection and harm reduction

Beyond its role as a technical tool, Aselo was described as a productive and useful "team member" that recognised the needs of the helpline and supported its external positioning. Importantly, the system's capacity to provide robust evidence was linked to helplines' broader advocacy goals, including fundraising and efforts to influence systemic policy change, particularly with respect to TF-CSA and CSAM detection and response. In this sense, Aselo was seen not only as a platform for operational support but also as an enabler of sector-level influence and visibility.

The evidence strength for this is moderate to low as the downstream outcomes cannot be easily evidenced due to external dependencies - specifically the IWF reporting portal. The evaluation will investigate this, but it is also important to note that the systemic-level outcomes are beyond the remit of this evaluation.

## 4.6 Data Governance and Compliance

The final set of assumptions focus on how scaling Aselo will rely on lawful handling of sensitive data enabling continued trust and advocacy use. Activities related to security, permissions and compliance with local laws will impact the improved data collection and control and in the long-term leads to having good quality data that informs coordination and data driven advocacy. Research from previous findings revealed that:

| Improved Data Management and Case Handling: | Challenges and Areas for Improvement: | Strategic Impact: Evidence for Policy and Advocacy: |
|---|---|---|
| • Counsellors noted that Aselo made record capture very easy compared to previous case management systems. With practice, counsellors became comfortable navigating the Agent Desktop, Case List, and Standalone Search<br>• User history features improving efficiency and quality of practice<br>• Quick access to case summaries, past transcripts, and user histories enabling faster response times<br>• Support for continuity of personalised care across multiple interactions<br>• Easier evidence forwarding (e.g., call transcripts to police | • Usability issues distinguishing between contacts and cases (e.g., ECFA duplicated every contact as a case)<br>• Supervisors recommended clearer change management planning and training prior to implementation<br>• Calls for stronger automation to flag or prioritise high-risk cases (suicide, self-harm) for timely intervention<br>• Malta counsellors struggled retrieving past chats, requiring exact dates rather than scrollable history<br>• Slowed case handling and reduced continuity of care<br>• Concerns about children losing trust if messages failed or systems appeared unreliable. | • MSC stories illustrated how Aselo enhanced helplines' engagement within the broader child protection sector. The platform's comprehensive data-gathering capacity enabled generation of critical, evidence-based findings directly informed by children's voices—described as rare and valuable for shaping legislative and policy recommendations. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| could be sent electronically rather than via hard disk)<br>• Shared documentation supporting learning and development through reflection and colleague strategies<br>• Effective facilitation of CHI survey completion<br>• Reduced inconsistencies across case records<br>• Strengthened monitoring and reporting<br>• Improved reliability of evidence for advocacy and policy engagement<br>• Real-time statistics generation with consistent data for stakeholders and funders<br>• Significant improvement over fragmented systems and paper-based records. | • Supervisors in Thailand, Malta, and Jamaica struggled extracting reports in required formats<br>• Requests for more granular reporting options and integrated visualisations (e.g., combining gender, location, and issue type)<br>• Missing mandatory fields causing interruptions during data entry<br>• Suggestions to redesign forms with dependent mandatory fields at the top to reduce errors. | |

As to evidence prior findings imply that there is already some low to moderate evidence to support these assumptions and the ToC pathways. Further analysis is required to understand the role of governance in this process.

## 4.7 Conclusion

Overall, the existing evidence provides preliminary indications that several core assumptions of the ToC are plausible, particularly around improved workflow efficiency for counselors and the potential for multichannel access to better meet the communication preferences of children and young people. Prior studies consistently report perceived benefits related to more structured workflows, easier access to case histories, and streamlined data capture, all of which align with the ToC's expected outputs related to effective system use, stronger case management, and improved data practices.

For service-users, the preference for discreet, text-based communication highlights the relevance of Aselo's multi-channel approach and the importance of privacy and anonymity

as enabling conditions for digital engagement. However, constraints related to platform reliability, media sharing, and inconsistent visibility of incoming messages introduce risks to accessibility and continuity of care, particularly in lower-bandwidth contexts.

Across sites, connectivity challenges, instances of parallel system use, and variation in referral mechanisms highlight that institutional capacity and technology stability remain material uncertainties. These conditions influence both the effectiveness of Aselo and the degree to which intended outputs translate into short-term outcomes, such as reduced wait times and improved follow-through of cases.

The desk review indicates early examples of data being used for internal learning, supervision, and advocacy. Yet, questions remain regarding sustainability, affordability over time, and the strength of data governance and compliance frameworks, all foundational assumptions for scaling and long-term system impact. Evidence on systemic response to TF-CSA/CSAM reporting is notably limited and contingent on external actors, and therefore lies beyond the direct control of the platform.

Taken together, existing evidence suggests promise in several pathways of the ToC while also revealing significant gaps that must be tested. The evaluation will therefore focus on verifying whether:

- the reported efficiency and access gains hold across diverse contexts;
- reliability and staffing capacity enable full transition away from legacy systems;
- data collection and supervision practices are used consistently in decision-making;
- privacy, security, and governance safeguards support sustained trust and usage;
- referral and escalation processes function effectively where implemented.

# 5 Assembling the Contribution Story

The reconstruction of the Theory of Change was presented to the ERG team and Tech Matters in May 2025 for feedback with the scope of further grounding it in its relevance to Aselo. This feedback enriched the understanding of the project's goals, and shows that the evaluation is responsive and grounded in the realities of Aselo’s context. Together with the analysis presented in the previous section, Aselo’s contribution story continues to be assembled to trace the impact pathways from the inputs to the outcomes. Changes from the original versions are marked in bold.

This section synthesises the current contribution story based on the updated Theory of Change, desk review and stakeholder feedback. It presents the testable contribution claims and the conditions that must hold for Aselo to contribute to its intended outcomes.

## 5.1 The Problem Statement

In response to the first drafted Problem Statement, Tech Matters highlighted that the systems used by many helplines are not only fragmented but also often expensive and poorly maintained. This shifts the focus beyond functionality: Aselo's value lies in offering financial and operational sustainability as well. The revised problem statement now reads that these systems are "expensive, poorly maintained, and/or fragmented."

This is an important insight because it means Aselo's impact can be judged not only on its ability to integrate systems technically, but also on its potential to provide a more affordable, reliable, and sustainable alternative. This strengthens the case for Aselo by adding the dimension of cost-effectiveness and reliability. Furthermore, child helplines address broader threats apart from TF-CSA or CSAM. Two key priorities for Child Helpline International are violence and mental health crises. This broadens the scope of the evaluation.

The revised problem statement is thus as follows, with additions reflected in bold:

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Child helplines face barriers to effectively supporting children in crisis. Many helplines operate with **expensive, poorly maintained,** and/or fragmented systems that do not integrate voice, chat, and social media channels, thereby limiting responsiveness to how children seek help. Low counselor capacity, including due to the burdens of data entry and dealing with abusive calls, means that many children are left waiting or unsupported. Furthermore, poor data collection and integration systems prevent helplines from tracking cases effectively, making timely referrals difficult and undermining strategic advocacy and coordination with law enforcement, social services, and policy actors. These challenges are especially acute in responding to complex, evolving threats like technology-facilitated child sexual abuse (TF-CSA) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM), **as well as other threats to children that child helplines contend with such as violence and mental health crises.**

Thus, the evaluation also explored the link between Aselo's cost-effectiveness and reduced maintenance burden and the improved financial sustainability for helplines, which in turn frees up resources for other critical services or expanding counselor capacity. The additional evidence needed to investigate this in the future includes the following questions:

> **Financials**: Has the implementation of Aselo led to a reduction in technology-related costs or a more predictable cost structure for helplines?
>
> **Sustainability**: Have helplines found Aselo easier to maintain than their previous systems?
>
> **Scope**: Have counselors felt more equipped to handle a broader range of complex cases, including mental health crises, due to Aselo's features?

## 5.2 Assumptions and Risks

Through a collaborative process with Tech Matters, the ToC assumptions developed by the evaluation team have been revised and clarified and are shown in the table below. This iterative approach strengthens the contribution story by ensuring the evaluation is grounded in the practical realities of the platform's design and implementation. As before, changes are highlighted in bold.

| **Assumptions Proposed** | **Comments and Revisions (in bold)** |
|---|---|
| 1. Child helplines can enhance access and responsiveness for children and youth in need by proactively integrating emerging communication technologies such as social media, messaging apps, and AI-powered platforms. | 1 and 2 were considered to be very similar assumptions. However, the first one is focused on the supply side - child helplines, and specifies that if child helplines are made more accessible through technologies, they will be more accessible to children. The second one is focused on the demand side - children i.e. technology alone is not enough; the child's context, trust, and ease of use will determine whether the children use the helplines. To further differentiate the two assumptions, the second assumption was reworded. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2. Children with access to digital tools will be more likely to engage helplines through a variety of communication channels (e.g., chat, messaging, and social media), provided these options are trusted, accessible, and user-friendly in their context. | Reworded as: Children and young people with access to digital tools will be more likely to use these helpline services (e.g., chat, messaging, and social media), only if the options are seen as reliable, easy to access, and designed to be trustworthy in their specific community or context. |
| 3. Helplines will adopt the Aselo platform if it is demonstrably affordable within their operational budgets, aligns with their case management needs, and is supported by ongoing, context-relevant training and technical assistance. | While this assumption is not completely factual, as there are other reasons why helplines may choose not to adopt Aselo, it is still a well-formed, testable assumption. |
| 4. In contexts where young people have regular access to smartphones and the internet, they are more likely to contact helplines through private, digital-first channels such as chat and messaging apps. | Aselo's feedback prompted a crucial clarification of this assumption. The original statement used the term "private," which can have multiple interpretations. To enhance the testability and precision of this assumption, we have revised it to focus on **secure, one-on-one digital channels that are perceived as confidential by young users.** This rephrasing acknowledges that a channel's appeal to a young person is less about its technical privacy settings and more about their feeling of safety and anonymity. This refinement ensures that the evaluation can more accurately assess whether Aselo's digital-first channels meet the specific psychological and social needs of the children and youth they aim to serve.<br><br>Reworded as: In contexts where young people have regular access to smartphones and the internet, they are more likely to contact helplines through secure, one-on-one digital channels such as chat and messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram, or integrated web-based chat services) that are perceived as more confidential than public social media platforms or phone calls. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5. Increased counselor capacity will result in more children receiving support. | |
| 6. A reduction in TF-CSA/CSAM will be more likely if improved helpline support and increased reporting are met with timely and effective responses from law enforcement and the judicial system, supported by robust child protection frameworks. | Feedback about this assumption was that it could be potentially overloaded. It puts forward three separate factors: (1) improved helpline support, (2) responsive law enforcement / judicial system, (3) robust child protection frameworks. This assumption claims that an improved helpline support is not the only factor in reducing TF-CSA and CSAM, but other factors need to be in place. A more nuanced understanding of TF-CSA and CSAM is possible using helpline data, and thus this assumption was reworded.<br>Reworded as: Stakeholders can devise better TF-CSA/CSAM responses if they have a better understanding of the issues, which can be achieved through helplines being able to collect data more efficiently and effectively. |
| 7. Simplifying and improving data collection processes will enhance helpline productivity and strategic effectiveness by enabling data-informed decision-making, service improvements, and stronger advocacy. | |
| 8. Aselo will enable easier tracking and follow-up of referrals, assuming that referral systems are in place and that partner organizations have the capacity and mandate to respond effectively. | |
| 9. National policy and legal frameworks permit and encourage the use of helpline data for service delivery, enforcement, and advocacy. | |
| 10. Aselo's platform architecture is adaptable enough to comply with varying legal requirements, technical standards, and social norms in each country of implementation. | Since this is one of Aselo's operating principles it will be **deleted from the list of assumptions**. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 11. The implementation and sustainability of Aselo will not be hindered if helplines have sufficient financial, human, and technical resources, including local IT expertise or support structures. | Feedback from Aselo pointed to the similarity with assumption #3, and helplines having sufficient resources cannot be caused by adopting Aselo. Thus it will be **deleted from the list of assumptions**. |
| 12. Aselo is designed with configurable data protection features that allow helplines to comply with country-specific data protection and privacy laws. | Since this is one of Aselo's operating principles it will be **deleted from the list of assumptions**. |
| 13. Buy-in from counselors and helpline management for Aselo will depend on demonstrating its relevance, usability, and alignment with existing workflows and values. | Since this is one of Aselo's operating principles it will be **deleted from the list of assumptions**. |
| 14. Aselo is committed to user-centred design, ensuring the platform is intuitive and accessible to helpline staff with limited technical experience. | Since this is one of Aselo's operating principles it will be **deleted from the list of assumptions**. |
| 15. The benefits of using Aselo, such as increased efficiency, flexibility, and improved case management, will outweigh potential limitations, if limitations are well-communicated and mitigated. | Feedback from Aselo identified this assumption as being too vague to be explicit and testable. Effectively, this can be considered as a restatement of the project's overall goal. Instead of retaining this vague assumption, we have **deleted it** and retained assumption 16. |
| 16. Aselo provides a cost-effective solution for child helplines, offering long-term savings and efficiency gains relative to other comparable platforms, particularly in resource-constrained settings. | |

Table 4: ToC Assumptions

The risks identified were all validated in the review cycles. Two minor revisions were suggested for risks 12 and 14, as Tech Matters commented that cybersecurity and localisation are both offered within Aselo. Thus, risks 12 and 14 were modified as follows.

**Risk 12:** Helplines' **weak cybersecurity measures** could expose helpline data to unauthorized access or breaches, leading to reputational harm and endangering children.

**Risk 14:** Limited **resources for the localization of the platform** (e.g., lack of interface or training in local languages) could hinder uptake and use, particularly in multilingual countries.

## 5.3 Contextual Factors

The five factors presented in the reconstruction of the ToC, were also validated in the reviews. In the review of the first deliverable, the comment from the ERG to clearly incorporate the contextual factors in the ToC narrative had already been addressed. Tech Matters added the following contextual factor:

**Inter-helpline Coordination:** Aselo offers benefits as a tool that can provide network effects when there is sufficient regional and global coordination between helplines and/or with network-level partners (such as Child Helpline International). Aselo's potential for impact is increased when there is capacity for coordination between organizations that can yield greater benefits for all of them and the movement as a whole.

## 5.4 Updated ToC

The review of the building blocks of the ToC (Activities, Outputs and Outcomes) resulted in a tighter, more relevant ToC specific to Aselo. The changes are presented below in bold.

**Inputs and Activities**[6]

| Technology Development & Implementation | Capacity Building & Outreach | System Support |
|---|---|---|

[6] In the inputs and activities component, Tech Matters reworked most of the activities presented under technology development and implementation.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Provide modern technology:<br><br>• Develop secure, cloud-based, user-friendly platform for counselors to perform day-to-day counselling functions effectively such as conversation handling and data collection<br>• Adapt platform for local language and accessibility needs.<br>• Enable multi-channel access (e.g., messaging apps, chat, voice) with safety features for people in crises to reach out for help.<br>• Develop tools for managers to easily evaluate quality assurance on service delivery<br>• Build real-time and historical reporting tools for helpline managers to analyze helpline program and operational data<br>• Ensure alignment with local laws on privacy and data protection.<br>• Introduce new technologies (e.g. chatbots, AI) to support helplines in their daily functions<br><br>Provide client and case management systems:<br><br>• Provide tools for easy case documentation and follow-ups<br>• Integrate referral systems and databases of social service organizations | • Train counselors and helpline staff on using TF-CSA/CSAM reporting tools available in Aselo.<br>• Provide ongoing technical support and localized training.<br>• Work with helplines on best practices when introducing features, to shape standard operating procedures.<br>• Partner with network organizations to facilitate standardized data-sharing. | • Reduce costs for onboarding and operating Aselo.<br>• Ensure cybersecurity, privacy and digital safeguarding for Aselo-adopting helplines.<br>• Enable voice/chat in low-bandwidth or high-risk contexts.<br>• Address platform bugs and reliability to maintain high-level of service uptime. |

## Outputs

1. More helplines use Aselo.
2. Helplines use Aselo effectively and consistently **for service delivery and data collection**.[7]
3. Counselors are trained and confident in using multi-channel tools where they receive contacts.
4. Referral systems are functional, integrated, and used.
5. TF-CSA/CSAM cases are more efficiently identified and tracked.
6. Data collection is streamlined for analysis, advocacy, and reporting.

## Outcomes[8]

| Short-Term | Intermediate | Long-Term[9] |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Helplines manage more contacts with lower wait times.<br>2. Improved referral accuracy and follow-through.<br>3. Helplines and users have better access to secure, trusted channels.<br>4. Increased reporting of CSAM and TF-CSA.<br>5. Helplines have more and better quality data.<br>6. Helplines have improved access to and secure control over their data. | 7. Children and youth more frequently use helplines via preferred channels (chat, social media).<br>8. counselors' job satisfaction and their overall wellbeing are enhanced.*<br>9. Helplines better analyze their user needs and own impact.<br>10. Higher counselor productivity results in more children receiving timely support.*<br>11. Improved supervisor and assessment controls results in higher quality counselling.*<br>12. Having access to repeat caller history can be beneficial to callers.* | 13. Helpline data informs national child protection strategies and policies.<br>14. Improved coordination between helplines, law enforcement, and social services.<br>15. Advocacy for child protection and digital safety is more evidence driven. |

Table 5: Updated ToC

[7] Output 2 was made more specific to emphasise the efficiency and consistency expected from Aselo use for service delivery and data collection.

[8] Two outcomes (5 and 8) were added include aspects related to helplines having more and better quality data, and helpline counselors having greater wellbeing and job satisfaction as a result of using Aselo in their work.

[9] Beyond the scope of the present evaluation.

(* These are included to make the Theory of Change comprehensive, but their assessment is beyond the scope of this evaluation since the evaluation team is not engaging with service users.)

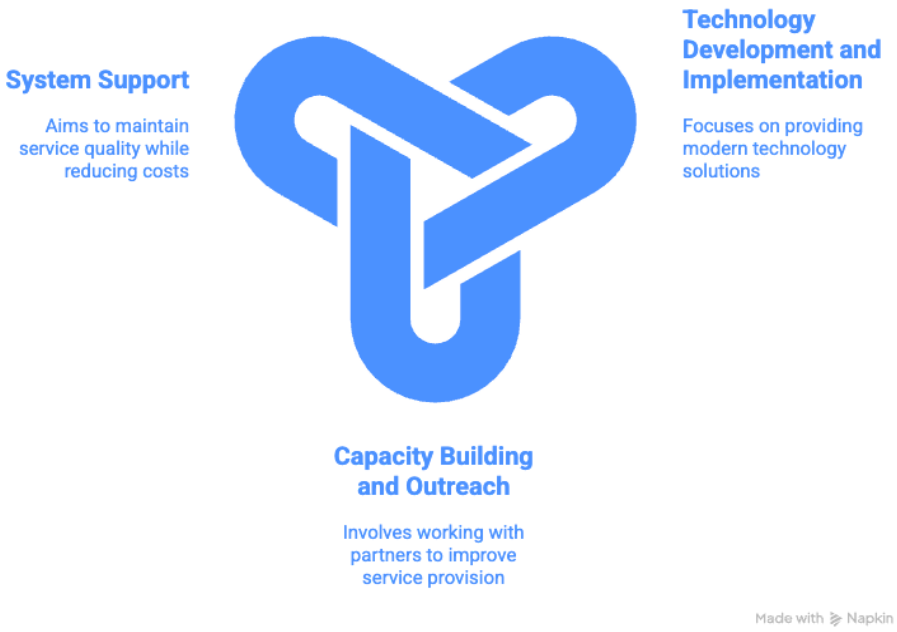
**Overall Impact[10]:** Children experience safer, more supportive, and evidence-informed environments, resulting in improved wellbeing and protection from harm. This is achieved when child helplines, through Aselo, provide faster, safer, and more effective support to more children per helpline counselor by using modern, integrated, and data-informed systems that meet children where they are, which integrate client and case management systems. Additionally, Aselo strengthens child protection systems, making them more responsive, accessible, and guided by evidence-based practices.

The results framework was updated based on Tech Matters' suggestions and feedback. The full results framework is provided in Annex I. It builds on the framework developed for this evaluation, which is relevant both to current and future evaluative contexts. The evaluation team feels it is important to note that while the metrics provided in this results framework intend to be comprehensive, they are not necessarily exhaustive. Much like a ToC is dynamic, a results framework can also be developed to consider different or better metrics to show progress towards the ToC.

## 5.5 Implications for the Evaluation

The inputs and activities to develop the Aselo platform are focused on three interconnected areas of work:

[10] The overall impact was also revised to focus on child-centered impact through Aselo as a mechanism for achieving this.




The current ToC was presented above and Annex J provides a graphical representation of this. For the sake of legibility and taking into consideration the dynamic nature of a ToC it is being made available in a larger and editable format here.

Based on available evidence, the evaluation's working hypothesis is that Aselo contributes to more accessible, timely, and consistent helpline services by enabling multichannel contact, streamlined case handling, and improved data visibility, when helplines have the capacity and enabling environment to adopt and sustain the platform. This contribution is expected to be most directly observed through:

| | |
|---|---|
| More efficient and consistent workflows for counselors | Improved documentation and case continuity for repeat callers |
| More trusted, discreet access channels for children and young people | Enhanced internal data use for supervision and operational decisions |

This forms the basis of the contribution story that will be tested through the evaluation. The contribution story requires several necessary conditions to be in place. The table below reflects these conditions in relation to the ToC assumption themes and indicates how much influence Tech Matters can exert on this.

| Condition | Assumption Theme and Numbers | Influence |
|---|---|---|
| Helplines can afford Aselo and sustain operating costs | Adoption & Sustainability (1, 16) | Partial |
| Aselo performs reliably enough to replace legacy systems | Adoption & Sustainability (1, 16) | Within TM's control |
| Helpline staff are trained and supported to use all core functions | Institutional Capacity (3, 5) | Partial |
| Referral pathways are functional and ready to receive escalated cases | Institutional Capacity (3, 5) | Outside TM's control |
| Children and young people have access to trusted digital channels | User Engagement (2, 4) | Shared |
| Digital channels are perceived as safe and discreet | User Engagement (2, 4) | Shared |
| External response systems act on OCSEA/CSAM data where applicable | Systemic Response (6) | Outside TM's control |
| Data governance and privacy compliance are credible to stakeholders | Data Governance (7, 8, 9) | Shared |

Table 6: Conditions

The evidence points to clear contributions towards improving the accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency of helpline services, particularly through structured workflows, easier access to caller histories, and data capture that can support monitoring, reporting, and training, already contributing directly to most of the outputs (e.g. 2-6) in the ToC. At the same time, persistent issues with technological stability, duplication of work, and platform-specific challenges (notably with WhatsApp) suggest that service responsiveness and user trust can be undermined when the system does not function reliably. The insights available to the evaluators thus far map the contribution story as follows:

| Where the contribution appears plausible | Where uncertainties remain |
|---|---|
| Counselors perceive improved efficiency through integrated workflows and data capture | Technology reliability varies, leading to parallel system use in some contexts |

| | |
|---|---|
| Youth prefer chat-based support and value anonymity | Expressive communication limited by some media constraints |
| Supervisors use data for oversight and operational improvements | Data use is not always consistent across contexts |
| Platform enables more secure access where well configured | Privacy confidence varies depending on device access and culture |
| Early signs of cost-effectiveness in some helplines | Long-term affordability unproven in lower-resource contexts |

Table 7: Contribution Story Mapping

Thus, to determine whether and how Aselo is contributing to intended outcomes, the evaluation will:

- Verify whether operational benefits are consistent across helplines
- Assess whether digital channels reduce wait times and increase access
- Examine change management and capacity as mediators of outcomes
- Determine whether case data is used to inform decision-making
- Identify constraints that limit contribution outside the platform's control.

