

# POWER IN NUMBERS

## CHILD HELPLINE INTERNATIONAL AND ASELO: NATURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH TECH MATTERS

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### **Background**

Since its founding in 2003, Child Helpline International and its members have understood the value and power of child helpline data. Collectively, we have worked to gain recognition of child helpline data as an indicator, evidence base and unique insight into the lives of children and young people.

The ways that child helplines collect data, and in turn the ways that Child Helpline International collects data from its members, have changed and developed drastically over the course of the last 20 years. This is in part led by child helplines and their investments in data collection platforms and tools and also in part due to the demands made by partners and child protection actors on the data itself, the type of data, frequency of collection, analysis and so on. And it is overwhelmingly due to advances in technology, where data collection and all related processes are increasingly automated, intuitive and sophisticated.

Previously, child helplines at the national level sought out and developed their own, often bespoke solutions, in isolation. In time, solutions were shared, and, in some cases, sub-regional investments were made in common software. In 2017, discussions and exploration began in earnest to understand the technologies used by child helplines. A process of co-creation was quickly established and through our Founder, Jeroo Billimoria, Tech Matters became a partner in the process.

Coupled with data collection, a revolution in call centre management was apparent, largely led by the private sector. AseLO was developed by Tech Matters to provide helplines with equal opportunity to enhance their use of technology in a modern, sustainable and secure way. In 2020, co-development of AseLO began with ten child helpline members. With support of funders including the End Violence Fund, Schmidt Futures, and the Oak Foundation,



Aselo officially launched in early 2021. By the end of 2023, it is projected that 20 child helplines will be using Aselo in some capacity.

### **What is Aselo?**

Aselo was developed not only to store (child) helpline data but to extend the reach of child helplines beyond voice to include text-based channels in one unified system. This includes web-based services, and social media, recognizing that child helplines need to be accessible to young people where they are – online. Aselo also includes advanced tools for optimizing queues, managing information systems, and evaluating counsellor performance. In addition, Aselo was designed to make submitting annual data to Child Helpline International as seamless as possible. Some of the key Aselo features include:

- Omnichannel: Voice, SMS, Webchat, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Line.
- Unified screen for queue visibility, task management, call/chat handling and data entry.
- Highly customizable (data fields, reporting, platform localization to helpline language preferences, permissions structure).
- Optional case management tools.
- Interactive Text Response (ITR) chatbot/ Interactive Voice Response (IVR), with customizable questions, language accommodation, and information flow options.
- Optional skills-based routing, triaging.
- Robust and flexible reporting dashboards.
- Automatic mapping of helpline-specific categories to our standard data framework to facilitate annual reporting.
- Remote real-time conversation monitoring for supervisors.
- Transcript and voice recording availability for past conversations.
- Quality assurance and counsellor evaluation tools.
- Built to modern data security and privacy standards.
- Built on top of standard cloud technology such as Twilio and Amazon Web Services.

### **Why do we collectively develop Aselo?**

Child Helpline International does not impose anything on its members but does work on behalf of its members, consulting with and understanding their needs. We wanted our members to have access to a state-of-the-art platform, with the option for multiple applications, for data collection and also to function as a call-centre software, with the possibilities for omnichannel service provision. The motivations can be summarized as follows:

- Reducing risks for child helplines that are making individual investments in tech – spreading the costs and the risk by acting collectively.
- Harnessing technology to automate data management processes to reduce staff time needed and free more time for counselling.
- Improving efficiency in collecting data from members, with automatic and real-time uploads in the future.



- Benefitting from continuous improvement of the technology, receiving new functionality (that is informed by their own collective feedback) at no additional cost.

As part of the development, Aselo has implemented the Child Helpline International Data Framework, which makes it easier to aggregate data on the global experience of children. This allows child helplines to advocate for the populations they serve and Child Helpline International to influence policy and funding. Aselo will continue to seek out more opportunities for developing tools that will strengthen the child helpline network.

The Aselo team also prides itself on its commitment to being a technology partner to helplines, not just a technology provider. It commits to placing counsellors at the centre of its design and strategy process, and work closely with each helpline team during the implementation process to support them through planning and executing the entire change management process, operational workflow breakdown, training and customization according to their needs as an organization.

### **What is Tech Matters?**

Tech Matters is a non-profit organization based in Palo Alto, California. Its mission is to make the benefits of technology available to all of humanity. It works hand-in-hand with social change visionaries to build the technology solutions required for real systems change, to create large-scale, far-reaching positive impact. Tech Matters is staffed by technology experts with a passion for social justice and a commitment to further positive social change.

### **Costs of adopting Aselo**

As a non-profit, Tech Matters does not need to charge a profit, so the cost estimates are based on actual expected costs to customize and operate Aselo as a cloud solution for each helpline partner.

Costs to adopt Aselo are twofold:

1. One-Time Setup Cost: Provision of sandbox environment, training, customization to the local environment, including translation, and operational needs.
2. Recurring Operating and Support Cost: Annual running costs to cover the cost of running cloud-based software (Twilio, AWS and Okta costs); ongoing support and product maintenance from the Aselo team for technical or configuration improvements.

If a potential adoptee requires functionality not yet available in Aselo, the product management team welcomes the opportunity to work with the organization to scope the functionality and provide cost estimates for custom development work required to deliver it. The cost for custom development is a once off in addition to the Setup Cost described above. It typically takes 4-6 months to set up Aselo for a specific helpline, depending on the customization needs of the helpline.

All of these costs can be estimated during initial conversations to assess the needs of each child helpline service. The costs will be calculated from the expected usage of the platform (e.g., number of counsellors, hours of operation, annual projected voice minutes, etc.) and



the level of customization required for implementation. What is clear is that Aselo, when compared to other similar platforms, is very competitive.

***There is no commercial benefit for either Tech Matters or Child Helpline International in developing and facilitating the adoption of Aselo.***

### **What data is collected in Aselo?**

Two types of data are collected in Aselo: programmatic data and call-centre data.

- Programmatic data includes customizable data fields about the caller, such as the nature of the call and additional details collected by counsellors. All data fields are defined by the helpline and Aselo can be configured for both fully anonymous helplines or those that capture extensive caller personal/demographic information.
- Call-centre data includes caller identifiers such as phone number and conversation length, as well as call recordings and transcripts.

The data collected can be accessed through Aselo's reporting capabilities and can be used to manage cases, analyse trends, and evaluate counsellor performance. While Tech Matters will be hosting the data on the Aselo platform, this data belongs to the helpline. Tech Matters will only share aggregated helpline data (no confidential personally identifiable information) and will share helpline specific aggregated data only with permission from that child helpline.

Aselo ensures data security through modern security measures and is