## 5.6 Contribution Claims and Current Confidence

Based on the evidence available prior to additional data collection, the evaluation identifies four interim contribution claims about how Aselo is influencing helpline service delivery. These claims focus specifically on the causal contributions of the platform:

1. Aselo contributes to improved workflow efficiency for counsellors through integrated case handling and structured processes.
2. Aselo contributes to more consistent and continuous support for repeat callers by enabling improved documentation and case histories.
3. Aselo contributes to greater access for children and young people by providing discreet, trusted digital communication channels.
4. Aselo contributes to more informed operational decision-making by strengthening the availability and use of helpline data.

The evidence available suggests strong confidence in operational and workflow contributions (Claims 1 and 2), while providing more moderate support for access-related and data-related contributions (Claims 3 and 4). Confidence levels vary across contexts due to technological stability and capacity, data governance maturity, and helpline capacity.

Prior to additional data collection, all four claims were considered plausible. Early findings increase confidence that Aselo is contributing directly to operational improvements for counsellors, while partially confirming contributions related to access and data use. At the same time, reliance on external systems, capacity constraints, and technological reliability create uncertainty in the strength and consistency of these contributions across contexts. The current available evidence is summarised in Table XX below:

| **Contribution claim** | **Summary of early evidence** | **Confidence** | **Remaining uncertainties** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Aselo contributes to improved workflow efficiency for counsellors through integrated case handling and structured processes. | Counsellors report faster case handling, integrated workflows, and reduced administrative burden | Moderately strong | Variable stability and parallel system use in some contexts |
| 2. Aselo contributes to more consistent and continuous support for repeat callers by enabling improved documentation and case histories. | Case histories and documentation enable continuity; caller information accessible across sessions | Moderately strong | Occasional duplication where systems run in parallel |
| 3. Aselo contributes to greater access for children and young people by providing discreet, trusted digital | Youth preference for chat observed; anonymity valued; improved reach in some settings | Moderate | Effectiveness depends on platform reliability, configuration and external perceptions of safety |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| communication channels. | | | |
| 4. Aselo contributes to more informed operational decision-making by strengthening the availability and use of helpline data. | Supervisors increasingly use data for oversight and reporting; examples of data-driven adjustments | Moderate | Data practices differ widely; dependency on staff capacity and data governance maturity |

These interim contribution claims will be reassessed as additional evidence becomes available. Additional data collection focused on (i) verifying operational improvements across diverse helplines, (ii) assessing whether digital channels expand access equitably, (iii) examining change management and institutional capacity as mediating factors, and (iv) determining whether data use becomes embedded over time.

# 6 Findings & Discussion

This section contains the project's key findings. These findings are based on a combination of qualitative data obtained through interviews along with quantitative data (platform usage analytics) provided by Tech Matters. These findings answer the research questions and are grouped into four themes as outlined in section 2: *Implementation*; *Outcomes and Impacts*; *Scalability*; and *Sustainability*. Beyond these themes, this section also provides key findings on Aselo's key competitors, which is intended to feed into strategic considerations regarding Aselo's competitive advantages and product positioning in the wider market.

It is worth noting that the *Scalability* and *Sustainability* themes overlap. We define *Scalability* as relating to Aselo's ability to acquire new helplines, i.e., to 'scale up' and (but not necessarily) to expand to more regions of the world. On the other hand, we define *Sustainability* as Aselo's ability to remain operational — literally, to be sustained across time. As this evaluation shows, however, much of Aselo's sustainability depends upon its scalability, especially from a financial perspective. The themes are maintained distinctly for the purposes of this section of the report, and we revisit the relationship between them in the recommendations.

To protect anonymity, we do not name individuals, helplines, or external organisations. Instead, interviewees are identified using an abbreviation and number, as shown in the table. For Tech Matters, each abbreviation represents one person; for helplines, each abbreviation represents one helpline and may cover several interviewees. We also interviewed one person each from Child Helpline International (CHI), Oak Foundation, Safe Online, and Twilio; we refer to this group collectively as the "external stakeholders", and for them each abbreviation represents a single person.

| **Interviewee Type** | **Abbreviation** |
|---|---|
| Tech Matters | TM |
| Helplines | HL |
| External Stakeholders | ES |

Table 8: Interviewee Type Abbreviations

Throughout this evaluation, the strength of evidence is assessed using a five-point rating scale ranging from 'excellent' to 'poor' (**excellent, very good, good, fair, poor)**. These ratings are determined through a mixed-methods triangulation approach that integrates three complementary sources of evidence. First, qualitative data derived from stakeholder narratives and case examples provide contextual depth and illustrative insights into how ASELO functions in practice. Second, quantitative documentation—including usage statistics, performance metrics, and outcome data—offers measurable indicators of effectiveness and reach. Third, professional expert judgement from our three-person evaluation team, drawing on extensive experience in child helplines, child rights, and technology for social good, provides critical assessment of ASELO's quality, appropriateness, and potential impact. By systematically comparing and synthesising these multiple data sources, we assign ratings that reflect both empirical evidence and contextual understanding of what constitutes excellence in child helpline technology platforms.

## 6.1 Implementation

As specified in section 1.1 of the report, the research question guiding the evaluation of Aselo's implementation process was as follows:

> **How effective is Aselo's onboarding process**, particularly regarding implementation, training, and feature adoption?

The evaluation's response to this research question is summarised as follows:

Aselo's onboarding and implementation process is broadly effective and efficient. It is structured around a number of standardised steps, with a typical implementation timeline being 6 to 8 months. Implementation challenges tend to revolve around communication and coordination issues within the implementing helpline, along with internet connectivity challenges in certain parts of the world. Most user-reported issues appear to be caused by user error and/or the aforementioned connectivity issues. The Aselo team provides a high level of training and customer support, which helplines commend.

This section now presents the key findings in detail. The findings are grouped into a number of sub-themes. The sub-themes explored below are:

- Implementation Process/Steps
- Implementation Timeline
- Personnel Requirements
- Implementation Types
- Implementation Challenges
- Other Common User-Reported Issues
- Training and Customer Support

### 6.1.1 Implementation Process/Steps

**Findings: Aselo's implementation process is standardised and routinised.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Aselo's implementation follows a structured and standardised process involving several steps. These steps are shown in the table below.

| Implementation Step | Description / Activities[11] |
|---|---|

[11] For acronyms in full, please refer to the Glossary.

| | |
|---|---|
| (1) Scoping | Includes signing the contract, SLA, and SOW; holding the KOM, reviewing the helpline's workflows and SOPs; and identifying any specific requirements. |
| (2) Configuration | Includes building the helpline's staging environment; providing a product demo and discussing customizable components; gathering the helpline's customization needs in greater detail, especially business logic, workflows and channel integrations. |
| (3) Validation | Includes user tests with the helpline; further customisations; more internal testing; and end-to-end workflow validation. |
| (4) Change Management | Includes training sessions to frontline counselors and helpline supervisors; identifying helpline 'champions' to train other helpline staff; allocating 'practice' time on the platform; conducting a phased rollout; setting up data visualisations and metrics to support reporting and M&E. |
| (5) Production Launch | Includes deploying the helpline's instantiation of Aselo to the production environment; technical configuration; creating user accounts; and sometimes a phased launch involving initiating the use of one channel at a time). |
| (6) Post-Launch Support | Includes continuous monitoring of platform performance and stability; ongoing support to helpline users; tracking and triaging support requests via Freshdesk and other channels. |

Table 9: Key Steps During Implementation Process

### 6.1.2 Implementation Timeline

**Findings: Implementation takes 6 to 8 months; this could be reduced.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Aselo's typical implementation timeline is six months, including all the standardised steps shown above. However, implementation can take up to eight months, or longer in some situations. At the extreme end of the spectrum, Aselo's implementation in Canada took 1.5 years. Key factors affecting the pace of implementation include the complexity of a helpline's feature requirements and channel requirements, the complexity of their operational workflows, the helpline's decision-making duration, and misalignments

between a helpline's expectations versus Aselo's capabilities. It is likely that Aselo's implementation timeline could be condensed beyond the current six-month duration if decision-making and other factors at play within the implementing helpline were resolved faster. As TM-3 remarked, the exchange of communication involves some back and forth, which can be time-consuming. The specific factors and challenges faced during implementation are explored in more detail below.

### 6.1.3 Personnel Requirements

**Findings: Implementation requires between two and four Tech Matters staff; helpline staff numbers vary.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Aselo's implementation requires a combined effort by staff from Tech Matters and staff at the implementing helpline. Based on interviews with Tech Matters staff, the personnel requirement from Tech Matters itself is 2-4 staff. Their roles, effort, and responsibilities are outlined in the table below.

| **Role, Quantity** | **Effort, Responsibilities** |
|---|---|
| Partnerships/Project Manager x1 | Mandatory; medium effort<br>Manages the relationship with the helpline and monitors progress throughout the implementation lifecycle; also handles the SLA and SOW negotiations, along with the overall change management strategy with the helplines; receives updates from the Solutions Engineer, rather than being involved in daily implementation work. Conducts user interviews and design workshops with helpline staff; creates PRDs to capture new feature requirements. |
| Solutions Engineer x1 | Mandatory; high effort<br>Implements the helpline's required customisations and operational workflow logic; supports setting up the staging environment; provides the primary point of contact with the helpline during the implementation and change management processes. |
| Software Engineer x1 | Optional; low effort |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Performs custom feature development (if needed by the helpline); helps resolve technical issues (e.g. channel integrations). |
| Product Designer x1 | Optional; low effort<br>Designs new features (if needed by the helpline). |

Table 11: Tech Matters Staff Required for Aselo of Implementation

Based also on interviews with Tech Matters staff, the helpline staff required for implementation is varied and is influenced mostly by the helpline's size, resources, and organisational structure. For example, some helplines had dedicated IT staff while others did not. In broad terms, it is possible to say that helpline personnel requirements involve the staff shown in the table below.

| **Role, Quantity** | **Responsibilities** |
|---|---|
| Executive Director / Senior Leadership Position | Has final approval over key decisions and signing off on the contract; mostly light involvement. Will have administrative rights. |
| Project Manager | Primary point of contact with Tech Matters staff during implementation; heavily involved in defining the helpline's customisation requirements regarding forms, fields and workflows. Will often receive "train the trainer" training and is then expected to train other staff. Will have administrative rights. |
| M&E Staff (number unknown and not always present) | Support the configuration of the data visualisations and metrics for reporting purposes. |
| IT Staff (number unknown and not always present) | Support channel integrations, access/authentication issues, and other aspects of implementation as/when needed. |
| Counselors/Case workers (numbers vary) | Aselo's primary users; receive training on transitioning to and using the platform; provide feedback and validation for customisations. |
| Supervisors (numbers vary) | Are able to oversee the counselors' dashboards and review how contacts (calls and chats) are managed and handled, they use data from Aselo for reporting; provide feedback and validation for customisations. |

Table 11: Helpline Staff Required for Aselo of Implementation

### 6.1.4 Implementation Types

**Findings: There are three main implementation types: text-only; text plus voice or SMS; and custom implementation.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

There are three main types of implementations that vary depending on the scope of features and channels required by the helpline. As TM-3 explained, the first type is "text-only implementation" which includes text channels only. The second type is "text including voice or SMS," which is distinguished from the first because "voice and SMS require a lot more work in terms of talking to telecom [providers] and [undertaking] hardware setups and all of that." The third type involves customisation. As TM-3 explained, the third type is "[where helplines say] 'We want you to build a feature for us that we don't see in Aselo at the moment.'."

Some feature requests are unique to a given helpline, which can make them more expensive to build because they are unlikely to be generalisable and thereby add value to other helplines. These are the "niche features" (TM-1). However, sometimes features that are developed for a particular helpline can then be deployed for other helplines. Often, making these features generalisable to other helplines requires Tech Matters to expend only minor additional efforts and helpline-specific adjustments, such as terminology. TM-1 gave the example feature of client profiles, which "was something that we didn't have a year ago. But [helpline redacted] requested it, and because they have used it other helplines have been taking advantage of that. And the cool thing is, with the way that we have configured it, it can look very different for each helpline."

### 6.1.5 Implementation Challenges

**Findings: Implementation challenges include communication and coordination, internet connectivity issues, feature customisations, working with telecoms companies, and the lack of Twilio Flex documentation.**

| Strength of Evidence: Excellent |
|---|

The interviews with Tech Matters staff and helpline staff helped shed light on several challenges that have been, and/or continue to be, encountered during the implementation

process. These challenges have been grouped into a number of themes and factors, as shown below. Note that some of these challenges also re-appear, where relevant, in section 6.3 ('Scalability').

### Helpline Communication and Coordination

Implementation appears to be challenged by a range of inter-related communication and coordination factors, including decision-making delays within helplines; cultural differences; long response times; miscommunications about needs; changing needs; and internal politics. Interview participants noted that helplines are sometimes unclear about their requirements or the scope of work they want to cover (TM-1, TM-9), with needs occasionally changing during the implementation period, which can extend timelines significantly (TM-8). Technical team members also observed that helplines sometimes underestimate the work required on their side to reach launch stage, and that differences in expectations between helplines and the technical team are a key factor in delaying product implementation (TM-1, TM-9).

As to coordination,TM-9, TM-10 and TM-6 agreed that coordination within helplines can delay Aselo's implementation. Implementing changes requires multiple internal stakeholders and management approvals, and different teams or senior staff often have conflicting requirements. Identifying and reconciling these needs is challenging, and hesitancy among staff to change established ways of working can further slow progress. Given that resistance to change is a known implementation risk, the ToC could include specific change management activities to address it.

Helplines' responsiveness can also impact implementation timelines.TM-3 noted that "generally the [helpline's] response time throughout the implementation" can be a challenge; this can manifest in difficulties getting in touch with specific teams, or lack of timely feedback when the Aselo team is customising features for the helpline. TM-3 also remarked that this "really prolongs the entire implementation process because we're not getting the input," where input relates to decisions needed to complete all the steps in the process. Responsiveness and coherence can also be hampered due to the remote-first operating model of some helplines as noted by TM-8.

While every helpline arguably presents a unique implementation context, the challenges above could be mitigated by placing greater emphasis on stakeholder

impact mapping,[12] comprehensive requirements analysis, and ensuring all stakeholders at the helpline (from senior management to end users) are able to review and appraise the resulting requirements before technical work begins in earnest. This is work that is carried out in the first step of the implementation, and can be better structured to ensure better alignment between the helpline and Tech Matters.

Further to this, it seems that there is a lack of clarity or understanding around what Aselo can or cannot do, and this needs to be communicated clearly. Adding a 'Step 0' in the implementation process where baseline information or data is collected can be useful for helplines to understand the 'metrics' that can change as a function of implementing Aselo. Additionally the baseline data serves 'higher' purposes to demonstrate Aselo's impact following implementation.

Cultural and language barriers can also be a challenge to the implementation, compounding the issues above. TM-3 reported that although "a lot of the helplines may be able to converse in English, [often] it's not their first language. These differences in communication cause differences in understanding." Cultural attitudes regarding expression and assertiveness can be a factor too.

### Internet Connectivity

Weak internet connectivity is a significant challenge both during and after implementation. Unsurprisingly, this appears to mostly affect helplines in low and middle income countries. A staffer from HL-3 reported that "the problem is not the Aselo team; there just seems to be something with [our country's] ICT infrastructure. There seems to be a firewall that is affecting the connection. But [Tech Matters have] been so patient about it, and so kind about it. They're been trying to troubleshoot a lot of different alternatives." Similarly, a staffer from HL-7 reported that "the biggest limitation... [is] issues with the internet. Because sometimes you might find that you are on a serious call... and in the middle of counseling someone, then... it just cuts you."

[12] a structured process of identifying all the groups affected by the system (for example, senior management, frontline counselors, IT support, funders, and children or young people contacting the helpline) and then mapping how each group is impacted by design decisions. The exercise makes visible both direct and indirect effects of the technology, highlights potential risks or unintended consequences, and helps set priorities when requirements are defined.

Tech Matters are aware of this issue: in the context of Aselo's implementation challenges, TM-8 said that poor internet connectivity "is a big one". TM-9: agreed: "I think the slowness of loading when they log into the system is typically one of the first initial issues that we notice as well." As TM-9 added, "in the greater Africa region and Asia, the internet is always the issue." In this sense, it is important to note that in many regions where helplines operate, weak (i.e. slow and unreliable) internet is a fact of life.

However, part of the problem appears to be due to the fact that even though there are instances of Aselo available in multiple AWS regions (EU, US, Canada), calls are routed through Twilio's servers in the US, and this affects the speed and latency of connectivity for helplines that are based further away.

The evaluators welcome that Tech Matters is seeking to resolve these internet issues through measures including developing an offline mode, auto-saving functionality (for when internet temporarily drops), and making the frontend web app more lightweight so that it requires less data to load (a staffer at HL-6 also noted that "if the interface was maybe a bit simpler, it might take less bandwidth to load."). TM-10 said that pre-implementation, the Aselo team typically performs network tests on each location where a helpline's staff work from, in order to understand internet quality in the area and potential issues; but there is little further internet testing that can be done pre-implementation.

Additionally, the team has experimented with building a tool called *Aselo Connector*.[13] However, the Connector remains a prototype, and it is our recommendation that this be explored further. A challenge as TM-8 said is that Tech Matters has limited funding, impacting development.

The digital infrastructure is a contextual factor in which Aselo is operating, and the evaluation is indicating that this can have a significant impact on Aselo's ToC. In some contexts, connectivity can be limiting. In other contexts, the dependency on Twilio Flex reduces Aselo's loading time. Tech Matters' experiments with other solutions for low connectivity areas are commendable, but the issue with funding to

[13] This is specifically designed for low-connectivity countries and involves receiving voice calls via a web browser. The Connector enables Aselo to bypass the need to route calls across the Atlantic to the US and back to their source location. TM-8 explained, "if it's a number in Zambia calling another number in Zambia," then rather than routing the call via the US "we just keep it in Zambia with a physical hardware component, and it's much faster."

continue its development is indicative that the activities mentioned in the ToC addressing the issues in low bandwidth contexts may be facing blockers.

## Feature Customisations

The ability to customise Aselo to meet each helpline's needs is a key part of the platform's value proposition. In fact, a staffer from HL-6 suggested that even further customisation should be made available to helplines on a "per area… or per region" basis because, for example, "how Zambia and South Africa used it would be very different to how helplines in Australia or New Zealand or Europe would use it, or even those in Asia. So I think it needs to be customized… [so that] it wasn't a one-size-fits-all."

However, the degree of customisation that is currently made available to helplines can present challenges during implementation. As TM-3 said, "one of the biggest [challenges], I think, is the customisation of the platform," especially "complex features." T ""

TM-8, TM-3 and TM-9 agreed that unclear or shifting helpline requirements are a key cause of implementation challenges. Helplines do not always fully understand what is being asked of them or what Aselo can realistically deliver, which can lead to needs being revised after launch. This underlines the importance of clear, early communication about Aselo's capabilities and support for helplines to articulate precise requirements, as TM-9 noted that clear requests can usually be met quickly and straightforwardly.

## Working With Telecoms Companies

Liaising and collaborating with telecommunications companies can be challenging depending on where the helpline is located and which channels it wants to integrate. For example, integrating voice calls—arguably the most foundational channel—has to be tackled on a country-by-country basis. Where Twilio has coverage, this process is simplified since the company has already established the necessary connections. The challenges arise in countries where Twilio does not operate, and direct engagement with local telecoms remains necessary. Team members confirmed that connecting helplines to local telecom providers can vary considerably across contexts, meaning that solving voice call integration in one location does not automatically translate elsewhere. In some cases, efforts to

establish voice calls have taken years without success, and these challenges have been significant enough to hinder progress with implementation in certain places.

**Twilio Flex Documentation**[14]

As explained earlier in this report, Aselo is built on Twilio Flex, a call centre management platform that provides channel integrations (voice, text, social media, etc). From an implementation perspective, challenges can arise not only due to limited platform documentation, but also because Aselo is built on top of another service provider. This means that for new features, the team must decide whether to rely on what Twilio already offers, adapt and manipulate existing functionality to meet specific needs, or build a new solution from scratch. Each approach carries its own advantages and challenges, and as TM-1 noted, this can make the development of customer features more time-consuming than anticipated.

### 6.1.6 Common User-Reported Issues

**Findings: Common user-reported issues involve user errors, technical bugs, limitations with the search functionality, phantom callers, and inactivity timeouts.**

| Strength of Evidence: Fair |
|---|

User-reported issues can be grouped into the following categories.

**User Support Requests**

These issues are less technical problems and more user misunderstandings or user error. This includes issues such as login issues, calls appearing to be stuck, users forgetting to transfer their session between workstations, and users being unable to close calls. According to TM-8, Many of these issues could likely be resolved or prevented by improved user training and anywaythese kinds of user-reported issues tend to diminish after the first six months, once users become familiar with the platform.

**Technical Bugs/Challenges**

[14] There are also scalability-related considerations with Twilio Flex; these are captured further below.

Technical bugs are the more 'traditional' technical bugs and usability problems, and most of these appear to be related to how Aselo handles calls/conversations. These issues include things like users being unable to accept new calls even when the user is marked as available; calls being sent to users who are marked as offline; calls being sent to users who don't get a notification that the call is waiting for them. TM-3 agreed that the most common technical issues are "related to the conversation piece of Aselo." As a result, Tech Matters receives somesupport requests relating to issues with messages and calls not coming through to users. TM-3 explained that "... sometimes they happen because of browser settings; sometimes they happen because of local challenges — local internet infrastructure challenges [i.e. poor internet connectivity] and stuff like that."

Variations in the quality of internet connectivity appear a likely culprit for many of these issues. Hence, some helplines reported no issues relating to calls or conversations. For example, when asked about bugs, the staffer from HL-1, a helpline based in a developed country, remarked "no complaints there." The HL-2 staffer, based in a less-developed country, reported that Aselo "work[s] perfectly fine" so long as no more than three staff use Aselo simultaneously; a single counselor manages three chats in parallel, which allows the helpline to handle a larger volume of calls/contacts. Additionally, in their internal evaluation report Malta notes "operators frequently experience lag or slow response times during high-traffic hours. This can manifest as delays in message delivery, frozen screens, or general unresponsiveness."

Other user-reported issues included:

- Search Functionality: As TM-4 explained, "we are constantly fine-tuning how that search engine works" and counsellors sometimes cannot locate saved contacts because "in our new search engine we didn't have this particular information in mind to be searchable." Internal reports from Malta highlighted that "searching for previous interactions or case histories is hectic due to limited filtering and keyword functionalities," whilst ChildLine South Africa requested word search capability to locate chats by specific terms (e.g., searching "Instagram" to find conversations mentioning that platform). Despite previous evaluation feedback, search functionality remains problematic and does not consistently meet helpline needs.

- Phantom Callers: There appear to be issues whereby automated messages indicate non-existent callers are waiting. As the staffer from HL-4 said, something "that really worries some of the professionals [is that] the welcome message says[s] [there is a caller] waiting, but in reality, there is no one."

- Inactivity timeout: The staffer at HL-3 said that one of the main challenges raised by their frontline staff was Aselo's inactivity period, which automatically logs users out after five minutes if no action is taken. The staffer said this created difficulties because staff are often required to move between different webpages while working: "if you come off of [Aselo and switch to a different browser tab], you're going to get kicked off after five minutes," which has caused frustration among team members.

While the development of Aselo has meant significant strides forward for helplines, and as some of them attest that there are "no complaints there" (HL-1), the issues mentioned by the helplines where the platform glitches, can hinder the effectiveness and consistency of service delivery (**OP2**). Additionally, helplines wait times could be impacted negatively (**OC2**), undermining also the number of children who could receive support (**OC10**).

### 6.1.7 Responding to User-Reported Issues

**Findings: User-reported issues are addressed via a standard customer support process; helplines say this is an improvement over their experience with previous vendors.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

User-reported issues are handled through a standard support, triage and resolution process. TM-3 explained that users report issues to the Tech Matters team via email or WhatsApp, with messages being automatically routed through to Freshdesk, a customer support system.[15] TM-3 reported that "we have a support schedule with both a secondary and a primary on-call support person every week, and that's to cover the differences in time zones." Once a support ticket is received, the on-call support person investigates the issue by trying to replicate it, checking the status of Twilio Flex and AWS, viewing user sessions and analytics in Fullstory,[16] investigating the relevant user session and any errors,

[15] https://www.freshworks.com/freshdesk
[16] https://www.fullstory.com

checking logs to see whether it appears as a network issue or failed call etc., and keeps snowballing the investigation. TM -3's comments are corroborated by the evalautors who examiend Aselo.

Once the actual or probable cause of the problem is identified[17], the team brings this into their development cycle. As TM-3 reported, "if we find that it's happening across multiple helplines, or it's actually... a bug in the system, then we'll reply to tell them that this bug has been logged, and then it will go into our next sprints[18] to correct." This issue-resolution process appears to align with industry standard approaches to triaging, assessing, and problem-solving issues that users raise. The timely responses contribute to increasing the effectiveness and consistency of service delivery (**OC2**). Anecdotally, helplines noted that this level of attention and responsiveness contrasts with their previous experiences, where vendors often lacked an understanding of the sensitive context of helpline operations and critical issues were overlooked. In this respect, Aselo's support model represents a notable difference.

### 6.1.8 Training and Customer Support

**Findings: Tech Matters provides comprehensive training and customer support, which helplines find invaluable; one helpline mentioned limitations with training materials.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

Helplines generally reported high levels of satisfaction with the training and customer support offered as part of the Aselo implementation process, and the evaluators collected numerous quotes to support this. For example, a staffer at HL-1 said they felt "pretty confident" using Aselo after the initial training and noted that the feedback mechanism for addressing questions was effective. A member of HL-7 said that "everything was done very well" regarding training. Another HL-7 staffer said the training was smooth, but this was also because Aselo "is user friendly. So it was very easy, even for counselors, to learn it fast because of the simplicity in... the way it was designed." HL-2 praised the training stating:

[17] Provided that there is in fact a technical issue (versus user behaviour). Quantitative statistics provided show that 50% of the tickets are in fact a "non-issue".
[18] 'Sprints' are periods of software development with a fixed, consistent duration (e.g. two weeks).



"we're were feeling a bit scared about the change, but [NAME] made it very, very easy and comfortable, that everyone felt very happy, and that the way that they introduced a new, completely new way of working, and that the data collection was becoming more complete this way, and everyone could feel really comfortable. And indeed, once they left, they were always very open to answer any questions that would come along, even during the use of after the training, and that everyone was really pleased with it."

Helplines appreciated that Tech Matters staff provided extensive in-person training, travelling to locations from South America to Africa. All staff stressed the value of in-person (rather than virtual) sessions for building their confidence in the platform. Several helplines noted that true familiarity with Aselo emerged through practice. For example, an HL-4 staffer reported that "the system really became understood once everyone was using it." A staffer at HL-4 also said that Tech Matters staff "came here for around two, three days, and we went through very, very vast training on how the system can be used, and all the technical aspects of it, in terms of reporting when we need to report. And we also discussed how it can be adjusted and according to our needs, which was very, very good".

Helplines also praised the support that Tech Matters offered after the initial training. At HL-2, a staffer reported that the team remained "very open to answer any questions that would come along, even during the use of after the training, and that everyone was really pleased with it." This sentiment was echoed by other helplines who felt reassured by the responsiveness of the team throughout the onboarding process. A staffer from HL-7 appreciated the training continuing post-implementation whenever there are new features: "we've had trainings, and they keep on training us every time they... they would have introduced a new feature in the system, and they keep on sending us some emails when they are upgrading it." The helplines interviewed generally agree that the training and support they receive is valuable, providing evidence that supports **OP2** focused on counselors' training and confidence in using Aselo.

Helplines reported that training materials were insufficiently tailored to diverse operational roles. HL-1 noted the materials were "not exhaustive from the clinical operations or frontline staff perspective" and required content for different user personas (frontline staff, management, quality assurance, clinical leadership) rather than the two personas

provided. Consequently, HL-1 developed supplementary in-house training materials. HL-6 found the manual overly lengthy and technical, particularly challenging given multiple languages used in their country. This indicates training materials require greater adaptability and contextualisation to ensure all users can effectively engage with the platform (**OP3**).

### 6.1.9 Quantitative Data – Onboarding

A single quantitative datapoint was captured regarding implementation and onboarding, as per the table below. At 88.8%, the *% of users completing onboarding* is relatively high, representing a good level of commitment and buy-in from helplines users. That said, the target should always be 100%, given the importance of training helpline staff to use Aselo effectively and minimising the disruption caused by missed learning opportunities during onboarding. Further research could help understand and reduce the 11% drop-off rate.

| Question | Data points required |
|---|---|
| What percentage of users drop off after initial registration or onboarding? | • % users completing onboarding: **88.8%** |

Table 12: Quantitative Data Regarding User Experience and Accessibility

## 6.2 Outcomes & Impacts

As specified in section 1.1 of the report, the research questions guiding the evaluation of Aselo's outcomes and impacts were as follows:

> **How has Aselo impacted helplines' operations**, particularly regarding workflow efficiency, case handling, data management, and service responsiveness?
>
> **Has Aselo improved helpline services' accessibility** for children and vulnerable users, including through multichannel access?

The evaluation's response to this research question is summarised as follows:

Aselo has had a significant impact on helplines' operations, as reported by all helplines interviewed by the evaluation team. Benefits include making it easier for helplines to

manage their overall caseload; reducing the time required to gather and find data about cases; improving supervisors' ability to monitor service delivery; and enabling stronger data-driven reporting for advocacy and other purposes. Aselo has improved helplines' accessibility for children and vulnerable persons, including: allowing contacts to seek support via a variety of communications channels; providing a chatbot feature that helps handle call volume while providing an alternative to speaking directly with a counsellor; and improving helplines' overall responsiveness to children who reach out for support.

This section now presents the key findings in detail. The findings are grouped into a number of sub-themes, and they draw upon insights from Tech Matters staff, helpline staff, and external stakeholders, as relevant. The sub-themes explored below are:

- Overall Perceptions
- Accessibility and Use
- Responsiveness
- Operational Efficiencies
- Reporting and Oversight
- Advocacy
- Data Sharing
- Measuring Impact
- Potential Features

### 6.2.1 Overall Perceptions

**Findings: Helplines perceive Aselo overwhelmingly positively.**

| Strength of Evidence: Excellent |
|---|

Helplines overwhelmingly reported that Aselo has delivered a significant positive impact in terms of improving their services' accessibility to children and also improving the efficiency of their operations (workflows, case handling, data management, and service responsiveness). A quote from HL-3 illustrates this well:



"Aselo has been a complete game changer for us, because of where we're coming from, having virtually nothing to be able to… produce and be as efficient as other helplines and participate in these types of discussions… Aselo is amazing to me." They added: "I think the more we utilize Aselo is, the more that we appreciate how comprehensive the system is… it's really an amazing platform. I cannot say it enough."

Similarly, a staffer at HL-7 said "there's no way we can stop using [Aselo]. We have people who come to visit our call center, [and] we proudly share with them our system, and they are so amazed… They also get excited."

### 6.2.2 Accessibility and Use

**Findings: Multichannel access increased reach and acceptability; repeat-caller handling improved continuity.**

Strength of Evidence: Very Good

There is strong evidence that Aselo has made it easier for children to get in touch and seek support from counselors through various communications channels (phone, WhatsApp, web chat, social media). This multi-channel capability is particularly significant given that, as was stated above, younger and vulnerable populations are often text- and app-oriented, and may be unwilling or unable to use traditional voice-based phone services. Aselo, "it's improved even on service delivery…It's changing the narrating. It's changing the attitudes towards toll free helplines" said a staffer from HL-7.

Another staffer from HL-7 explained that "I know kids are these days, they're always on WhatsApp, they're on Facebook, Instagram. So it really, I think it, it has also helped them, you know, to really open up and talk about things they're going through…" This provides evidence in support of **OC3**, as helplines and users have access to secure, trusted channels. Additionally, helplines' feedback also seems to indirectly support **OC7** whereby accessibility through children and young people's preferred channels can impact the frequency of the helpline use.

A staffer at HL-2 highlighted how Aselo improved the process of gathering contact information. The counselor explained that the platform not only simplified the visualisation of information but also guided them through asking questions in a sensitive way. The built-in prompts helped staff frame queries more gently, while also giving them the option to record whether a child shared details voluntarily or in response to a question. As the HL-2 staffer said, Aselo "would prompt us with ways of asking things… and even allow us to note whether this information was given [by the contact] voluntarily or after asking."

Helplines highlighted the ability to identify repeat callers as particularly impactful from a service accessibility and delivery perspective. For example, a staffer at HL-6 explained that "when the same child came in multiple times… and if the counselor that was in the previous day spoke to a child, and then on the next day we had a different counselor, it was a little bit easier for the next counselor to pick up where the previous counselor left off." This staffer noted that the ability to view "past chat transcripts… past summaries of the same child" was important in tracking repeat callers.

### 6.2.3 Responsiveness

**Findings: Wait times decreased in most sites; one high-volume site reports slight increases due to queue logic and load.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

All helplines apart from one stated that caller waiting times were the same or shorter compared to before adopting Aselo; thus making a strong case for this finding. For example, HL-3 said that wait times had reduced from 20 minutes to 10 minutes. However, HL-1, the exception, raised concerns about efficiency in caller waiting times: the staffer at that helpline said that while the average wait time had been five minutes, it has now risen to 5:10–5:30. They attributed this partly to increased call volume and therefore longer queues, but also to limitations in how Aselo manages multiple queues. The staffer noted that "Tech Matters is not a contact centre solution service, so they don't have the expertise in providing ways to optimise how different queues function in the algorithm."

As a result, queues with vastly different traffic levels, ranging from 70 callers a day to over 1,000 a day, were initially treated in the same way, meaning the probability of being picked up varied significantly between queues. The HL-1 staffer suggested that this lack of

algorithmic weighting contributed to longer waiting times and inefficiencies in managing call flow across programmes and partnerships. Overall, while waiting times generally decreased or remained consistent across helplines, the points raised by HL-1 are however of relevance to **OC1**. They highlight the importance of continuing to refine activities that ensure Aselo effectively supports counsellors in performing their day-to-day functions.

### 6.2.4 Operational Efficiencies

**Findings: Helplines' operational burdens were reduced; staff-to-contacts ratio increased; and data quality has improved.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Evidence strongly suggests that Aselo reduces the operational burden on helplines and improves their workflows, thereby enabling helplines to deliver a greater impact (in terms of helping vulnerable children) with their existing personnel. For example, TM-6 reported that after adopting Aselo, one helpline:



"had 38% more contacts [compared to their previous system] with the same staff. They spent 50% less time on data entry. And because of the assessment tools they had [in Aselo], they said that 90% of their staff had improved their counseling abilities."

This is evidence of **OP2** and **OP3**, and indicates progress towards achieving **OC5** related to more and better quality data, and intermediate outcomes related to increased frequency of use (**OC7**), and to higher quality counselling (**OC11**).

The fact that Aselo integrates various communications channels and tools into a single UI underpins a lot of the operational benefits. Prior to using Aselo, counselors would often consult multiple tools during the course of their work. As TM-3 explained, "we've had helplines where the system [they] previously [used] was a combination of an [Microsoft] Access database, a Google Sheet, and notebooks," whereas with Aselo "it would combine

all of those [functions] and no longer have notebooks, no longer have to enter data in the Access system and all of that, and just edit in Aselo."

This integration has delivered several operational improvements. Counsellors can manage calls more efficiently with streamlined workflows that reduce tab-switching (TM-5) and enable real-time data capture during conversations rather than recording information after the fact (HL-7). Multiple helplines emphasised the benefit of having chat platforms and data capture systems integrated together, rather than operating as separate systems (HL-6). This consolidation has notably improved both data quality and staff efficiency (HL-1, HL-3), with one quality manager at HL-3 noting that prior to Aselo, "I couldn't see the bigger picture for our clients." This feedback helps validate a key aspect of Aselo's value proposition and confirms that outcomes 5 (more and better quality data) and 11 (higher quality counselling) are being achieved.

### 6.2.5 Reporting, Advocacy and Oversight

**Findings: Aselo's data capabilities have strengthened both management oversight and advocacy efforts.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

Aselo's integration of multiple data streams into a single location has significantly improved both internal service delivery management and external advocacy, we score this as very good:

**Management and Oversight**

> Supervisors reported substantial benefits from real-time dashboards enabling monitoring of counsellor activity, particularly valuable for remote staff during lockdown (HL-6). HL-4 noted statistical reporting eliminated manual errors and enabled quick responses to information requests, whilst also allowing random checks of service metrics like contact wait times. HL-3 explained that Aselo now enables evidence-based responses to government questions that were previously impossible to answer, such as identifying peak service times to justify round-the-clock operations. Annual reporting and case extraction for specific child protection issues have become straightforward (HL-3).

### Advocacy and Funding

> Helplines emphasised that Aselo's data capture, categorisation, and filtering capabilities have transformed how they evidence their work. HL-2 reported that Aselo "created a great impact in order to continue receiving funding" by enabling data-driven project proposals and helpline promotion. HL-7 noted that filtering specific metrics (e.g., callers living with HIV) supports targeted advocacy, whilst HL-3 highlighted improved credibility when providing media commentary on emerging child protection issues: "we're able to provide that data at the drop of a hat." TM-5 summarised that helplines now have "a lot more data that they can use themselves to be able to make decisions, [to] advocate for their organization, just to make them a stronger organization overall."

These findings demonstrate progress toward **OP6** (streamlined data collection for analysis, advocacy, and reporting), **OC5, OC6** (helplines having access and control over their data), **OC9** (understanding user needs and impact), **OC11, OC13** (informing child protection strategies and policies), and **OC15**. Robust data access also strengthens funding sustainability by enabling compelling impact evidence.

### 6.2.6 Data Sharing

**Findings: Aselo can provide a foundation for sharing insights and information across the community, as/when helplines are ready to do so.**

| Strength of Evidence: Fair |
|---|

The ability to enable the sharing of data and insights between helplines via Aselo is a potential future value-add of the platform. At present, helplines are not sharing data with each other in the platform, meaning that Aselo's insights reports and dashboards are not being used to inform funding decisions, policy advocacy, or sector-wide best practices at a larger scale beyond individual helplines, as two external stakeholders (ES-2 and ES-4) noted. Reasons include constraints imposed by user agreements, concerns around sharing data between jurisdictions, difficulties in aggregating data across helplines, and the fact that helplines ultimately wish to retain direct control over their own data. Indeed, the latter is a core tenet of Aselo's anti-colonial approach to data ownership. And broadly speaking, helplines remain more interested in sharing best practices and learnings than sharing their data *per se*.

CHI, as the membership organisation for the child helplines, remains the logical place to situate cross-country aggregation of data. To this effect, Aselo is intended to enable helplines to submit data that can then be leveraged by CHI for reporting, analysis, and global advocacy. For some stakeholders, Aselo's capabilities need to be further developed here. For example, ES-2 highlighted the use of shared data and aggregate insights had been the top priority for them, and they had hoped that each helpline would, by now, be consistently sharing data with Aselo and/or CHI. Similarly, ES-4 said that Aselo is not yet at the point where aggregate insights from the helplines can be shared with other stakeholders on a regular basis to inform decision-making and advocacy across the helpline community. As ES-4 remarked, "I am not going to give up on that, of course. But I think we've got quite a few stages to go before we get there."

### 6.2.7 'Tech for Good' Leadership

**Findings: Aselo demonstrates leadership as a 'tech for good' initiative.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Another sought-after outcome for Aselo is in providing leadership on how tools can be deployed not just within the helpline community but with the 'Tech for Good' space broadly. There is strong evidence to find that this is achieved. Part of this revolves around Aselo's open-source foundations. ES-1 explained, a desired strategic outcome for Aselo is in "seeding that open-source tooling ecosystem," which involves "providing the sort of proof-of-concept and models and approaches… and ways of thinking about that and ways of collaborating in that way." In this sense, Aselo's impact is less about measuring the numbers of helplines onboarded and the number of countries in which Aselo is deployed, and more about the intangible positive knock-effects that Aselo has in the social enterprise space. ES-1 put it this way:



"I don't think [that] scale just for scale sake is necessarily always the goal. I think it's more [about the]… magnitude of impact in the sense of what ripple effects is it creating, what

| |
|---|
| infrastructure or capacity is it building in the ecosystem that will then have amplifying effects?" |

A related part of this leadership is demonstrating how tools can be adapted to the specific needs of local contexts, and identifying lessons that other social enterprises could benefit from. ES-1 said that this outcome is about seeing Aselo "scale and adapt to different contexts in ways that are very localized and [then] learning from that," especially because a "big challenge… in the ecosystem is adapting tools to local context, and how do you best do that, working with local partners." In ES-1's view, Tech Matters has shown strong outcomes here: they have "been really collaborative in working with different ecosystem partners, exchanging knowledge, sharing some of their best practices… through how they develop their projects and do outreach and sort of share their insights."

### 6.2.8 Measuring Impact

**Findings: Helplines report Aselo has delivered a strong positive impact on their service delivery and on children themselves; quantifying this impact remains difficult.**

| |
|---|
| Strength of Evidence: Good |

When discussing Aselo's impact, it is important to clarify what is meant by "impact" in this context. Some types of impact such as the long-term effect of helpline contacts on a child's wellbeing or on a child's or even counsellor's mental health, are well recognised as inherently difficult to measure quantitatively. Other forms of impact, however, such as improvements in number of contacts handled, consistency of service delivery, data use, or fundraising/advocacy capacity, are more directly attributable to Aselo's role as a technology platform. The qualitative evidence gathered for this project suggests that Aselo delivers significant benefits for helplines within these categories.

However, as mentioned much of the positive impact evidence currently takes the form of self-reports from helplines. These are valuable, but they do not always provide the type of robust data needed to articulate a business case for Aselo—something often required in funding applications and investment requests. For example, counsellor experience in terms of efficiency, burden, and ease of use is widely reported as positive, but there are limited quantitative measures to confirm this.

A further difficulty lies in establishing pre- and post-Aselo comparisons. Without baselines from before adoption, it is hard to quantify how much better Aselo is than previous systems, even where users report improvements. The same applies to decision-making and fundraising: helplines use Aselo's reporting functions to advocate with donors, government, and internally, yet the outcomes of these activities are hard to isolate and measure.

As mentioned earlier, the results framework proposes indicators that can help track progress toward longer-term goals. In the absence of baseline data, proxy indicators could also be identified. Over time, establishing systematic baselines and enabling platform-wide analytics will be essential for building a stronger evidence base of Aselo's real-world impact. Some progress is already being made in this direction, with work underway on dashboards to track metrics such as time to answer, unanswered calls, and call quality.

Finally, the measurement challenge is especially acute when considering the broader "Tech for Good" outcomes Aselo aims to foster, such as capacity building, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. These outcomes are by nature less tangible and harder to measure, but not impossible: shifts in mindset and behaviour, for example, can be captured through tailored results frameworks. Ultimately, the degree to which this becomes a material issue will depend on the type of evidence donors and partners require to provide continued support.

### 6.2.9 TF-CSA

**Finding: Better baseline data is required from helplines to be able to assess Aselo's impact in supporting the recognition and reporting of TF-CSA.**

| Strength of Evidence: Poor |
|---|

The ability to identify and respond to callers presenting issues of TF-CSA and CSAM is an important issue for all stakeholders and readers will thus note its presence in the outcomes tables. This was however a difficult point to evaluate due to lack of baseline or current data. HL-3 explained that their helpline received few online sexual abuse cases prior to implementing Aselo, but this changed following a national and international push on the issue in 2022, when they began receiving reports of online grooming, indecent exposure, and related concerns from young people. Given the timing coincided with both Aselo's implementation and increased awareness campaigns, the helpline could not determine

whether any increase in reporting was attributable to the platform itself or to broader contextual factors.

On quantitative data, Tech Matters staff informed the evaluators that they have counted 1,621 Reports of CSAM and/or other forms of TF-CSA received by helplines using Aselo from its inception in February 2021 through the end of 2024. Qualitative data from helplines indicates that while Aselo has generally improved helplines' ability to respond to callers, including those contacting them about TF-CSA and/or CSAM, it has not, on its own, substantially strengthened helpline capacity to *detect* or *specialise* in these cases:

- A HL-4, staff emphasised that professional assessment and triage remain the decisive factors, with Aselo playing only a supporting role.
- At HL-7, counsellors described their capacity as stemming primarily from training with the Internet Watch Foundation, which enabled them to identify and report TF-CSA cases.
- At HL-2, Aselo did play a role in encouraging the creation of internal protocols for handling calls about sexual exploitation, though gaps remain due to the absence of broader state-led structures for prevention and response.

In light of this, progress towards **OP5** and **OC4** appears uneven, and there is not enough evidence to make a strong finding.

### 6.2.10 Referrals

**Findings: Aselo has improved helplines' referral workflows, including replacing outdated manual processes, improving data quality, and enabling staff to identify patterns.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

Helpline staff reported that Aselo has streamlined referral workflows and improved case management. HL-7 noted the system provides clear referral pathways, including direct TF-CSA reporting through the IWF portal, and case tracking functions ("pending," "follow-up," "closed") that replaced incomplete manual spreadsheets. HL-2 emphasised improved handling of caller information, demographics, and conversation themes, contributing to more structured and accurate referrals. Both HL-3 and HL-7 highlighted

that Aselo enables monitoring of referral patterns, including how many times a child has been referred, whether cases remain open, and when follow-up is required. The tagging function ensures referrals are tracked beyond the helpline's short-term mandate, supporting long-term case follow-through.

These findings demonstrate achievement of **OP4** (helplines actively employing Aselo's integrated functions to manage and monitor referrals systematically) and progress toward **OC2** (clearer referral pathways, more efficient data collection, and built-in follow-up mechanisms). Whilst long-term referral completion rates require quantitative verification, qualitative evidence indicates both the output and outcome are being realised in practice.

### 6.2.11 Quantitative Data – User Experience

The following table captures quantitative data that was collected regarding the helplines' user experience of Aselo.

| **Question** | **Data points required** |
|---|---|
| How long is the average wait time that users experience? (**OC1.2**) | • Average user wait time before being connected to a counselor: **14 minutes 57 seconds**[19]<br>• Timestamp at contact creation and timestamp at first response: **Not available,** but we note that counsellors accept when they are ready to chat. |
| How frequently do users return to previously visited pages or features? | • # repeat visits per user: **Not available**<br>• Repeat feature usage trends: **Not available** |
| What percentage of contacts entered are incomplete? | • % contacts lacking full info: **2.57%**[20] |

[19] Calculated from average value of "Average Queue Time" from six helplines: "JM - Overall Stats.xlsx" (Jul 2022 to Jul 2025), "Th - Overall Stats.xlsx" (Jul 2023 to Jul 2025), "CL - Overall Stats (1).xlsx" (Jun 2023 to Jun 2025), "ZM - Overall Stats.xlsx" (Feb 2021 to Jul 2025), "SG - Overall Stats.xlsx" (Apr 2024 to Jul 2025), NZ - Overall Stats" (May 2024 to Jul 2025).
[20] Data from "Incomplete Contacts.png" (as of September 2025)

| | |
|---|---|
| What percentage of users request support per month? (**OP3.3**) | • # support requests per month: **32**[21]<br>• % support requests per month: **7.26%** |

Table 13: Quantitative Data Regarding User Experience and Accessibility

There are some comments to make regarding the quantitative data. First, the *average user wait time* is ~15 minutes. On the one hand, this may appear excessively long, and runs the risk that callers will either end their call prematurely and/or be dissuaded from calling the helpline in time-sensitive situations. On the other hand, we note that each helpline has its own operational procedures that can impact wait times to varying degrees; some helplines have wait times that hover around 1-5 minutes, while others who are more chat-focused have longer wait times. Going forward, it is advisable that helplines with shorter wait times are analysed to see if lessons can be learned for those with longer wait times.

Second, the *% of contacts lacking full info* is low, at 2.57%. This suggests that the use of Aselo is helping to improve the quality of data being captured by helplines, and therefore corroborates helplines' self-reports on the data quality improvements experienced with Aselo. Third, the *% [of users submitting] support requests per month* is 7.26%, which is low. While further analysis may help to shed light on the comparative rate of user support requests per helpline pre, during, and post-implementation, this statistic corroborates findings from the interviews suggesting that most user support requests are concentrated in immediate post-implementation period and concern mostly minor issues that are addressed quickly.

### 6.2.12 Quantitative Data – Feature Usage and Adoption

The following table captures quantitative data that was collected regarding helplines' use and adoption of Aselo.

| **Question** | **Data points required** |
|---|---|
| How many user accounts exist? (**OP1.1**) | • # existing user accounts: **1644 (including inactive)**[22] |

[21] Average over June-November 2025.
[22] As of 26 May 2025, from "directory-users_2025-05-26T08-25-46_52883cbd-4a24-4d8e-9b11-673f60921663.csv"

| | |
|---|---|
| How many users log into Aselo on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis? (**OP2.1**) | • # daily active users: **115**[23]<br>• # weekly active users: **361**[24]<br>• # monthly active users: **746**[25] |
| What percentage of users are actively using the platform over time? (**OP2.1**) | • # registered users: **1644**[26]<br>• # active users: **820**[27] |
| How long do users typically spend on the platform per session? | • Average session duration: **7814791.723 ms (2.2 hrs)**[28]<br>• Session duration distribution: 5696301.43 ms (1.6 hrs) to 9772116.157 ms (2.7 hours)[29] |
| Which features of Aselo are used the most/least frequently? (**OP2.2**) | • # visits per feature:[30]<br>  ○ Agent-desktop: **1,023,649**<br>  ○ Teams: **122,287**<br>  ○ Case-List: **75,214**<br>  ○ Search: **60,371**<br>  ○ Queues-Stats: **43,344**<br>• # interactions/clicks per feature: **Not available**<br>• Feature usage duration: **Not available**<br>• Feature usage distribution:[31]<br>  ○ Agent-desktop: min (11,822), max (25,106)<br>  ○ Teams: min (1,217), max (2,833)<br>  ○ Case-List: min (849), max (2,254)<br>  ○ Search: min (703), max (1,798)<br>  ○ Queues-Stats: min (522), max (1,312) |

[23] Average of daily active users, 20 August 2024 to 19 August 2025.
[24] Average of weekly active users, w/c 18 August 2024 to w/c 10 August 2025.
[25] Average of monthly active users,July 2024 to June 2025.
[26] As of 26 May 2025, from "directory-users_2025-05-26T08-25-46_52883cbd-4a24-4d8e-9b11-673f60921663.csv"
[27] As of 26 May 2025, from "directory-users_2025-05-26T08-25-46_52883cbd-4a24-4d8e-9b11-673f60921663.csv"
[28] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, average of "Everyone_Average_TimeSinceSessionStart" from "Users_Today_20250526_104952.csv"
[29] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, min and max values of "Everyone_Average_TimeSinceSessionStart" from "Users_Today_20250526_104952.csv"
[30] 16 Jun 2024 to 15 Jun 2025, total "EventCount" per page, from "Page_Views_20250619_205144.csv"
[31] 16 Jun 2024 to 15 Jun 2025, min and max values of "EventCount" per page, from "Page_Views_20250619_205144.csv"

| | |
|---|---|
| How does feature usage vary across different user roles (e.g., Supervisor vs. Counselor)? (**OP2.2**) | • Above metrics by role: **Not currently available** (could be obtained for future evaluations from each helpline) |
| What is the number of reports exported or run in system logs? (**OP6.1**) | • # of reports exported or run per month: **9 (average)**[32] |
| What is the number of TF-CSA/CSAM-related cases flagged through Aselo? (**OP5.1**) | • Tech Matters have counted 1,621 Reports of CSAM and/or other forms of CSEA received by helplines using Aselo from its inception in February 2021 through the end of 2024<br>• # of TF-CSA/CSAM tags per month: **2.3 (average)**[33] |

Table 14: Quantitative Data Regarding Technology Adoption and Utilisation

The quantitative data raise some useful insights. First, given the *# of active users* being 820 and the *# of monthly active users* being 746, this means **91% of Aselo's users with active/current user accounts are logging into and using the platform of a monthly basis**. The *session duration distribution* of 1.6 hours to 2.7 hours sits relatively closely around the *average session duration* of 2.2 hours, meaning that the vast majority of helpline users use Aselo for roughly the same duration each day. Given the above findings from the interviews, it is reasonable to assume that the work undertaken on Aselo during those 2.2 hours per day represents notably less time than would be spent on the same activities prior to adopting Aselo.

In terms of feature usage, the most used feature/page in Aselo is the agent-desktop page by a significant margin (this is where counsellors are handling their conversations). Interestingly, the Search feature has a relatively low usage rate, despite being cited in some helpline interviews as an invaluable feature for finding contacts, although the challenges cited by some helplines in using the search feature could explain this. Further user research could help understand the feature usage distribution in more detail, in particular whether there are certain workflows that are adding greater value, or whether there are specific "pain points" that prevent certain features from being fully utilised.

Regarding TF-CSA/CSAM reporting, it is difficult to understand whether there has been an increase in reporting without the availability of a baseline. Since 2023, and the proliferation

[32] Data from Looker (Aug 2022 to March 2025).
[33] Data only available from Meri Trustline (India). Breakdown: 6 (2023), 15 (2024), 19 (2025).

of GenAI, there has been an increase in reports of AI generated CSAM[34]. It is important to note that several countries have designated hotlines for reporting CSAM[35] making helplines one of the places where CSAM can be reported, but not the only one. Having Aselo linked to IWF portals to make reporting easier and more accessible can be considered a useful tool for helplines. Further monitoring of the CSAM/ TF-CSA metrics would help Tech Matters identify how Aselo is contributing to reporting, and devise specific training for helplines to ensure better identification of CSAM. A further step could be to request follow-up on the referrals to the IWF portal so that helplines can get feedback about the outcomes of the referrals. This could also be noted in Aselo so that the information can be available to both the helpline and Tech Matters for monitoring the outcomes of reporting.

## 6.3 Scalability

As specified in section 1.1 of the report, the research question guiding the evaluation of Aselo's scalability was as follows:

> **How scalable is Aselo** (both within existing helpline contexts and in new geographies) and what lessons from its development and implementation are transferable to other tech-based social impact initiatives?

The evaluation's response to this research question is summarised as follows:

From a technical perspective, Aselo is essentially ready to scale as/when needed. Aselo is a cloud-based platform that is hosted within AWS, which offers a variety of resources that facilitate scaling-up of Aselo's infrastructure (both compute and storage). The factors that will affect (i.e. constraint) Aselo's scalability are primarily non-technical in nature and include: financial challenges and uncertainties; the dependencies on third-party services (namely, Twilio Flex); and balancing Aselo's platform coherence with helplines' individual customisation requirements. While data processing regulations are unlikely to be a major barrier to scalability, they may constrain which specific features (especially AI features) can be offered to which helplines, which in turn may limit Aselo implementation.

This section now presents the key findings in detail. The findings are grouped into a number of sub-themes, and they draw upon insights from Tech Matters staff, helpline staff, and external stakeholders, as relevant. The sub-themes explored below are:

[34] How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online
[35] INHOPE

- Funding Uncertainties
- (Additional) Potential Barriers to Adoption
- Dependency on Twilio Flex
- Technical Debt and Testing
- Data Processing Regulations
- Data Sharing
- Platform Security
- Team Size
- Platform Coherence

### 6.3.1 Market and Funding Fit

**Findings: Price sensitivity is the primary brake on adoption among LMIC helplines; grant subsidies currently underwrite half of implementations.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Funding uncertainty is the most significant challenge to Aselo's scalability (and sustainability). This was a recurring concern throughout the interviews with all stakeholder groups. When asked what would be the biggest challenge as Aselo scales-up to more helplines, TM-2 said "the biggest challenge is fundraising," TM-3 said the "the biggest [challenge], as I see, is cost," As TM-5 remarked, "the biggest challenge [to scalability] is… our sustainability model and the current state of fundraising and revenue that we have, and cost and pricing fold into that."[36]

Specifically, the crux of the challenge appears to revolve around the fact that many of Aselo's current (and also prospective) customers (i.e. helplines) operate in low and middle income countries where resources are, almost by definition, highly constrained. This report already highlighted resource constraints in relation to the implementation process. The conundrum is that a key part of Tech Matters' vision for Aselo is in enhancing the capacities of low-resource helplines to support vulnerable children.[37] Yet the reality is that the less able helplines are to pay for Aselo, the more grant funding is needed to cover Aselo's costs.

[36] Funding and costs are also a sustainability challenge (see section below).
[37] See section below on strategy.

The cost of Aselo has been an important factor when helplines have chosen not to adopt the platform. As TM-3 reported, “I've had a lot of conversations that stop when we start talking about cost. So everyone's like, ‘Yes, yes, yes, we want it.’ And then [they ask], ‘How much will it cost?’ And then [the conversation] cuts… So the biggest challenge [is] still cost; that remains a challenge in the foreseeable future.” TM-3 believes the proportion of potential customers (i.e. helplines) that have declined to adopt Aselo due to prohibitive costs has “changed throughout the years,” but “I would say it’s… at least 30 to 40% of all of our interactions” where this has happened. Similarly, TM-8 said the current problem is not “we can't onboard [helplines] fast enough… The problem is we don't have enough [helplines] that are willing to pay”. As TM-5 remarked, “a lot of helplines unfortunately… cannot afford Aselo.” This is also evident from the helplines who no longer use Aselo. HL-6 mentioned that the funding constraints prohibited them from continuing using Aselo for their helpline. In the case of HL-2 the helpline currently has no funding to continue its operations, but they mentioned that they would gladly use Aselo again if they had funding to operate.

The technical limitations with Aselo’s dependency on Twilio Flex were highlighted above. It is also worth noting that the costs of using Twilio Flex—like those of AWS—are passed on to helplines and can influence decisions about signing up. At the same time, relying on third-party services also brings important benefits: if Aselo had not used these providers, it would have required significantly more upfront funding to replicate their functionality, longer development timelines before delivering impact, and additional resources to maintain a larger system in-house. In this sense, while some costs are passed on, many others are absorbed, particularly for helplines in low- and middle-income countries. There have also been initiatives to reduce third-party costs and pass savings to helplines, although these have not always proven sustainable over the long term (for example, when free access to Okta via a grant came to an end). As Aselo scales up, careful management of third-party costs, and exploration of more affordable alternatives, will remain important to ensure affordability for helplines.

Not only will more funding be required to cover the costs of scaling Aselo to more helplines — infrastructure costs, third-party services costs, personnel costs (e.g. more engineers) — but the international fundraising environment is facing constraints too. In this sense, changes in the fundraising environment are compounding the financial challenge for Aselo’s scalability. During the Covid pandemic, TM-2 explained, “fundraising was easier than it’s been… for decades… it was a more generous time… [But] there were a bunch of dynamics where fundraising got more difficult last year.” This included “the ratcheting

down of foreign aid and government funding, both in Europe and in the United States, the two most generous sources of foreign aid and development aid," TM-2 said, "And so we're in this deep sort of problem now. A lot of organisations are closing."

A potential disconnect exists between funder priorities and helpline needs, particularly regarding AI investment. TM-2 noted that whilst "people want to fund AI," for many helplines—especially in Africa—AI is not a priority concern. This report has highlighted various non-technical challenges (organisational, cultural, digital literacy) affecting Aselo implementation that AI investments would not address.

### 6.3.2 (Additional) Potential Barriers to Adoption

**Findings: Other scalability barriers include helplines' own concerns about Aselo's sustainability, which may dissuade them from buying a license; helplines' expectations of Aselo's capabilities; the potential that some helplines develop their own solutions in-house; some helplines' demands for a mobile version of Aselo; and operational challenges regarding data migration and working across time zones.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

In addition to the challenges discussed above, the evaluators have found strong evidence to support the claim that there are several additional potential barriers to Aselo's adoption that should be addressed as Aselo scales up.

#### Concerns About Sustainability

> As nonprofits, most helplines are used to operating under limited resources and will also be aware of the constrained funding environment. This awareness has filtered through into concerns about the extent to which Aselo is a safe long-term investment for a given helpline. As TM-8 reported, "one of the concerns that I've heard, or read between the lines and heard implied from helplines, is 'Is Aselo going to be around in 10 years? How long will you be here? Can we rely on you versus our internal [team]?'"
>
> One mitigation to this risk (whether actual or perceived) is to open-source Aselo itself. Indeed, Tech Matters has made Aselo's code open-source, which should go

some way to alleviating helplines' concerns, and perhaps one strategy could be to communicate this clearly to the helplines.

### Data Migration Strategy

Developing a structured data migration strategy may also ease the pathway to signing-up new helplines, especially in terms of building confidence that a helpline's existing data will be available within Aselo for subsequent analysis and reporting. TM-8 said that the data migration aspect of Aselo's implementation is "not the strongest at the moment.." Part of this is because helplines are often looking to adopt Aselo in order to improve the quality of their data collection going forward, and so "it wouldn't always make sense to migrate" all their existing data straight into Aselo. As mentioned above, as part of the implementation process Tech Matters already provides methods for migrating, or otherwise making available, a helpline's existing data for searching, querying and reporting purposes, and this approach may continue to suffice for the near-term as Aselo scales.

### In-House Solutions

Some helplines may choose to build their own solutions in-house, especially if they have the will and resources to do so. If they have highly specific needs, this can also increase the likelihood that they choose to build something themselves. TM-8 suggested that more helplines in this category — i.e., helplines who have the resources to potentially build their own solution — should be targeted from a sales strategy perspective. The ability to leverage Aselo's network benefits should be highlighted as a key incentive: if a helpline builds their own solution, they are "not getting to be part of that bigger community". As discussed below, data sharing is a key unique selling point of Aselo and further effort should be applied to develop this differentiator.

### Mobile Version

Building a mobile version of Aselo may support further helpline acquisition, especially given the limitation that Twilio Flex is not optimised for mobile devices. As TM-1 explained, "I can imagine a world where... someone [at a helpline] needs to be on-the-go when they're helping others... [and] it's not the most feasible to be using a laptop. So I can imagine it would be helpful to make [Aselo] more mobile." According to TM-1, this would not necessarily require building a native iOS or Android version

of Aselo; “I’m thinking just a [mobile] browser.” Similarly, TM-8 noted that “there could be a lot of helplines out there that would move to Aselo if we had [a] mobile [version].” However, the extent to which this would actually help secure more sales is unclear

### Time Zones

A staffer at an EU-based helpline (HL-7) reported that concerns about differences in time zones between their staff and Tech Mattes impacted their decision not to adopt Aselo. They said the time zone difference was believed to pose barriers to implementation and support, and created uncertainties around how responsive Tech Matters staff would be during moments of operational difficulty or crisis. Although this concern was only raised by one helpline, it may become more salient as Aselo scales to additional time zones. At the same time, it is important to note that a significant portion of Aselo’s full-time staff are already based in Europe and Africa, specifically to help address these types of concerns and provide support across regions.

## 6.3.3 Dependency on Twilio Flex

### Findings: Aselo has a critical dependency on Twilio Flex for channel integrations; this may affect scalability, although there are few (if any) alternatives.

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

As noted earlier, Aselo uses Twilio Flex to handle channel (telecoms) integrations. However, strong evidence indicates this dependency creates significant technical and financial constraints.

### Technical Limitations

Twilio Flex restricts how far Tech Matters can customise and develop Aselo. TM-1 explained that the team is "very often limited by what they can offer from a technical point of view." Specific constraints include:

- **Outdated technology stack:** Twilio Flex uses old versions of Node and NPM, forcing Aselo to use outdated dependencies. This includes an obsolete React

version that creates design issues for Aselo's frontend, whilst the backend remains modern.

- **Feature development constraints:** Building desired features, such as a Data Warehouse for improved data storage, querying, and reporting, is impossible within Twilio's architecture and would require external development that ports back into Aselo (TM-8).

#### Financial Costs

Twilio Flex represents Aselo's largest expense. TM-4 noted Flex charges on an hourly basis, meaning costs increase with usage. TM-6 identified Twilio costs as the primary "blocker" to new helpline sign-ups, albeit it was noted that Twilio provides discounts.

#### Replacement Infeasible

Despite these constraints, replacing Twilio Flex appears impractical. Multiple staff noted that:

- Twilio Flex constitutes a "majority part of the stack" (TM-5)
- Its programmability and customisation capabilities are unmatched by alternatives
- Building in-house telecommunications capability "from scratch would be way more expensive" than current Twilio costs (TM-4)
- Redevelopment would be "reinventing the wheel" given Twilio's sophisticated, flexible contact centre technology (TM-5)

Whilst Twilio Flex dependency creates real constraints, it remains the most viable solution given the prohibitive cost and complexity of alternatives.

### 6.3.4 Technical Debt and Testing

**Findings: As a software product, Aselo naturally accumulates tech debt over time; as Aselo scales, comprehensive testing and a QA function should be resourced to ensure tech debt is kept under control.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

One Tech Matters interviewee highlighted challenges around technical debt. TM-1 reported that whilst technical debt has improved since Aselo's launch, it remained high toward the end of last year, with nearly every feature generating follow-up tickets. TM-1 noted that additional engineering and product personnel would help address this backlog.

Technical debt is not inherently problematic and is expected in software operations. However, in Aselo's case, underlying causes—including resource constraints, limited testing capacity, and rapid scaling—will likely need addressing to improve efficiencies and ensure platform stability. TM-1 acknowledged that whilst the team has addressed considerable technical debt, progress is limited by having only three engineers. Whilst this has not undermined Aselo's performance yet, high technical debt volumes could become problematic as the platform scales, particularly when reliable and timely support to contacts is critical.

Technical debt is further exacerbated by incomplete testing during development. TM-1 explained that whilst the team employs test-driven development covering main features (end-to-end, unit, integration, and accessibility tests), time constraints prevent comprehensive testing across all platform components. There is strong evidence that this has not undermined Aselo thus far. However, as Aselo scales—with increased feature development and platform complexity—the growing testing requirements may necessitate hiring a dedicated Quality Assurance (QA) engineer.

### 6.3.5 Data Processing Regulations

**Findings: Data processing regulations are unlikely to constrain Aselo's scalability long-term, but AI features may require US data processing, and differing interpretations of compliance can deter adoption.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Aselo's AWS hosting provides strong foundations for international growth through customisable regional deployment. TM-8 noted that "where we store different buckets of data can definitely be customised per country." Aselo currently operates three regional instances:

- **EU (Ireland)** – for GDPR compliance; used by EU and some non-EU helplines
- **US** – for US-based helplines
- **Canada** – separate server for Canadian data residency requirements

At launch, Aselo was US-hosted only. The team provisioned the EU instance to achieve GDPR compliance, which TM-3 said "alleviated a lot of the data protection challenges in the EU."

### Growing Demand for Local Data Storage

> Whilst data protection compliance is not currently a major challenge for most helplines (TM-3), demand for local data storage may increase, particularly in the MENA region where it significantly influences adoption decisions. Tech Matters distinguishes between helplines that prefer local storage and those legally required to use it—often local storage is not legally mandated once compliance standards are explained.

### Data Protection and Compliance Interpretation as Adoption Barriers

Data residency requirements and evolving regulatory frameworks present barriers to Aselo adoption for some helplines, particularly in the EU. A small number of helplines have not adopted Aselo due to data residency concerns, with TM-3 noting that occasionally "talks have immediately stop[ped] because there's no international data transfer allowed," though emphasising this affects "a very small number" of helplines.

Compliance challenges are further complicated by the introduction of AI features. TM-8 explained that an EU helpline interested in AI functionality could not proceed because Tech Matters is "still going through a process of determining what kind of [data protection] regulation [would apply], how it might be a little bit different with the EU AI Act." This confirms risks related to legal frameworks constraining helpline data use.

The divergence between legal interpretations can function as a deterrent even when technical solutions exist. For example, HL-5 (EU-based) declined Aselo primarily due to data sovereignty concerns, interpreting EU regulations as prohibiting transfers of sensitive data (phone numbers, conversations) outside the EU. Tech Matters clarified that most data resides in AWS Ireland, with only portions transferred to Twilio US servers, and that EU-US agreements enable compliant operations for other European helplines.

Tech Matters should continue checking national data protection regulations during helpline engagement as Aselo scales.

### 6.3.6 Infrastructure Scaling

**Findings: Generally, Aselo's infrastructure is ready to scale as/when needed; database improvements may be required.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

#### Ready to Scale

There is strong evidence to note that as Aselo scales, platform infrastructure pressures will require close monitoring to maintain performance and user experience. TM-4 explained that Aselo's AWS architecture is largely ready for vertical scaling (increasing component power) and horizontal scaling (adding resources to distribute load), including migration to AWS Lambdas with auto-scaling capabilities. The team focuses on "avoiding any unnecessarily expensive computations," though infrastructure cost projections for scaling to additional helplines would be valuable if not already completed.

#### Shared Databases Present the Primary Scaling Concern

Aselo currently operates three regional databases (Canada, US, EU), with helplines sharing their region's database. Both TM-1 and TM-4 identified this as problematic: shared databases complicate system monitoring and will require scaling to accommodate growing data volumes. TM-4 noted this is the component "that I am more scared of failing" and said dedicated databases may be necessary, as occasional load bursts from one helpline have caused issues for others.

However, TM-4 believes the current architecture "will work just fine" for years, with limits emerging only at "many millions of contacts in a single database." Other potential infrastructure expansions include a second AWS account and additional regional hosting for improved monitoring (TM-1).

### 6.3.7 Platform Security

**Findings: There are no obvious security concerns that would affect scalability.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

There are no apparent security concerns as Aselo scales up, and evaluators are confident in this finding. Regular independent penetration testing and prompt patching of identified vulnerabilities have ensured strong protection, with no recorded data breaches. Helplines also reported no issues and noted that Aselo's security features, such as single sign-on and role-based access controls, have strengthened their organisational security.

### 6.3.8 Team Size

**Findings: The size of the Aselo team (especially engineering) will need to increase to support platform growth; integrating AI features will require additional technical staff.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

The Aselo team, especially engineering staff, will likely need to expand as the platform scales. At present, the team includes two engineers who undertake a range of tasks including building new features, fulfilling grant requirements, addressing bugs, and also providing rotating on-call technical support. According to TM-8, "It's just too few people to sort of manage all of that. I could easily see that becoming an issue as we grow". However, even a small increase in the size of the team could pay dividends as Aselo scales. As TM-8 said, "we could grow and sustain many more helplines if we had even four or five engineers total.... I think three is just a little too small from what I'm sensing." TM-1 agreed, saying that a couple of years ago the team had "six to seven staff... So there's definitely more need in terms of the technical help, because it is a lot of work" for two engineers.

Whilst the comments focused on engineering staff, the comment is probably true of other functions too. TM-1 noted that if Aselo is to have AI capabilities, this will need more staff beyond the single machine learning (ML) engineer who is currently on the team. The current Aselo team appears to be operating at maximum capacity, and will clearly require additional staff to enable any further scaling of the platform.

### 6.3.9 Platform Coherence

**Findings: Aselo's features, even when requested by a single helpline, have tended to benefit multiple helplines at once; however, the risk of platform fragmentation will need to be actively managed as Aselo scales.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Given the level of customisation provided for each helpline, the question was posed regarding whether Aselo might become fragmented over time, leading to there being multiple products rather than a single platform. Tech Matters "don't want to create sixteen little Aselos. We want to create one Aselo that many more helplines can use… So as we're scaling more, I'm just trying to imagine what it would be like to manage Aselo for, let's say, one hundred helplines." The team is seeking a balance between the two extremes of having a fixed-feature off-the-shelf platform versus a fully customisable platform, said TM-6, adding that "we don't want either those extremes… So that is a challenge that we have, of continuing to find where is that right middle ground [where] we're providing customisation but we're not providing too much." That said, it may be that while Aselo continues to scale, customisations that were previously implemented effectively reduce the number of new customisations needed by new helplines.

With respect to **OP1** (more helplines using Aselo), the progress since the launch of Aselo should be acknowledged. However, since some helplines have not adopted Aselo following the beta testing, and some others have stopped using it since they implemented Aselo, it shows that progress towards achieving this output is slow. This is in line with comments from external stakeholders (e.g. ES-4) who mentioned that the uptake is much slower than they expected and what Tech Matters would like. Given that helplines have increased since Aselo launched, but some have stopped using it since then, and the rate of adoption of Aselo is slower than expected, **OP1** can only be considered as partially achieved. Further to this, the assumption that helplines will adopt Aselo if it is demonstrably affordable within helplines' operational budgets is challenged and the corresponding risk that helplines may lack the long-term funding needed to adopt and sustain Aselo, is confirmed and needs to be evaluated and mitigated.

### 6.3.10 Quantitative Data – System Performance

The following table captures quantitative data that was collected regarding Aselo's performance, which sheds some light on the scalability of the platform.

| Question | Data points required |
|---|---|
| How long do pages take to load and what is the breakdown across time, place, device etc.? | • Av. page load by location (fastest to slowest):<br>  ○<br>  ○ **United States: 2.19**<br>  ○ **Singapore: 3.32s**<br>  ○ **Canada: 3.43s**<br>  ○ **Chile: 3.49s**<br>  ○ **Ethiopia: 3.79s**<br>  ○ **Malta: 3.97s**<br>  ○ **India: 4.13s**<br>  ○ **New Zealand: 4.42s**<br>  ○ **Zambia: 4.47s**<br>  ○ **Jamaica: 4.61s**<br>  ○ **Thailand: 5.05s**<br>  ○ **Tanzania: 5.22s**<br>  ○ **Zimbabwe: 7.98s** |
| How often do users experience system errors, and what are the most common errors? | • Most common errors: **Not available**<br>• Average #errors per day: **1,084** (note: overwhelming majority of these have no impact on the user experience)[38]<br>• Types of errors: **Not available**<br>• Av. #errors per day by location: **Not available**<br>• Av. #errors per day by time of day: **Not available**<br>• Av. #errors per day by browser:[39]<br>  ○ Chrome: **4,973**<br>  ○ Edge: **249**<br>  ○ Firefox: **155**<br>  ○ Safari: **38**<br>• Av. #errors per day by device:<br>  ○ Desktop: **1,354**[40]<br>  ○ Mobile app: **4**[41] |

[38] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, average of all browsers'/devices' daily average errors, from "Browser.csv"
[39] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, each desktop browser's daily average errors, from "Browser.csv"
[40] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, average of all desktop browsers' daily average errors, from "Browser.csv"
[41] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, average daily mobile app errors, from "Browser.csv"

| | |
|---|---|
| What percentage of users experience session timeouts or unexpected logouts? | • % session timeouts: **Not available**[42]<br>• % forced logouts (note, all accounts but one are set to enforce logout after 30 minutes of inactivity so this is not an 'unexpected' logout: |
| Are there any specific browsers or devices that show higher failure rates? | • % errors by browser:[43]<br>  ○ Chrome: **91.8%**<br>  ○ Edge: **4.6%**<br>  ○ Firefox: **2.9%**<br>  ○ Safari: **0.7%**<br>• % errors by device:<br>  ○ Desktop: **99.9%**[44]<br>  ○ Mobile app: **0.1%**[45] |

Table 15: Quantitative Data Regarding System Performance

The quantitative data raise some useful insights regarding scalability. First, the *global average page load speed* of 3.99 seconds is not unreasonable for a platform like Aselo, especially given the integration of third party services. More interesting is the geographic distribution of helplines above and below the average. Helplines for whom Aselo loads faster than the average include not only the US, Canada, countries in Europe, but also countries in the "global south" and/or less developed parts of the world, such as Latin America (Chile) and parts of Africa (Ethiopia). Similarly, helplines for whom Aselo loads slower than the average include not only places like Zimbabwe and Zambia (which this report has highlighted above), but also countries in more developed parts of the world such as New Zealand. These statistics suggest that it is erroneous to assume that Aselo will *de facto* load faster in the more developed parts of the world and slower in the less developed.

Second, there was little data available regarding the nature of *system errors*. While the browser and device-related errors rates skewed heavily towards the Chrome browser and desktop devices, this also reflects the fact that Aselo is designed for desktop (not mobile), is almost exclusively accessed via desktop, and that Chrome is the most popular internet browser. While it is important to ensure continued compatibility with changes in internet browser technologies, this does not raise any concerns from a scalability perspective. If/when Aselo is deployed as a mobile application (via mobile browser or a dedicated iOS or

[42] Data available on total number of timeouts per country, but not as percentage of helpline users.
[43] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, each desktop browser's total errors as % of all errors, from "Browser.csv"
[44] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, total of all desktop browsers' errors as % of all errors from "Browser.csv"
[45] 26 May 2024 to 26 May 2025, total mobile app errors errors as % of all errors, from "Browser.csv"

Android application), error rates should be similarly monitored and assessed for those platforms.

## 6.4 Sustainability

As specified in section 1.1 of the report, the research question guiding the evaluation of Aselo's sustainability was as follows:

> **How sustainable is Aselo**, considering factors such as organisational ownership, funding models, and long-term operational integration?

The evaluation's response to this research question is summarised as follows:

Aselo's vision is to support child helplines around the world, but especially those who are most in need of additional resources. In this context, the primary sustainability challenge is financial: most helplines depend on donor funding to pay for Aselo, and yet the donor funding environment is increasingly constrained. Aselo's financial model will need to be strengthened (and likely diversified) in order to ensure the platform's sustainability.

This section now presents the key findings in detail. The findings are grouped into a number of sub-themes, and they draw upon insights from Tech Matters staff, helpline staff, and external stakeholders, as relevant. The sub-themes explored below are:

- The Vision for Aselo
- Funding Gap
- Aselo's Affordability
- Funding Strategies

### 6.4.1 The Vision for Aselo

**Findings: Aselo's vision responds to a strong customer demand (from helplines) and a clear gap in the market (i.e. lack of will from Big Tech to meet this demand).**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

Aselo is located within the 'Tech for Good' field, an informal movement that seeks to leverage technologies for societal (and environmental) benefit. In this context, the vision for Aselo is to provide a capability that enables child helplines to better connect with, and deliver support services, to vulnerable children around the world. As TM-2 explained:



"[O]ur dream is to provide technology tools that help the helplines help twice as many kids with the same number of staff... that's what the helplines wanted, they wanted technology that made them more powerful to pursue their mission. And I think that's what the 'Tech for Good' field does best, [which] is [to] provide tools that help the people on the front lines of social change be a lot more effective."

Given that most helplines around the world are nonprofits and have limited financial resources, the idea was that Aselo would fill a technology gap that the 'Big Tech' companies have little financial incentive to address. "For Tech Matters, Aselo's success is defined as an increase in the number of helplines using the platform and an increase in the impact on the helpline community and on vulnerable children as a result. At present, much of this effort is focused on helplines within the CHI network.

Success can also be defined in terms of normative leadership within the helpline community. For example, ES-1 explained that their decision to support Tech Matters was strongly influenced by the commitment to open-source tools and collaborative working. ES-1 said that Aselo functions not only as a practical tool for helplines, but also as a demonstration of how open-source technology can catalyse systemic change. However, it is difficult to measure the extent to which any observed outcomes from the operation of Aselo can be attributed to specific ways in which Aselo is built (e.g. open-source).

### 6.4.2 Strategic Uncertainties

**Findings: Aselo's strategy can be better communicated**

Strength of Evidence: Very Good

Given the constrained funding environment, ES-1 highlighted that having a strategic vision of what is needed in the space is really important to attract donor attention. This includes having metrics and solid partnerships, where you show that you're collaborating and that you've seeded the thing, so that this will take off and be able to be used by other people, and will shift the way other people are doing their work alongside your implementation.

Aselo's strategic evolution reflects both intentional design and necessary adaptation. From its inception, Aselo was developed as a globally-shared, open-source product intended to address technology pain points for the CHI membership through user-centred co-creation. The strategy included increasing helpline capacity, reaching children where they are, providing meaningful data insights, and developing a mixture of philanthropic funding and earned revenue from high-resource helplines. Development was led by Tech Matters in active partnership with CHI and helplines globally.

However, interviews with external stakeholders revealed varying understandings of Aselo's strategic priorities, suggesting gaps in how strategy has been communicated across the stakeholder ecosystem. ES-2 noted uncertainty about whether strengthening CHI's network capabilities or improving helpline accessibility for children was the primary objective. ES-4 emphasised their expectation for aggregate data to support CHI's campaigning and advocacy efforts, and when asked about Aselo's strategy, remarked: "to be honest, I don't think we've even seen a strategy when we were talking about scaling up and sustainability... I think it hasn't really materialised."

These differing perspectives partly reflect the natural reality that different stakeholders prioritise different aspects of a multi-faceted initiative. However, they also point to communication challenges that have left some stakeholders unclear about strategic direction. This has been compounded by legitimate periods of strategic flux, including a major shift towards greater reliance on revenue from high-resource helplines in response to a more challenging philanthropic funding environment than anticipated during Aselo's first 2-3 years.

Ensuring that key strategic priorities are clearly articulated and well-understood across all stakeholders, particularly those in strategic roles, will be important for addressing sustainability and scalability challenges going forward. This includes clarifying how Aselo's strategy has evolved in response to sector-wide funding constraints, and ensuring alignment on priorities between Tech Matters, CHI, helplines, and funders.

### 6.4.3 Funding Gap

**Findings: Gaps in funding place Aselo's sustainability at risk.**

| Strength of Evidence: Very Good |
|---|

To sustain Aselo's growth and achieve its vision, it is obvious that robust, sustainable sources of funding are required. At present, lack of funding remains a significant risk. This means that Aselo will need to "rely on philanthropy." According to TM-6, while Aselo is "a good product that is sellable in wealthier economies" like the US, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, nevertheless in the developing world "we have to figure out some other partnerships" that "ideally [involve] some funding and some partners." It is in light of these challenges, TM-5 raised concerns about Aselo's longer-term financial trajectory.

At present, around half of Aselo's funding comes from helpline fees, most of which comes from a minority of well-sourced helplines who pay higher fees, according to TM-8. The remaining half comes from grants issued by Safe Online and other funders. The aim is to ensure a 50/50 split for funding.

This evaluation notes that a robust sales strategy will be required to drive a stronger revenue base. At present, inbound sales (i.e. when helplines engage with Tech Matters, rather than Tech Matters actively reaching out to helplines) appears to be the main sales approach. Tech Matters has therefore focused on nurturing engagements with helplines who had previously expressed an interest in Aselo. Yet it is doubtful that Tech Matters has capacity to engage in a more expansive approach while maintaining Aselo for the existing helpline userbase. TM-5 cited the lack of a full-time sales person as being part of the problem.

### 6.4.4 Affordability and Pricing

**Findings: Aselo might prove to be prohibitively expensive for many helplines; this could affect the sustainability of the platform.**

| Strength of Evidence: Excellent |
|---|

The need to improve Aselo's affordability for helplines appears crucial, and evaluators are confident in this finding. For example, a staffer at HL-4 felt that costs were high relative to

their budget, noting that they were still missing some desired functionalities. A staffer at HL-7 expressed concern that quotations appeared to increase over time, creating uncertainty about future sustainability. They explained that prohibitive cost would be the only factor preventing their continued use of Aselo, as their organisation does not generate income from the call centre and depends entirely on external funding. Similarly, a staffer at HL-2 said that price would be the only factor that might force them to stop using Aselo.

It is important to note that, according to Tech Matters, unit costs are not generally increasing. Where helplines see higher costs, this is typically linked to increased usage, which is communicated in advance. Nevertheless, these perceptions highlight how affordability remains a central concern for helplines, and how communication about cost structures may be as important as the actual pricing model.

Beyond becoming a potential barrier to new customer acquisition (i.e., signing more helplines, as discussed in the scalability section above), price rises may also increase customer 'churn' (i.e. more helplines cancelling their contracts). A HL-3 staffer said that although they understood that prices rise over time, e.g., inflation or exchange fluctuations, if the price were to jump significantly in one go this could create problems, especially as they are under strict funding rules on how much can be spent per team. According to this staffer, if Aselo's prices rise beyond the permitted budget, the helpline would have no choice but to switch to a different platform.

### 6.4.5 Funding Strategies

**Findings: There are some identifiable funding strategies that could help address financial challenges; the private sector represents an unexplored market.**

| Strength of Evidence: Good |
|---|

Several funding routes have been highlighted for Aselo. In practice, some combination of these ideas is likely to be required to achieve financial sustainability.

#### Donor Outreach/Sales

> To diversify and strengthen fundraising, Tech Matters needs to increase qualified donor leads and prioritise in-person engagement. TM-2 explained that in-person donor conversations dramatically improve conversion rates—with approximately

100 leads generating 20-30 conversations, resulting in 2-3 new donors over one to two years. However, the current approach depends primarily on leveraging the founder's existing connections rather than systematic donor cultivation, creating vulnerability if this network becomes unavailable or exhausted. Expanding sales efforts and developing additional pathways to engage potential donors would reduce this dependency and support more sustainable funding.

### Subsidisation Model

Tech Matters has discussed adopting a subsidisation model where wealthier helplines (North America, Europe) pay higher fees to offset costs for lower-resourced helplines (South America, Africa, South Asia). This aligns with Aselo's coalition ethos but requires careful financial management. However, external stakeholders raised viability concerns. ES-4 questioned whether sufficient analysis had been conducted on different scenarios, noting that whilst the theory of cost-sharing is sound, tight control over financial projections is essential. If lower-resourced helplines are onboarded faster than higher-paying ones, Aselo will struggle to cover costs without adequate grant funding.

### Diversification

Beyond child helplines, Aselo's contact management capabilities could serve broader use cases including case management and command/outreach centres. Two non-child-facing implementations already exist.

- **Government Sector:** Tech Matters has explored government contracts, including one unarmed crisis response line. However, concerns exist about mission drift—particularly risks of Aselo becoming a law enforcement tip line—and notoriously slow government sales cycles that hinder consistent revenue pipelines.

- **Private Sector:** This market remains unexplored, with uncertainty about rules governing private sector service provision. Given funding challenges, assessing this opportunity merits consideration. Remote counselling services (social services, student services) increasingly operate online and could benefit from Aselo's platform for both service delivery and data management.

## 6.5 Competitive Landscape

Based on interviews with  helplines and external stakeholders, not a full market scan, no alternative product or solution was cited as demonstrably better than Aselo for child helpline operations. When asked about the competition to Aselo, these interviewees mainly referenced general-purpose CRM tools (e.g. Salesforce) rather than specialist platforms. This indicates that Aselo remains relatively unique in serving helpline-specific needs, from the perspective. However, several notable platforms do exist, some purpose-built for similar contexts, others serving broader human services or NGO operations:

**iCarol (https://www.icarol.com):** A nonprofit helpline solution used by 211s, crisis and suicide prevention lines, warmlines, victim support services, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisations.

**Casebook:** A configurable mobile-ready child welfare case management system tailored to human services, designed to manage adoption, foster care, and reporting workflows. It includes interoperability and compliance capabilities.

**Basechat (https://www.basechat.com):** A secure chat and SMS platform focused on emotional support contexts like hotlines and counseling. It offers webchat, video chat, WhatsApp, SMS, video chat, questionnaires, anonymisation, and queue management, all optimised for helpline use and GDPR compliant.

**Primero (https://www.primero.org):** Developed by UNICEF (and now partnered with Microsoft and other providers), Primero is an open-source case management platform. It supports comprehensive protection workflows (including child protection, gender-based violence, incident monitoring, family tracing, reunification). It emphasises transparency, adaptability, and cost-effectiveness for governments and NGOs.

**Bonterra Apricot (https://www.bonterratech.com/product/apricot):** While not specific for helplines, Bonterra Apricot is recognized in NGO circles as a participant tracking and program management tool, offering a CRM and data-driven case management features.

**extendedReach (https://www.extendedreach.com/extendedreach.nsf/index.html):** A case management solution aimed at social service agencies, including child welfare. It

supports outcome tracking, documentation, and reporting.

**OpenCHS (https://openchs.com)**: An open-source case management system tailored for child protection services and helplines. It features multi-channel communication capabilities (phone, WhatsApp, SMS, webchat) and is integrating AI-driven capabilities including automated call triage and real-time speech-to-text translation.

**Izzy (https://www.izzyplatform.com/products/helpline):** A helpline case management database tailored to nonprofits and charities, built to consolidate workflows and improve internal operational capacity.

Additionally, mainstream commercial platforms, such as Salesforce, are increasingly adopted within the nonprofit and government sectors. These enterprise-grade platforms deliver powerful features like chatbots, ticketing systems, and analytics dashboards. However, their proprietary nature, high cost, and generic customer service orientation make them less aligned with the unique operational needs and safeguarding requirements of child helplines. Aselo's integrated, safeguarding-focused design remains a key differentiator.

# 7 Conclusion & Recommendations

## 7.1 Conclusions

In concluding, this section will first provide an answer as to what the findings mean for the wider ecosystem. Then we revise and strengthen Aselo's contribution story, showing how it is contributing towards the overall impact outlined in the ToC. Conclusions and contribution claims are based on the evidence gathered, and some suggestions to further refine the ToC are also presented. This section will also present recommendations to help improve current practices.

First however, the evaluation team wishes to acknowledge the substantial positive feedback received from the participating helplines during the course of the evaluation. These findings suggest that Aselo not only improves helplines' effectiveness and accessibility, but also fosters deeper engagement between children and counselors. Through Aselo and its capabilities, children can contact the helplines in a safe and confidential environment that is specifically built for addressing children's needs based on

the helplines' structures and systems. The evaluation team also acknowledges the significant advancements Tech Matters has made in developing open-source technology for social good, which is both a challenging and commendable undertaking.

## 7.2 Implications for the Wider Ecosystem

The evaluation demonstrates that it is possible to build a **global, scalable "tech-for-good" solution** when development is grounded in strong user-centred design and co-creation with non-technical partners. Aselo provides concrete proof that digital tools can sustainably support social impact work across diverse contexts.

As an **open-source** platform, Aselo offers an important model for shared ownership and transparency in the child protection and digital-rights sector. Its codebase and collaborative governance approach can inform future technology initiatives that aim to strengthen trust, accountability, and inclusivity.

There is a **pressing need for systems to interoperate**. Data collected by helplines through Aselo can feed into regional and global partners such as Child Helpline International and Safe Online, creating a continuous evidence loop. This loop enables better advocacy, resourcing, and policy responses. The overlap of Aselo's funders with initiatives such as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), which also receives support from Safe Online, further highlights the importance of shared data standards and coordination across organisations.

Aselo's structured and secure **data architecture enables evidence-based policy and advocacy**. Aggregated and anonymised data can strengthen global insights on technology-facilitated child sexual abuse (TF-CSA)) and related harms, providing the evidence necessary for national and international child-protection strategies.

The platform illustrates the **digital impact of online channels on accessibility**. It shows that online spaces, while often discussed primarily as sites of risk, can also be crucial entry points where children seek and receive support. Promoting and safeguarding this positive use of digital environments should therefore be part of broader online-safety strategies.

Finally, the evaluation raises concern about **non-evidence-based restrictions**, such as blanket bans on social-media platforms. These measures risk excluding children from vital protection and counselling services offered through digital channels, while

inadvertently pushing them toward riskier, unregulated spaces (for example through VPN use). Policy responses should therefore balance safety with access to support.

## 7.3 Revising the Contribution Story

Overall, Aselo seems to be contributing to helplines having more integrated and accessible systems which support service provision and increase responsiveness to children's needs. Data entry is less time consuming and less burdensome, and data management is supporting the helplines having more accurate data that can be used for case management, advocacy and reporting. This shows progress towards the overall impact of providing faster, safer and more effective support through a data-informed system that meets children where they are. While Aselo offers value for money, financial sustainability remains a critical question that must be addressed.

Through revising the contribution story, the evaluation identified four interim contribution claims that focus specifically on Aselo's causal influence on helpline service delivery:

1. Aselo contributes to improved workflow efficiency for counsellors through integrated case handling and structured processes.
2. Aselo contributes to more consistent and continuous support for repeat callers by enabling improved documentation and case histories.
3. Aselo contributes to greater access for children and young people by providing discreet, trusted digital communication channels.
4. Aselo contributes to more informed operational decision-making by strengthening the availability and use of helpline data.

The evaluation also shows that there has been significant progress in achieving the short-term and intermediate outputs and outcomes of Aselo's ToC, and it also provides evidence towards the longer-term outcomes that were beyond the scope of the evaluation. The tables below summarise the status of the outputs, and short-term and intermediate outcomes. A new short-term outcome is also being suggested to portray progress in relation to data entry being less burdensome and less time-consuming, which was confirmed from the qualitative data.

In the table below, “Evidence strength” reflects the evaluators’ collective confidence in the finding, based on the quality, consistency, and triangulation of available data. Ratings (low, medium, strong) were agreed jointly by all three evaluators to mitigate individual subjectivity.

| **OUTPUTS (OP)** | |
|---|---|
| **Output** | **Status** |
| 1. More helplines use Aselo. | Partially achieved. Helplines have increased since Aselo launched, but some have stopped using it since then. Rate of adoption of Aselo slower than expected.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 2. Helplines use Aselo effectively and consistently for service delivery and data collection. | Achieved based on qualitative data. Quantitative data to track this output, particularly lack of baseline information is limited.<br>Evidence Strength: Medium |
| 3. Counselors are trained and confident in using multi-channel tools where they receive contacts. | Achieved based on qualitative evidence and review of training documentation.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 4. Referral systems are functional, integrated, and used. | Seemingly being achieved, more quantitative data needed to verify qualitative evidence.<br>Evidence Strength: Medium |
| 5. TF-CSA/CSAM cases are more efficiently identified and tracked. | Seemingly uneven, insufficient evidence, some evidence of tracking.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 6. Data collection is streamlined for analysis, advocacy, and reporting. | Achieved; evident from qualitative data and also from quantitative evidence of reports exported (requires tracking to observe the longer-term use for reporting).<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |

Table 16: Status of Outputs

| **OUTCOMES (OC)** |
|---|

| Short-Term Outcomes | Status |
|---|---|
| 1. Helplines manage more contacts with lower wait times. | Partially achieved. Qualitative data indicates yes, no baseline available to compare.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 2. Improved referral accuracy and follow-through. | Seemingly being achieved, more quantitative and long-term data needed to verify qualitative evidence.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 3. Helplines and users have better access to secure, trusted channels. | Achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 4. Increased reporting of CSAM and TF-CSA | Seemingly uneven, insufficient evidence.<br>Evidence Strength: Medium |
| 5. Helplines have more and better-quality data. | Achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 6. Helplines have improved access to and secure control over their data | Achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| **Added Outcome:** Data entry is less time consuming and is a lesser burden on counselors | Achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| Intermediate Outcomes | Status |
| 7. Children and youth more frequently use helplines via preferred channels (chat, social media). | Qualitative data indicates it has been achieved, no baseline available to compare.<br>Evidence Strength: Medium |
| 8. Counselors' job satisfaction and overall wellbeing are enhanced. * | Beyond the scope of this evaluation.<br>Evidence Strength: N/A |
| 9. Helplines better analyse their user needs and own impact. | Achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: Strong |
| 10. Higher counselor productivity results in more children receiving timely support. * | Beyond the scope of this evaluation.<br>Evidence Strength: N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| 11. Improved supervisor and assessment controls results in higher quality counselling. * | Beyond the scope of this evaluation, however there are indications that this is being achieved. Data also enables this.<br>Evidence Strength: N/A |
| 12. Having access to repeat caller history can be beneficial to callers. * | Beyond the scope of this evaluation. Data from previous evaluations had already proved this is being achieved.<br>Evidence Strength: N/A |

Table 17: Status of Outcomes

(* Beyond the scope of this evaluation.)

Evidence provides increased confidence in the contribution claims relating to workflow efficiency and support for repeat callers, as these effects are consistently reported across helplines and strongly supported by qualitative accounts. Confidence in contributions related to discreet access and data-enabled decision-making is moderate, reflecting contextual variations. As a result, the contribution story has been updated (Table XX) to reflect a stronger and more consistent contribution to operational improvements, alongside emerging but context-dependent contributions in relation to access and data use. From a Contribution Analysis perspective, the evaluation is now able to state where contribution appears stronger, where uncertainty persists, and what still requires further evidence.

| **Contribution Claim** | **Current Confidence** | **Reasons for Change in Confidence** | **Remaining Limits to Confidence** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Aselo contributes to improved workflow efficiency for counsellors through integrated case handling and structured processes. | Strong | Consistent reports by helplines of faster handling and reduced burden | Parallel systems, technical reliability; lack of baseline data on operational workflows |
| 2. Aselo contributes to more consistent and continuous support for repeat callers by enabling improved documentation and case histories. | Very strong | More consistent documentation and history | Some duplication |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Aselo contributes to greater access for children and young people by providing discreet, trusted digital communication channels. | Moderate | Youth preference for chat; anonymity valued | Reliability, perceptions of safety, device context; lack of baseline data on levels of access and trust |
| 4. Aselo contributes to more informed operational decision-making by strengthening the availability and use of helpline data. | Strong | Consistent reports by helplines of improved decision-making; supervisory and reporting use increasing | Variation in practices and governance; lack of baseline data on strength of operational decision-making |

## 7.4 Recommendations

The authors of this report offer the below recommendations. These have been prioritised on the basis of business value, but without taking into account the associated costs and availability of resources. These recommendations do not reflect a direct 1:1 relationship with each of the 'Key Findings' shown in section six. Instead, the recommendations are intended to capture what the authors believe to be the most important actions that will holistically support the *effectiveness*, *impact*, *scalability* and *sustainability* of Aselo. There are various challenges and considerations identified in the report that do not have a direct corresponding recommendation here.

### 7.4.1 Clarifying Strategy

This report suggests that one of the overarching aims for Aselo's continued success is the need to further develop and communicate the business strategy for the platform. As this is a recommendation on strategy, this links to all findings and aspects of the ToC. A strategy that matches Aselo's vision provides a shared roadmap that aligns all the stakeholders around a common goal. Without one, the activities Tech Matters carries out risk becoming fragmented or reactive rather than focused on achieving the desired impact as outlined in the ToC.

A strategy sets out how to sustain partnerships, diversify funding, and adapt the product to different contexts. Since Tech Matters is operating within an environment of limited financial resources, a strategy helps prioritise where to invest these resources for the greatest value, reducing duplication and ensuring efficient use of funds. A strategy linked with monitoring, evaluation, and market research ensures that decisions are grounded in evidence about what works, where the gaps are, and how helplines perceive and use the app. It also allows for anticipating challenges and developing proactive responses as the risks arise, rather than as a reaction to them.

A strategy is also linked to impact. Having a clear strategy signals to donors, helplines and partners that Tech Matters has a coherent plan for ensuring the impact, scale and sustainability of Aselo. This increases trust, facilitates partnerships and strengthens fundraising efforts. Beyond the need to clarify the business strategy as a matter of course, specific recommendations include:

### Market Development

Systematic market development – including examining customer (i.e. helpline) needs, market sizing, competitive positioning, and tools such as SWOT[46] analysis – should be undertaken to better understand the market environment in which Aselo is operating. **This will feed into output 1** "more helplines use Aselo". Two key areas of development are proposed:

- Tech Matters is a US-based nonprofit organization and there could be concerns amongst helplines about the practical implications of this regarding data protection, costs, and even political factors. Market research should explore how helplines and other stakeholders perceive Aselo's identity and location, including issues regarding trust, accessibility, and alignment with local contexts. The findings can be used to inform strategic communications, marketing, and partnership-building approaches.

- A deeper understanding of legal and regulatory frameworks around data transfers and data sharing is needed. Investigating helplines' awareness of, and compliance with, national and regional data protection laws (e.g., GDPR, child protection regulations) can help Tech Matters best position itself as a contextually-aware technology partner.

### Strategic Capability Development

[46] Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT).

Relating to **outputs 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 the** prioritisation of Aselo's capabilities – especially the more expensive ones, like AI – should be informed by the business strategy. For instance, if higher-paying helplines are prioritised (as recommended below), then their requirements should be prioritised. Similarly, if funding from donors that have an interest in AI is deemed essential for Aselo's sustainability, then AI capabilities may need to be prioritised.

The timing and sequencing of capability development should also be considered. For instance, if revenues from high-paying helplines or grants from the aforementioned AI-focused donors are needed to provide a certain duration of financial runway for Aselo, then the capability needs of other helplines – including low-resource helplines – could be prioritised once that runway is achieved. An assessment of evolving needs across the global helpline community could provide demand signals for specific customer pain points and/or capabilities that helplines consider most important. This would allow Tech Matters to further develop the business plan and product roadmap for Aselo, refine its communications and product marketing, and strengthen its value proposition for existing and potential customers (helplines). Strategy is essential to all of this.

It is important to note that AI capabilities should be guided by principles in the Livingstone Declaration (2025). This calls for AI to be built through a safety-by-design approach, and to be regularly assessed to ensure it "enhances child safeguarding rather than compromise[s] it". As with the above recommendation regarding business strategy, the development of AI capabilities should be guided by a corresponding AI strategy, including identifying and articulating what problems AI is expected to solve, what the real-world benefits will be, to whom it will add value, what the risks are, and where AI capabilities should be avoided.

## Data Sharing and Aggregate Insights

One area where further strategic development could add value, and is related to Output 6, is in relation to data sharing and the generation of aggregate insights across the helpline community. Some external stakeholders had viewed this as central to Aselo's value proposition, particularly for advocacy and demonstrating impact. It is important to note, however, that Tech Matters does not own helpline data and cannot determine how or with whom it is shared. Significant progress has already been made in enabling helplines to share their data more easily with CHI for

annual reporting, though whether or not they choose to do so remains the decision of each helpline.

Looking ahead, clarifying how Aselo can continue to facilitate and support data sharing, where helplines are willing, would likely strengthen the collective value of the platform, especially for campaigns, advocacy, fundraising, and demonstrating impact. Monthly and quarterly reports can then distill the most significant patterns – rising hotspots of exploitation risk, shifting patterns of help-seeking behaviour, or emerging service gaps – and deliver these directly to decision-makers, funders, and advocacy partners.

### 7.4.2 Securing Funding

Naturally, the funding efforts for Aselo are a direct function of its business and platform strategy. Aselo's core vision is to support under-resourced helplines who cannot afford the typically more expensive technical solutions, thereby filling a gap that remains unaddressed by the larger tech companies. However, while Aselo may be less expensive than many competitors in the market, Aselo still commands a price that may be prohibitively expensive for many helplines.

It is acknowledged that Aselo's pricing model reflects Tech Matters' effort to balance cost with accessibility, allowing helplines to add new features as required and as funding permits. As noted in the Findings, some helplines perceive costs as high or worry about affordability if their usage, and therefore their expenses, increase over time. While unit costs are not generally being raised, potential perceptions of rising costs highlight the importance of maintaining clear communications about Aselo's pricing model.

At the same time, however, the fees that helplines do pay – expensive as they may be for many helplines – are relatively small in relation to the operating costs of Aselo itself, which include not only the price of third-party services but also engineering work and staff salaries. Hence Aselo's dependence on grant funding to cover the operating costs that helplines' fees do not.

Moreover, the attempt in the short- and medium-term to focus on supporting the less-resourced helplines as a matter of firm principle – Tech Matters desires to avoid 'turning down' any helpline in need – may undermine the long-term sustainability of the platform. Aselo's vision of being the support system to those helplines that are most in need (i.e. have the fewest resources) is laudable. But a vision is, almost by definition, a

long-term goal. To make that vision viable, there should be greater focus in the short- and medium-term on securing Aselo's sustainability. On this basis, the authors offer the following recommendations:

### Prioritise High-Resource Helplines

Further supporting Output 1, the recommendation is that **Aselo should prioritise adoption at well-resourced helplines**, to drive revenues that can provide the platform with a longer runway for sustainable growth. These revenues can also be used to build a 'war chest' that can cover a combination of (a) cost offsets for lesser-resourced helplines, and (b) new feature development to nurture continued adoption. Successfully targeting the well-resourced helplines will, by definition, boost Aselo's adoption rate across the helpline community, thereby enabling Tech Matters to better demonstrate (or 'prove out') the platform's value and strength of customer demand, and in turn provide an increasingly attractive proposition to other helplines and also potential funders.

### Diversify Revenue Streams

Alongside providing Aselo to helplines around the world, Aselo should pursue other revenue streams that are higher value and higher margin, in order to diversify. This is needed to ensure achievement of all outputs and aspects of the ToC. The revenue from these alternative streams would help offset Aselo's implementation costs and operating costs at helplines, while also likely exposing Aselo to opportunities to fund further platform enhancements (such as AI features) that would, in turn, raise Aselo's value proposition in the marketplace. Alternative revenue streams or markets may include:

- **Humanitarian Response**: Aselo could be deployed as a communications management platform for humanitarian, crisis response, and peacebuilding contexts. For example, Aselo could be used to support local dialogue and mediation efforts within peacebuilding programmes by serving to solicit feedback and perspectives from large numbers of people via multiple communications channels, and then analyse these solicitations to identify patterns, trends, and key themes. AI capabilities, if available, could support the analysis of data at scale. Target customers would include multilateral organisations, government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and private firms acting as prime contractors in this space.

- **Policing**: Aselo could be deployed as a case management system within the policing sector, for example to manage cases relating to human trafficking, child exploitation, sexual violence, domestic abuse..

- **Established Counselling Services:** Increasingly, traditional face-to-face counselling services (e.g. within social services, student services, etc...) are increasingly offering remote counselling. Generally, such services struggle with issues of data management and reporting; and, like some helplines that have adopted Aselo, they use multiple and fragmented systems. Aselo could be marketed to this sector as a solution that provides both counselling possibilities (e.g. via video chat), data capture, and case management.

### 7.4.3 Demonstrating Impact

While Aselo's real-world impact on helplines and vulnerable children appears significant based on the interviews conducted for this evaluation, articulating this impact is difficult due to the lack of a data-driven evidence base. Using the renewed ToC and corresponding results framework, Aselo's M&E's practices should be strengthened to generate the kind of data needed to fully demonstrate Aselo's impact and gain further buy-in from funders and the helpline eco-system This report therefore makes the following recommendations:

#### Results Framework and Data Collection

The results framework outlined in this report should be adopted and periodically updated to systematically track progress against the Theory of Change. Monitoring should extend beyond this evaluation to become a continuous process that supports adaptive management and long-term alignment with Aselo's objectives. To achieve this, Tech Matters should strengthen data capture and reporting to ensure sufficient evidence for measuring outcomes and impacts over time.

#### Pre-Aselo Baselines

Tech Matters should introduce a baseline data collection process prior to onboarding any helpline. The baseline data collection should include operational metrics related to the helplines (e.g. call volumes, response times, etc) that Aselo aims to improve. Additional counselor satisfaction and wellbeing metrics should also be included, which can be revisited at regular intervals after implementation. These

would allow tracking of progress in terms of service development and improvement, and also in relation to Outcome 8 (counselor satisfaction and wellbeing).

### Feedback Loops

Tech Matters can strengthen Aselo's monitoring by establishing regular feedback loops with helplines and external stakeholders. These mechanisms will inform ongoing development and ensure the platform continues to meet helplines' needs. Monitoring should combine quantitative indicators with qualitative insights to capture progress and challenges more comprehensively.

### Risk Register

Tech Matters should establish and maintain a risk register to map and monitor risks identified in the Theory of Change and any new ones that emerge. The register should cover both general and helpline-specific risks, such as IT capacity, staffing, funding, or policy constraints, and be reviewed quarterly with clear mitigation measures assigned. Using a simple likelihood–severity model will support consistent prioritisation and transparent tracking of risk management efforts.

| Risk | Likelihood | Severity | Risk | Mitigations | Owner | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Funding withdrawn | Medium | High | High | Secure alternative funding | Tech Matters | Ongoing monitoring |
| Helpline staff resist change to Aselo | High | Medium | High | Full change management; technical support | Aselo team; Helpline | Assess before rollout |

Table 18: Risk Register Template

## 7.4.4 Implementation as Change Management

Aselo's implementation is a structured and systematic process, and there are already aspects of change management included in this process, such as training sessions for frontline staff, identifying helpline 'champions' to advocate for Aselo's use in the helpline, allocating practice time, using phased rollouts to ease the changes to organisational processes, and building data visualisations and metrics. However, the challenges this

reported identified regarding Aselo's implementation – including ensuring the effective adoption of Aselo within helplines' operational processes, and reducing organisational resistance to change – could be addressed through viewing implementation as fundamentally a change management exercise, which requires a more systematic and comprehensive change management programme. Accordingly, this report provides the following basic recommendations.

### Communications Plan

In line with output 2 and 3, it is important to introduce a structured communication plan that sets out clear messages on the rationale for the shift to Aselo, the anticipated benefits for helplines and for vulnerable children, roles and responsibilities on the part of different stakeholders (namely, the helpline and the Tech Matters team), and common challenges during transitioning to Aselo. Helplines do not always fully understand the scope of Aselo's capabilities; they often do not know how best to express their requirements; and the logistics of the implementation process, including the inputs needed from the helplines, are often unclear to them. When helplines do understand Aselo's capabilities, and are able to clearly articulate their requirements and provide the inputs that Tech Matters needs, implementation proceeds effectively and efficiently. This communication plan should include regular updates before, during, and after implementation, to maintain transparency and trust.

### Orientation

Greater emphasis should be placed on fully orientating helplines towards Aselo's capabilities as early in the implementation process as possible, also as part of output 3. This orientation could include live demos of the platform, discussion of new and upcoming product features, and feedback sessions with helpline staff. It is important that all stakeholders in the helpline are involved in orientation, to reduce the risk of misalignments around expectations and other aspects. Helplines could also be provided with access to FAQs based on the issues that helplines typically face, so that they can self-solve less technical issues, especially in the first six months after implementation.

### Needs and Readiness Assessment

Related to output 2 and 3, there should be a formal stakeholder needs analysis and organisational readiness assessment prior to starting the configuration of Aselo. This should identify specific concerns, capacity gaps, or potential resistance within each helpline, which would allow the Tech Matters implementation team to plan their support resource allocations and address issues proactively. This assessment should also involve mapping the desired impacts for all stakeholders at the helpline, including identifying and prioritising the corresponding needs that the platform should fulfil, and allowing the helpline's stakeholders to then review and 'sign-off' the resulting mapping. This would help ensure that all stakeholders are included and accounted for within Aselo's configuration and broader implementation process, while further supporting buy-in from all relevant stakeholders (including frontline staff and senior management) at the helpline. The orientation and demonstration (above) would set the foundation for this activity. Moreover, following one helpline's comment regarding some limitations in the standard training materials, this mapping activity could also help Tech Matters understand any specific needs of particular user roles or personas which can then be incorporated into training materials, if needed.

### Support Network

In addition to identifying their Aselo 'champions', helplines should also be guided in establishing a peer support network (e.g., 'super-users' or an internal helpdesk) so that counselors can access ongoing, informal assistance and share lessons as challenges arise. This is not intended to replace the customer support that Tech Matters offers. This is also for output 2 and 3

### Change Management Toolkit

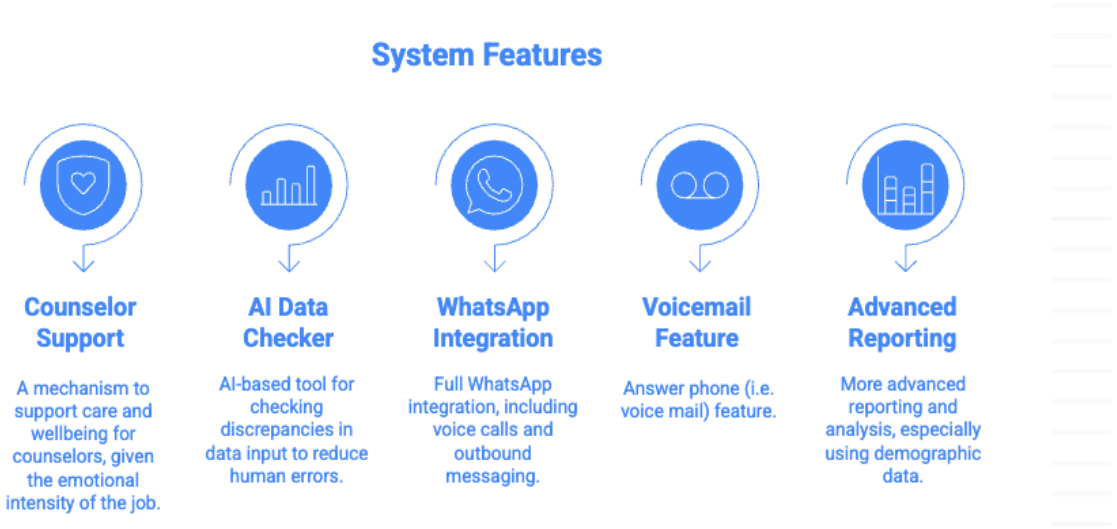
Tech Matters should support output 2 and 3 develop a change management toolkit to be provided to helplines. This would include guidance on improving staff engagement, common challenges and FAQs, communication templates, and suggested timelines for implementation. This would ensure more consistency in the implementation and change management process across helplines, while also allowing for contextualised adaptation by each helpline.

### Cost Transparency

Given the comments in the Findings regarding lack of transparency about Aselo's costs, it would also be beneficial to re-articulate these costs during the implementation phase.. Moreover, re-articulating Aselo's costs during (and indeed, after) implementation will also sensitise helplines to the need to factor these costs into their fundraising strategies, which in turn will increase the likelihood of Aselo's sustainable usage at each helpline. This is thus related to output 1, 2 and 3.

### 7.4.5 New features

There are several platform features that would add further value to Aselo, as reported by the helplines and/or Tech Matters staff. These are (in no particular order):




It is worth highlighting that limited funding presents a hard block on building AI-based features, especially due to the high costs of AI development. As TM-1 explained, there is limited funding and "there's a lot of AI features that could be implemented, but I don't think we have been able to. We have a lot of ideas. There's a lot of visionary work and things we would like to do, but that hasn't been able to be implemented."

# 8 Appendices

## 8.1 Appendix A: Aselo Feature Breakdown

This section details core Aselo's features (as of May 2025) grouped by functional area.

1. Access and Security
    a. User management:
        i. Aselo account creation/deletion is handled via Okta Admin Console.
        ii. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) required for Okta Admins.
        iii. Users receive an Aselo activation email to set up their credentials.
        iv. Supervisors can assign custom user attributes ('Counselor', 'Supervisor', 'Access to reporting and assessments').
        v. Integration with other authentication systems.
    b. Web browser: Aselo is a web app, optimized for Google Chrome.
    c. User status: Users can set their status to 'Available', 'Unavailable', 'Break', or 'Offline'. The system will re-route conversations to 'Available' counselors or other custom statuses that also help management track resource activity time.
    d. Languages: Users can change the language and date/time formats.

2. Counselor Interface
    a. Enables counselors to handle queries from multiple sources in a single platform.
    b. Supported channels:
        i. Voice
        ii. SMS
        iii. WhatsApp
        iv. Facebook Messenger
        v. Webchat
        vi. Telegram
        vii. Line
        viii. Offline Data Entry for interactions not captured in Aselo
    c. Real-time updates on active conversations.
    d. IWF reporting tool, or self-generated reporting link tool
    e. Resource database
    f. Quick tooltip links
    g. Interfaces can be customized to different languages.
    h. Knowledge base integration
    i. Switch seamlessly between multiple chats and channels.

j. Navigation bar for quick access to search, case history, client profile and active tasks.

3. Callers
   a. Every interaction with a caller is logged as a contact. The demographic information captured on the contact level is what drives the majority of reporting and donor reports that the helplines do. It is possible to track silent and abusive calls. There are also mandatory fields that ensure data completion (the system does not allow saving without this minimum data).
   b. A new case is created when further actions are needed beyond the initial contact.
   c. Cases include:
      i. Case number
      ii. Contact history
      iii. Household members (for context)
      iv. Notes
      v. Referrals
      vi. Incident reports
      vii. Perpetrators (if abuse is involved)
      viii. Attachments
   d. Case timeline: System logs all activities (past contacts, notes, referrals) related to a case for continuity purposes. It is possible to edit logs.
   e. Follow-up scheduling
      i. counselors can set follow-up dates to ensure ongoing support.
      ii. Helps maintain structured follow-ups for cases involving at-risk children.
   f. Searching and filtering: Sort and filter cases by status, counselor name, categories, date opened, last updated, follow-up date, name, ID, transcript text, or IP address.
   g. Incident tracking: counselors can log the date, time, duration, and location of incidents, and whether it was witnessed or reported.
   h. Automatic contact detection: System automatically identifies if a new contact matches a previous one using: IP address; account details; phone number (if available). Counsellors are also alerted if a caller has already reached out.
   i. Repeat callers: When handling a repeat caller, counselors can copy demographic details from past records, which saves time and ensures consistency in data entry.
   j. Supervisor features:
      i. Flag clients with notes (e.g., "Abusive", "Special Care").
      ii. Ability to block clients for a custom duration.
      iii. Restrict case access after a certain period (e.g., 45 days).
      iv. Edit case data (household members, perpetrators, incidents, referrals, notes).
      v. Finalize "In Progress" contacts for completion.

4. Conversation Management
    a. Customizable chatbot or pre-engagement form for data collection.
    b. Customizable wait experience - IVR or ITR messaging while service users wait in queue.
    c. More advanced skills-based and priority capabilities for triage.
    d. Post-survey offered for chat to allow users to provide feedback on service provided.
    e. Operating hours and closed/holiday messaging.
    f. Chat handling and routing
        i. Ability to triage.
        ii. Chats appear in the All Tasks panel, allowing counselors to accept/reject.
        iii. If a chat is rejected it passes to the next available counselor, with the system prioritizing counselors who have been idle the longest.
        iv. Canned (i.e. pre-written) responses are available for efficiency and consistent communication, and users can edit them before sending.
        v. “End Chat” button for users to manually terminate a conversation.
        vi. “Quick Exit” button ends the chat instantly, redirects to another website for privacy, and clears the chat history.
        vii. Classified by type: (a) a child calling about themselves; (b) someone else calling about a child; (c) non-data contact (pranks, wrong number, etc.).
    g. Voice call handling
        i. Calls as classified by type: (a) a child calling about themselves; (b) someone else calling about a child; (c) non-data contact (pranks, wrong number, etc.).
        ii. counselors must manually enter call data as there is no automated chatbot for voice interactions.
    h. Contact transfers
        i. counselors can transfer a conversation to another counselor or back to the queue.
        ii. Warm Transfers: The first counselor speaks to the receiving counselor before making the transfer.
        iii. Cold Transfer: The first counselor makes the transfer without prior discussion with the receiving counselor.
        iv. Transferred conversations retain full chat transcripts and all data entered so far.
        v. External transfers/conferencing also possible - e.g for emergency services or interpretation services
    i. Queue management
        i. counselors can manually pull conversations from the queue.
        ii. If no counselor is available, contacts are queued automatically.
        iii. counselors see the number of contacts in the queue and wait times.

   j. Supervisor features:
      i. Supervisors can show/hide caller phone numbers for privacy compliance.
      ii. Supervisors see active tasks, waiting tasks, and counselor availability.
      iii. Metrics update in real-time to track helpline efficiency.

5. Counselor Monitoring (Supervisors only)
   a. Search for specific counselors, filter by status, and view:
      i. Active conversations.
      ii. Breakdown of active chats (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, SMS, etc.).
      iii. How long a counselor has been in their status.
   b. Monitor conversations in real time without counselors or clients being aware.
   c. Group counselors by status, skills, queues.
   d. Assign skills to counselors
   e. Add labels (e.g., bilingual, volunteer) for better classification.
   f. Assess past conversations using a dedicated dashboard:
      i. The assessment interface displays chat transcripts alongside evaluation forms.
      ii. Supervisors leave comments and track areas for improvement.

6. Reporting & Dashboards (Supervisors only)
   a. Contact demographics.
   b. Counselor performance statistics.
   c. Conversation volume trends.
   d. Key service metrics: Average Speed of Answer (ASA), Average Handle Time (AHT), Missed Invitations, Abandon Time.
   e. Customizable dashboards for filtering reports by date range, communication channel, and counselor performance.
   f. Capability to integrate reporting either by integrating directly with raw data outputs, or to pull pre-built reports systematically.

7. Data Management
   a. Helpline's existing contact data can be ingested during implementation, including mapping source and target data fields to streamline data migration (see here).
   b. External docs (e.g., police reports, medical records) can be uploaded but not deleted.
   c. Cases can be exported as PDFs for official documentation.

## 8.2 Appendix B: Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative questions for interviews and focus groups are presented below. Each question and data source is mapped to evaluation themes. Where relevant, the respective outputs (**OP**), outcomes (**OC**) or indicators are included.

| **Theme** | **Question** | **Source** |
|---|---|---|
| Strategy | What initially motivated you to create Aselo, and what gap or need did you see that existing technologies weren't addressing for child helplines? | CEO |
| | How would you describe Aselo? | CEO |
| | Why does Aselo matter? | CEO |
| | Looking ahead, what is your ultimate vision for Aselo over the next five to ten years, and what role do you see Aselo playing in the global helpline movement? (**OP1**) | CEO |
| | You are at a pivot point between having a strong product and scaling it to hundreds of helplines. What have been the biggest challenges so far in scaling Aselo, and how do you plan to overcome them? (**OP1**) | CEO |
| | How do you ensure that helpline user feedback continues to meaningfully shape product evolution, especially as you scale? (**OP2**) | CEO |
| | How are you planning to ensure Aselo's financial and operational sustainability as a nonprofit tech platform, particularly beyond the current grant cycles? (**OP1**) | CEO |
| | What is your approach to the design of UI/UX of Aselo? | UI/UX Designer |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | How have you incorporated principles of accessibility and inclusive design into Aselo? (**OC6**) | UI/UX Designer |
| Implementation: Processes and Experiences | Please talk us through the implementation process. | Product Manager |
| | How long does it take to set up Aselo for a new helpline? | Product Manager |
| | How many Tech Matters staff are required for implementation? | Product Manager |
| | Which staff, and how many, from a helpline are involved in implementation? | Product Manager |
| | What kinds of challenges do organisations typically face during implementation? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | What is the most common technical challenge that helplines face during implementation? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | What is the most common non-technical challenge that helplines face during onboarding? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | What have been the most common user-reported issues, and how have they been addressed? (**OP2**) | UI/UX Designer |
| | What system did you use prior to having Aselo? | Helpline Managers |
| | What was your level of knowledge of Aselo *before* training? | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | What type of training did you receive to use Aselo? | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | How comfortable did the training make you feel about using Aselo? (**OP3.1**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | How confident do you feel about using Aselo? (**OP3.2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Did you ever feel the need to request additional training or help once you started using Aselo? (**OP3.3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | In onboarding, which features or workflows were the easiest to understand? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | In onboarding, which features or workflows were the most difficult to understand? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | What were the most useful parts of the onboarding process? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | What were the least useful parts of the onboarding process? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Do you have any government / local / funder restrictions related to the use of social media platforms in your work? | Helpline Managers |
| | If you could change one thing about the onboarding process, what would it be? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| Helpline Support | What support have you received from the Aselo team regarding your use of Aselo? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | How has the Aselo team responded to your requests for changes to the platform? (**OP3**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| Outcomes and Impacts | How has Aselo changed the way you handle and refer cases compared to previous systems? (**OP4**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Do you feel Aselo has improved the quality and accuracy of data collected for advocacy and policy work? Why or why not? (**OP6**, **OC5**, **OC7**) | Helpline Managers |
| | In your opinion, what impact has Aselo had on your helpline's ability to influence policy or secure funding through data-driven advocacy? (**OP6.2**, **OC5.1**, **OC5.2**, **OC7**) | Helpline Managers |
| | Have you seen any changes in how children and youth reach out for help since implementing | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Aselo? (probe for perceptions of ease of use and safety of the platforms) (**OC6.1)** | |
| | Have you seen any differences in the users' estimated waiting times before implementing Aselo and now? (**OC1**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | How do you use Aselo's reporting features? Does it support any strategic work? (**OP6.2**, **OC7.2**) | Helpline Managers |
| | Can you mention any ways in which data from Aselo was used for decision-making? (**OP6.2**, **OC7**) | Helpline Managers |
| | Have you received any feedback about the quality of your data from Aselo (e.g. from donors, CHI, other stakeholders)? (**OP6.3**, **OC7**) | Helpline Managers |
| | How does Aselo impact your ability to recognize and respond to children presenting issues of OCSEA and CSAM? (**OP5**)<br>Is there a difference in the number of OCSEA and CSAM cases pre- and post-Aselo? (**OC4**) | Helpline Managers |
| | Can children send images and voice notes? (**OC6.1**) | Product Manager |
| | Can children contact the service anonymously? | Product Manager |
| | How does Aselo address barriers related to internet access and device availability? (**OC6.1**) | Product Manager |
| | What measures does Aselo have to ensure chat histories are fully cleared or redirected after a session? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | How does Aselo ensure that youth receive appropriate human support if chatbot responses are insufficient? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | How has Aselo impacted your work at the helpline? Do you feel you are able to use your time more effectively? (**OC1**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | How do you currently manage repeat contacts from the same child? Do you merge cases, or treat them separately? (**OC2**) | Helpline Managers |
| | Are you able to find cases easily in Aselo, or do you struggle with searching? (**OC2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Are you keeping backup systems (e.g., spreadsheets, old platforms) active in case Aselo fails? | Helpline Managers |
| | How often do technical issues disrupt your workflow, and what's the main frustration? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Do you share case data externally? If so, should Aselo allow direct emailing of case data? (**OC2**) | Helpline Managers |
| Opportunities for Improvement and Scalability | What have been the challenges in scaling Aselo to multiple countries so far? (**OP1**) | Product Manager |
| | What challenges do you already foresee regarding future scalability? (**OP1**) | Product Manager |
| | Does your cloud-hosting strategy cater to all jurisdictions where helplines are based? (**OP1**) | Product Manager |
| | Are there relevant contractual guarantees to maintain Aselo's performance and reliability during peak loads? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | Are there any usage or performance limitations (e.g. API call rates) that could affect Aselo's performance at-scale? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | What aspects of the system architecture could be improved to enhance performance and reliability for scaling up? (**OP2**) | Product Manager |
| | How easy or difficult has it been to customize Aselo for different helpline needs and national regulations? (**OP1**) | Product Manager |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Is there a strategy to support helplines with integrating Aselo and/or migrating to it from existing systems? (**OP3**) | Product Manager |
| | What have been the most common user-reported issues, and how have they been addressed? (**OP3**) | Product Manager |
| | Are there any security or data privacy concerns that have emerged as Aselo has expanded? Were there any data-breaches or access violations reported? (**OC3**) | Product Manager |
| | Would helplines be willing to share data with each other via Aselo? | Product Manager |
| | Is there an understanding of how helplines could benefit from pooling data to drive additional insights? (**OC7**) | Product Manager |
| | Is there an understanding of how third parties could benefit from pooling helpline data to drive additional insights? (**OC7**) | Product Manager |
| | How do you receive feedback on UI/UX? And how do you decide if to address it? (**OP3.3**) | UI/UX Designer |
| | Are there any missing features that would significantly improve your ability to support children? (**OP2**)<br><br>Note: Phrasing this question for different cultures is important, some are low-context communicators and other high-context | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | What is the greatest benefit you gained from adopting Aselo? (**OC8**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Do you feel the Aselo platform is scalable for future growth and increasing helpline demand? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Have you noticed any issues with user permissions, access levels, or data security? (**OC3.2**) | Helpline Managers |
| | What lessons have you learned from integrating Aselo into your workflow that future adopters should consider? | Helpline Managers |
| | How did/does Aselo interface with your existing data and systems? (**OC5**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | What are the biggest limitations or challenges you face when using Aselo in your daily work? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Are there any inefficiencies in Aselo's workflow that slow down case handling or decision-making? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Have you encountered any issues with data entry, case tracking, or report generation? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | How does Aselo perform during high-volume periods? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | Do you feel the platform adequately meets the specific needs of your helpline's operational context? Why or why not? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers & Case Workers |
| | In what ways could Aselo be optimized to reduce operational burden on helpline staff? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers |
| | How does Aselo compare to other systems you've used in terms of efficiency and reliability? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers |
| | What lessons have been learned from scaling Aselo that could inform future improvements? (**OP1**) | Executive Director of Aselo Program<br><br>Director of Product and Business Operations, Aselo |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | UI/UX Designer |
| Sustainability | What are the key dependencies (e.g., third-party software, cloud services) that could impact Aselo's long-term stability? (**OP1**) | Product Manager |
| | How does the cost of maintaining and updating Aselo compare to its expected long-term benefits? (**OP1**) | Executive Director of Aselo Program<br><br>Director of Product and Business Operations, Aselo |
| | What kind of technical support model would be ideal for ensuring Aselo's sustainability in the long run? | Product Manager |
| | Do you think you will be using Aselo in 3 years' time? (**OP1**) | Helpline Managers |
| | What factors would help or hinder longer term use of Aselo? (**OP1**) | Helpline Managers |
| | What would you need to sustain the use of Aselo? (**OP2**) | Helpline Managers |

Table 19: Questions for Qualitative Data Collection

## 8.3 Appendix C: Quantitative Data Collection

| Theme | Question | Data points required | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| Technology Adoption and Utilization | How many user accounts exist? (**OP1.1**) | - # existing user accounts | Aselo Team |
| | How many users log into Aselo on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis? (**OP2.1**) | - # daily active users<br>- # weekly active users<br>- # monthly active users<br>- Login date/timestamps | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of users are actively using the platform over time? (**OP2.1**) | - # registered users<br>- # active users<br>- % churn/drop rate | Aselo Team |
| | How long do users typically spend on the platform per session? | - Session duration per user<br>- Session duration per role<br>- Session duration distribution | Aselo Team |
| | What is the retention rate of users over different time periods (e.g., 30-day, 90-day)? | - Cohort retention rate (1/7/30 D)<br>- % returners vs one-time users | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of users drop off after initial registration or onboarding? | - % users completing onboarding | Aselo Team |
| | Which features of Aselo are used the most/least frequently? (**OP2.2**) | - # visits per feature<br>- # interactions/clicks per feature<br>- Feature usage duration<br>- Feature usage distribution | Aselo Team |
| | How does feature usage vary across different user roles (e.g., Supervisor vs. Counselor)? (**OP2.2**) | - Above metrics by role | Aselo Team |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | What is the number of reports exported or run in system logs? (**OP6.1**) | - # of reports exported or run per quarter | Aselo Team |
| | What is the number of TF-CSA/CSAM-related cases flagged through Aselo? (**OP5.1**) | - # of TF-CSA/CSAM tags per month | Aselo Team |
| User Experience and Accessibility | What are the most common user journeys within the platform? | - Page/click sequence (clickstream) | Aselo Team |
| | How long is the average wait time that users experience? (**OC1.2**) | - Average or data on user wait time before being connected to a counselor<br>- timestamp at contact creation and timestamp at first response | Aselo Team |
| | Where do users typically drop off in multi-step processes (e.g., case management workflows)? | - TBD using clickstream analysis | Aselo Team |
| | How frequently do users return to previously visited pages or features? | - # repeat visits per user<br>- Repeat feature usage trends | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of contacts entered are incomplete? | - % contacts lacking full info | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of cases entered are incomplete? | - % cases lacking full info | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of contacts are duplicate cases, and how long do they persist? | - % duplicate contacts<br>- Lifetime of duplicate contacts | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of cases are duplicate cases, and how long do they persist? | - % duplicate cases<br>- Lifetime of duplicate cases | Aselo Team |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | What percentage of users request support per month? (**OP3.3**) | - % support requests per month | Aselo Team |
| System performance | How long do pages take to load and what is the breakdown across time, place, device etc.? | - Av. page load by location<br>- Av. page load by time of day<br>- Av. page load by browser<br>- Av. page load by device | Aselo Team |
| | How often do users experience system errors, and what are the most common errors? | - Most common errors<br>- Frequency of errors<br>- Types of errors<br>- Errors by location<br>- Errors by time of day<br>- Errors by browser<br>- Errors by device | Aselo Team |
| | How does usage change during peak vs. non-peak hours? | - User login dates/times<br>- Platform load times | Aselo Team |
| | What percentage of users experience session timeouts or unexpected logouts? | - % session timeouts<br>- % forced logouts | Aselo Team |
| | Are there any specific browsers or devices that show higher failure rates? | - % errors by browser<br>- % errors by device | Aselo Team |

Table 20: Questions for Quantitative Data Collection

## 8.4 Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

You have been invited to take part in a research activity for the evaluation of the Aselo technology. This is an independent evaluation. The evaluation team is made up of independent consultants: Dr Julia Muraszkiewicz, Dr Lorleen Farrugia and Mr Toby Fenton. The evaluation duration is from February to December 2025.

Before deciding on whether you want to participate or not, **please read this document carefully**. Please ask all questions you may have, including those regarding risks and benefits to yourself, so you can be sure to understand all the proceedings of the study.

Purpose of the research activity

This research activity intends to gather insights into the implementation, use, and impact of the Aselo platform from those directly involved in its development or deployment, including Tech Matters staff and helpline personnel. The aim is to understand how the platform supports child safeguarding efforts, identify areas for improvement, and inform recommendations for future scaling and development.

Procedure of the research activity

If you choose to participate in this research activity, it will involve you being asked to participate in a [specify the activity: semi-structured in-depth interview workshop, survey etc.]. You will be asked to share your views on [specify according to the purpose of the activity]. The activity is expected to take around [number] minutes. It will be [audio/video] recorded by the researchers and transcribed.

Voluntary participation and withdrawal of consent

Your voluntary participation is essential for this study. You are free to end your participation at any time without any cost. You may refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to discuss. You have the right to ask questions and receive clear answers before making any decision.

Data security and retention

The personal data will be safely stored. Digital copies will be stored in password-protected and encrypted machines. The recording will be permanently destroyed when they are no longer needed, and in any case two years after the end of the project.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The information you provide will be pseudonymized by removing your name and all other identifying features. Your identity, views, and experiences will remain confidential (unless attribution is required, and you have consented to it). Your personal information will be stored in separate files in a secure manner.

Potential risks and benefits of participation

The evaluation team foresees no physical or psychological risks which could materialize from your participation in this research activity. You will not be pressured or coerced into participating in this research activity. You are free to leave at any point, with no negative consequences. You will not receive any direct economic benefit out of your participation.

Rights regarding your personal data

In accordance with principles of research ethics and EU data protection regulations (where the evaluation team is based), you have rights regarding how your personal data is processed. Here are your rights and how we can fulfil them:

- Rights to access personal data processed about you, and the right for these data to be in a portable form – If you request access to personal data that we hold about you, we will provide you with that data in an easily accessible format;

- Right to rectify personal data held about you – If you think the personal data that we hold about you is inaccurate or incomplete, you can correct or complete it;

- Right to restrict the processing of your personal data – If you want to restrict the way we process your personal data, you can request that we do so;

- Right to request your personal data be erased – If you want us to delete your personal data from our systems, you can request that we do so;

- Right to leave the research activity – If you wish to withdraw from having your voice recorded or writing out answers, you can do so at any time without negative consequences, and we will delete any personal data you have provided;

- Right to complain to Dee Luo (Tech Matters): dee@techmatters.org

Whom to contact if you have questions

If you have any questions or queries about this research activity, or the processing of your personal data, you can contact Dee Luo (Tech Matters):
dee@techmatters.org

For information on the evaluation, contact Dr Julia Muraszkiewicz (Project Manager, Evaluation Team):
j.muraszkiewicz@gmail.com

## Informed Consent Form

| Terms of consent | Respondent's signature |
|---|---|
| I _____ *[your name]* confirm that I have read the information sheet explaining the evaluation and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. | |
| I confirm that my participation is entirely voluntary, I can withdraw from the study at any time without any cost | |
| I agree that the data collected from me during the research activity (workshop/ interview/survey/questionnaire) in which I am participating can be used to produce Tech Matters deliverables, such as research reports, scientific publications, blog and press articles, and training sessions. | |
| I agree that the activity will be [audio/video] recorded to facilitate its accurate transcription. | |
| I agree that my name will be pseudonymized for this research. I will not be identified or identifiable in the research products such as deliverables or other publications. However, I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my responses. | |
| I agree to have the name of my organisation stated for this research. | |
| I consent to the project team contacting me, if required, as a follow-up to the research/engagement activity. | |

Respondent's name (please print):

Date:

## 8.5 Appendix E: Aselo's Components

The evaluators were provided with a description of Aselo. This appendix presents the different components of Aselo, which showcase the different functionalities and capabilities of the platform.

| | |
|---|---|
| Access & Security | Aselo is browser-based, meaning it does not require installation and can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. |
| | Identity and Access Management (IAM): Uses Okta as its authentication system. |
| | Each counselor has an individual account created for them. |
| | Multi-factor authentication (MFA) may be in place for added security. |
| | Different roles have access to different features within the platform. |
| | Aselo is a cloud-based, open-source platform, enabling counselors to work remotely from any location with internet access, without the need for additional applications. |
| Communication Capability | Live chat. |
| | Phone calls. |
| | Messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, etc.) |
| | SMS |
| | Simultaneous conversations, allowing counselors to handle multiple chats. |
| | Automatic chat routing: Messages are assigned to available counselors based on availability and expertise. |
| Case Management | Case tracking: Each child's case is recorded and assigned a number for future reference. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Counsel or notes: Allows staff to log interactions with children. |
| | Internal communication: Staff can leave notes for other counsellors handling the same case. |
| 3rd Party Services | Aselo can search for external service providers (e.g., mental health services, legal aid, law enforcement). Moreover, Aselo can integrate with a helpline's resource database to allow counsellors to search for external service providers. And it can integrate with workforce management tools (e.g. Calabrio) and built an integration with mobile dispatching software Beacon |
| AI support | AI chat support: May assist in triaging requests |
| | AI-assisted conversation summarization |
| | Keyword flagging: Identifies at-risk conversations (e.g., self-harm, abuse) and escalates them. |
| Analytics & Reporting | Data insights. |
| | Performance monitoring: Measures counselor response times and effectiveness. |
| | Exportable reports: Can generate reports for policymakers, NGOs, and donors. |
| Scalability | Can handle different languages. |
| | Can handle a high number of concurrent users. |
| | Can be customised. |

The Aselo Launch Process consists of two phases:

- **Scoping and Agreement (Phase 1):** Establishes foundational relationships, refines requirements, and results in a Statement of Work detailing deliverables, costs, and specifications for helpline integration. This includes assessing functionality, organisational and personnel structures, and capacity.

- **Implementation and Launch (Phase 2)**: Develops and customises Aselo based on Phase 1 requirements. This includes setting up the helpline environment,

data/reporting structures, and permissions, followed by user testing, feedback iterations, training, and final deployment.

## 8.6 Appendix F: Aselo's Sustainability and Pricing Model

According to information provided by Tech Matters, Aselo's pricing model is structured as shown in the table below.

| Implementation Type | Setup Cost | Operating cost per month[47] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | One off | Low volume of conversations | High volume of conversations |
| Data Entry Only<br>• Aselo can serve as a Case and Contact Data Management system for existing channels, such as calls and in-person cases.<br>• No online channels and retain the current phone system<br>• Based on the initial discussion, Aselo's case management, reporting, and configurability features may offer advantages over current data capture systems.<br>• The estimated operating cost is the lowest and most consistent.<br>• There is no additional cost for access to new features, configuration changes<br>• Case Management & Reporting | $ 15,000 | $ 200 | $ 200 |
| Online Chat Channels<br>• This option incorporates webchat, Facebook, and other online channels while maintaining the current call system.<br>• Operating costs would increase based on volume. | $ 20,000 - 30,000 | $ 280 (~500 hrs) | $ 490 (~1,000 hrs) |

[47] These are estimates based on active partners' charges. The actual cost will be specific to the volume of conversations.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Voice and/or SMS<br>• Aselo for Calls, SMS, All Online Channels:<br>• The price for this comprehensive solution is yet to be determined but it is noted that custom development needed can cost more (which would be a customized statement of work with new feature deliverables) | $ 30-50,000 | $ 460<br>(~1,000 hrs) | $ 810<br>(~2,000 hrs) |

Table 4: Aselo's Implementation Costs

## 8.7 Appendix G: Global Footprint of Aselo

Evidence presented to the evaluation team showed that Aselo is **already in use** by the following child helplines across the continents. In the list we also include helplines that recently (in last 12 months stopped using Aselo):

### Africa

- Childline/Lifeline Zambia
- C-Sema (Tanzania)
- Childline South Africa (decided to stop using Aselo in 2023 due to costs)
- Childline Zimbabwe
- Adama Child Helpline run by ECFA (Ethiopia)
- Tithanzadine Child Helpline run by YONECO (Malawi)

### Latin America and the Caribbean

- Safernet (Brazil)
- Te Guio run by Red PaPaz (Colombia)
- SafeSpot (Jamaica)
- Linea Libre run by Para la Confianza (Chile)[48]

### Asia-Pacific

- Meri Trustline (run by RATI Foundation) (India)
- Childline Thailand
- ECPAT Philippines
- Tinkle Friend run by Singapore Children's Society (Singapore)

### Europe

- Kek Vonal (Hungary). *Please note* that this was specific to Ukraine-response project that ran from 2022-2024, and has since concluded
- Kellimini.com run by SOS Malta (Malta)

### North America

- Kids Help Phone (Canada)

[48] This program was temporarily shut down in June 2025 due to organisational funding challenges

- The City of Los Angeles CIRCLE Program (US)

### Oceania

- Youthline (New Zealand)

The platform is also **in the process of being implemented** by the following helplines:

### North America

- Childhelp (U.S)
- The National Center for Victims of Crime (US)

### UK

- Mental Health Innovations

This global footprint demonstrates Aselo's ability to serve helplines operating in vastly different social, cultural, and technological contexts. Specifically, helplines implementing Aselo are able to use its customisable and modular nature to choose which features they want to implement (see following appendix).

## 8.8 Appendix H: Aselo Features

The table below presents a sample of Aselo features that illustrate this. Each feature is described according to the following categories:

> **Core or Ancillary**: Identifies whether the feature is a *core function* i.e. included and enabled by default for all helplines, or an *ancillary function*, which is activated only upon request or with explicit confirmation from the helpline.
>
> **Example Helplines**: Provides examples of helplines that are actively using the feature. (Only helplines where implementation is complete, and the feature is in active use are listed; those still in progress are excluded.)
>
> **Relevant Metrics**: Lists sample system statistics that can be collected to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the feature in practice.

| Feature | Core or Ancillary | Example Helplines | Relevant Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Contact Data Capture | Core | All | • Volume of Records<br>• % of Data Records vs. Total Call Records |
| Webchat Counselling | Core | SafesSpot (JM), Child/LifeLine Zambia, Kellimni.com (MT), Youthline (NZ), Kids Help Phone (CA), Tinkle Friend (SG) | • Volume of Chats<br>• Wait Times |
| Voice Counselling | Core | Linea Libre (CL), Youthline (NZ), Kids Help Phone (CA), Tinkle Friend (SG), Child/LifeLine Zambia | • Volume of Calls<br>• % of Dropped Calls<br>• Wait Times |
| Social Media Channel Counselling | Core | SafeSpot (JM), Child/LifeLine Zambia, Childline Thailand, Youthline (NZ), Kellimni.com (MT) | • Volume of Chats<br>• % Counselling Chats |

| Feature | Core or Ancillary | Example Helplines | Relevant Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Case Management | Core | SafesSpot (JM), Childline Zimbabwe, Youthline (NZ), Meri Trustline (IN), Tinkle Friend (SG), Kellimni.com (MT) | • Volume of Records<br>• Number of Follow Ups<br>• % of Resolved Cases |
| Client Tracking | Core | Youthline (NZ), Linea Libre (CL), Tinkle Friend (SG) | • Volume of Clients<br>• Volume of Blocked Clients<br>• Volume of Client Notes |
| Data Visualization and Reporting | Core | SafeSpot (JM), Tinkle Friend (SG), Child/LifeLine Zambia, Kids Help Phone (CA), Kellimni.com (MT) | • Number of Reports (Custom vs. Standard) |
| Pre-Engagement Chatbot | Ancillary | SafesSpot (JM), Child/LifeLine Zambia, Kellimni.com (MT) | • % of Completed Data Fields |
| Post-Engagement Survey | Ancillary | Linea Libre (CL) | • Number of Completed Surveys<br>• Helpline Satisfaction Statistics |
| Priority and Skill-Based Routing | Ancillary | Kids Help Phone (CA), Tinkle Friend (SG), Youthline (NZ), Child/LifeLine Zambia | • Volume of Contacts<br>• % of Dropped Calls<br>• Wait Times |
| Data Exporting | Ancillary | Kids Help Phone (CA), Childline Thailand, Youthline (NZ) | • Number of Custom-built Reports |
| IWF CSAM Reporting | Ancillary | Child/LifeLine Zambia, Meri Trustline (IN) | • Number of Reports |
| Resource Database | Ancillary | Kids Help Phone (CA) | • Number of Referrals Made |

Table 21: Examples of Feature Usage by Helpline

## 8.9 Appendix I: Aselo's Updated Results Framework

| **OUTPUTS (OP)** | |
|---|---|
| **Output** | **Indicators** |
| 1. More helplines use Aselo | 1.1 Number of helplines that have onboarded and activated Aselo accounts and number of user-accounts.<br>1.2 Percentage increase in helplines using Aselo.** |
| 2. Helplines use Aselo effectively and consistently **for service delivery and data collection**. | 2.1 Percentage of helplines using Aselo daily or weekly (as per usage logs).<br>2.2 Percentage of functions/modules within Aselo actively used by helplines (e.g., chat, referrals, analytics).<br>2.3 Number of contacts handled with Aselo<br>2.4 Number of data records or fields completed in Aselo |
| 3. counselors are trained and confident in using multi-channel tools | 3.1 Number of counselors trained on Aselo's multi-channel interface (chat, social media, etc.).<br>3.2 Evidence of trained counselors reporting confidence in using Aselo.<br>3.3 Reduction in proportion of counselor support requests that relate to basic platform use **(e.g. through using a ticket count post-launch).** |
| 4. Referral systems are functional, integrated, and used | 4.1 Evidence of cases requiring referrals that are successfully logged and tracked in Aselo. |
| 5. TF-CSA/CSAM cases are more efficiently identified and tracked | 5.1 Number of TF-CSA/CSAM-related cases flagged through Aselo.<br>5.2 Percentage of TF-CSA/CSAM cases successfully referred to the IWF portal. |
| 6. Data collection is streamlined for analysis, advocacy, and reporting | 6.1 Percentage/Number of helplines regularly exporting and reviewing data through dashboards or reports.<br>6.2 Evidence of advocacy or operational decisions influenced by Aselo-generated data.<br>6.3 Evidence of helplines meeting data quality standards (completeness, accuracy, timeliness). |

Table 22: Proposed Outputs in Updated Results Framework

| OUTCOMES (OC) | |
|---|---|
| **Short-Term Outcomes** | **Indicators** |
| 1. Helplines manage more contacts with lower wait times | 1.1 Percentage increase in number of contacts handled per counselor*.<br>1.2 Average wait time per user contact (via chat, message, or voice).<br>1.3 Abandon rates |
| 2. Improved referral accuracy and follow-through | 2.1 Number of referrals made<br>2.2 Number of different entities referrals can be made to<br>2.3 Resulting action or update made for contacts that had referrals associated with them (which may or may not be confirmed service provision) |
| 3. Helplines and users have better access to secure, trusted channels | 3.1 Number of communication channels available to users.<br>3.2 Evidence of service users rating communication channels as “safe” or “easy to use”.*<br>3.3 Incidents of data breaches or access violations reported. |
| 4. Increased reporting of CSAM and OCSEA | 4.1 Percentage increase in reported cases tagged as CSAM/OCSEA. |
| 5. Helplines have more and better quality data. | 5.1 Percentage of user records with complete demographic and case information fields.<br>5.2 Percentage of data sets shared in standardised formats (interoperable with partners).<br>5.3 Evidence of data used in internal reviews, service planning meetings, advocacy or reports. |
| 6. Helplines have improved access to and secure control over their data | 6.1 Helplines demonstrate greater control over their data versus prior systems/processes.**<br>6.2 Evidence of data-informed policy or funding proposals generated by helplines. |
| **Intermediate Outcomes** | **Indicators** |
| 7. Children and youth more frequently use helplines via preferred channels | 7.1 Percentage of contacts received via digital-first channels (e.g., chat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). |

| | |
|---|---|
| 8. counselors' job satisfaction and their overall wellbeing are enhanced.** | 8.1 Percentage of counselors reporting improved job satisfaction in before and after Aselo implementation staff surveys.<br>8.2 Staff turnover and retention rates over time.<br>8.3 Number of counselling staff accessing staff wellness / psychosocial support services. |
| 9. Helplines better analyse their user needs and own impact. | 9.1 Percentage of helplines generating periodic data reports in Aselo on service usage and gaps.<br>9.2 Evidence of helplines using the raw data to build their own reports.<br>9.3 Evidence of service improvements implemented based on data insights.<br>9.4 Evidence of helplines reporting increased understanding of user demographics and needs. |
| 10. Higher counselor productivity results in more children receiving timely support. | 10.1 Increase in average number of children supported per counselor per day/week.**<br>10.2 Reduction in average time taken to respond to requests received.**<br>10.3 Reduction in average time taken to "close" a support request.** |
| 11. Improved supervisor and assessment controls results in higher quality counselling.** | 11.1 Percentage of calls/chats reviewed by supervisors for quality assessments.<br>11.2 Average supervisor rating of counselling sessions.<br>11.3 Frequency of supervisory feedback sessions per counselor.<br>11.4 Percentage of counselors receiving refresher or continuous training.<br>11.5 Evidence of improved service user satisfaction scores (proxy for counselling quality). |
| 12.Having access to repeat caller history can be beneficial to callers.** | 12.1 Percentage of repeat callers for whom history is available at point of contact.<br>12.2 Percentage of repeat callers reporting improved experience (e.g., less need to re-explain situation).<br><br>12.4 Number/percentage of repeat caller cases demonstrating continuity of care (e.g., referrals, follow-ups, safety planning tracked across interactions).<br>12.5 Evidence of counselors reporting greater confidence in handling repeat cases due to access to history. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 12.6 Number of instances where caller history contributes to early identification of risks (e.g., escalation of abuse). |
| **Long-Term Outcomes** | **Indicators** |
| 13. Helpline data informs national child protection strategies and policies.** | 13.1 Number of national child protection strategies/policies citing helpline data.<br>13.2 Number of government requests for helpline data/reports to inform planning.<br>13.3 Evidence of helpline participation in national-level child protection working groups.<br>13.4 Policy changes or reforms linked to helpline evidence (qualitative/traceable). |
| 14. Improved coordination between helplines, law enforcement, and social services.** | 14.1 Number of cases referred to law enforcement/social services that result in coordinated action.<br>14.2 Existence of formal referral protocols / MoUs between helplines and partner agencies.<br>14.3 Percentage of cases successfully tracked through the referral pathway.<br>14.4 Evidence of joint training or cross-sector case review meetings held annually. |
| 15. Advocacy for child protection and digital safety is more evidence driven.** | 15.1 Number of advocacy products (briefs, campaigns, reports, CHI reports) citing helpline evidence.<br>15.2 Number of external stakeholders (NGOs, INGOs, government, donors) referencing helpline data in advocacy.<br>15.3 Evidence of media coverage or campaigns based on helpline data trends.<br>15.4 Advocacy initiatives resulting in policy debate or reform discussions informed by data.<br>15.5 Evidence of children's voices (via helpline data) being represented in advocacy efforts. |

Table 23: Proposed Outcomes in Updated Results Framework

(*If baseline data is available.)
(**Beyond the scope of this evaluation.)

Upon Tech Matters' request, the results framework also presents indicators for outcomes that are not directly assessed within the scope of this evaluation (**OC8**, **OC11-15**). While the evaluation focuses on the outputs and a selected set of short-term and intermediate

outcomes, it is important to provide a broader framework that identifies how other outcomes could be measured in the future.

Including these additional indicators serves two purposes. First, it offers Tech Matters a more comprehensive monitoring framework that can guide ongoing data collection and performance tracking beyond the evaluation period. Second, it ensures continuity and alignment across the full theory of change, enabling Tech Matters to monitor progress toward outcomes that were not prioritised for this evaluation but remain critical for achieving long-term impact.

These indicators are therefore being suggested as a resource for future monitoring and learning. They are not assessed or validated in the current evaluation, but they provide a foundation for Tech Matters to strengthen its internal monitoring systems and to track progress more systematically over time. These suggestions can be updated and modified as necessary based on the type of data available. In the absence of such data, Tech Matters can also identify proxy indicators to evidence progress in relation to these longer-term outcomes.

For the outcomes and indicators beyond this evaluation, there is monitoring and evaluation work that needs to be established and developed in close collaboration with child helplines and CHI. Several of the long-term outcomes, such as those relating to counselor wellbeing, coordination with external agencies, and policy influence, require information and data that helplines themselves generate and maintain. Achieving reliable measurement for these outcomes will depend on helplines' capacity and willingness to share data, and on building systems that enable consistent tracking across different contexts.

This points to the need for establishing a dedicated M&E framework that not only captures outputs and short-term changes but also provides structured mechanisms to assess longer-term shifts. Such a framework would support learning, enable Tech Matters to better demonstrate its contribution to child protection systems, and ensure that evidence from helplines is systematically incorporated into advocacy, service improvement, and policy development.

# 8.10Appendix J: Aselo's Updated ToC

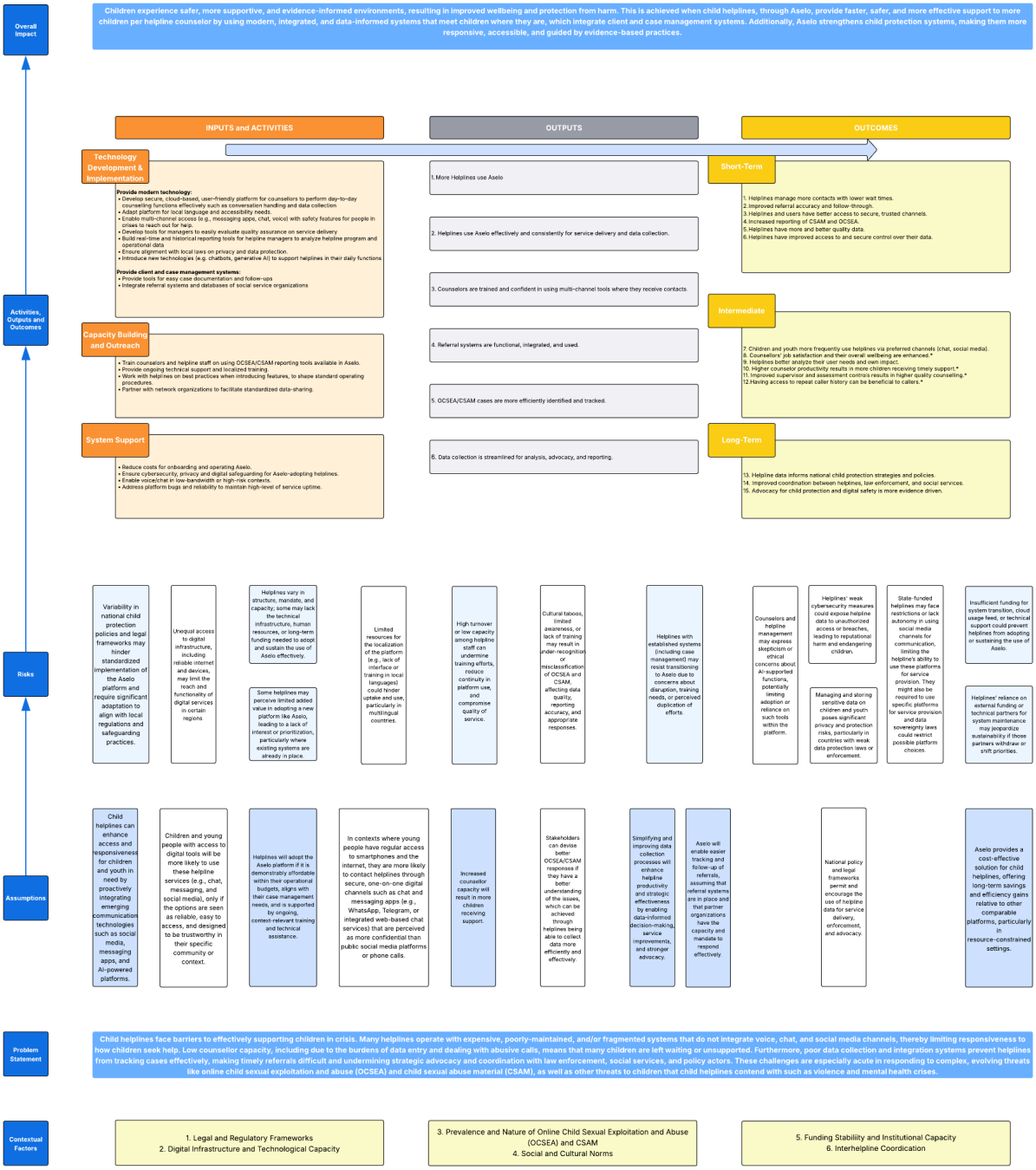



Figure 2: Aselo's Current ToC

## 8.11 Appendix E: Additional Information

The following annex elaborates on aspects of the evaluation that could not be included in the main body of the report due to length constraints.

**Additional ToC assumptions**

In addition to the critical assumptions tested in the evaluation, the following contextual and operational assumptions informed the reconstruction of the Aselo Theory of Change:

- Simplified and improved data collection processes enhance productivity and enable data-informed decision-making, advocacy, and service improvements.
- The Aselo platform architecture can be adapted to meet varying legal, technical, and social requirements across countries.
- Buy-in from counsellors and helpline management depends on perceived usability, alignment with workflows, and demonstration of relevance.
- User-centred design ensures accessibility for helpline staff with varying levels of technical experience.
- Increased counsellor capacity leads to more children receiving support.
- Aselo offers a cost-effective and efficient alternative to existing systems, especially in resource-constrained settings.
- The benefits of Aselo (e.g., efficiency, flexibility, improved case management) outweigh potential limitations when these are clearly communicated and mitigated.
- National policy environments permit and encourage responsible data use for enforcement, service improvement, and advocacy.

These assumptions provide additional insight into the contextual and operational factors influencing the implementation and effectiveness of the Aselo platform but fall outside the core set selected for validation during this evaluation.

Further to these assumptions, outlining the risks within a ToC is essential to ensure that the intervention design is realistic, adaptive, and robust. Acknowledging risks helps anticipate challenges that could undermine the logic or assumptions of the program. This enables stronger planning for risk management, promotes transparency, and strengthens the overall credibility of the ToC because it acknowledges uncertainties and external influences

that may affect outcomes. The following is the final list of risks identified using the criteria of relevance, likelihood and potential impact:

1. Variability in national child protection policies and legal frameworks may hinder standardized implementation of the Aselo platform and require significant adaptation to align with local regulations and safeguarding practices.
2. Helplines vary in structure, mandate, and capacity; some may lack the technical infrastructure, human resources, or long-term funding needed to adopt and sustain the use of Aselo effectively.
3. Unequal access to digital infrastructure, including reliable internet and devices, may limit the reach and functionality of digital services in certain regions.
4. State-funded helplines may face restrictions or lack autonomy in using social media channels for communication, limiting the helpline's ability to use these platforms for service provision. They might also be required to use specific platforms for service provision and data sovereignty laws could restrict possible platform choices.
5. Managing and storing sensitive data on children and youth poses significant privacy and protection risks, particularly in countries with weak data protection laws or enforcement.
6. Some helplines may perceive limited added value in adopting a new platform like Aselo, leading to a lack of interest or prioritization, particularly where existing systems are already in place.
7. Insufficient funding for system transition, cloud usage feed, or technical support could prevent helplines from adopting or sustaining the use of Aselo.
8. counselors and helpline management may express skepticism or ethical concerns about AI-supported functions, potentially limiting adoption or reliance on such tools within the platform.
9. Helplines with established systems (including case management) may resist transitioning to Aselo due to concerns about disruption, training needs, or perceived duplication of efforts.
10. Cultural taboos, limited awareness, or lack of training may result in under-recognition or misclassification of OCSEA and CSAM, affecting data quality, reporting accuracy, and appropriate responses.

11. Helplines' reliance on external funding or technical partners for system maintenance may jeopardize sustainability if those partners withdraw or shift priorities.
12. Helplines' weak cybersecurity measures could expose helpline data to unauthorized access or breaches, leading to reputational harm and endangering children.
13. High turnover or low capacity among helpline staff can undermine training efforts, reduce continuity in platform use, and compromise quality of service.
14. Limited resources for the localization of the platform (e.g., lack of interface or training in local languages) could hinder uptake and use, particularly in multilingual countries.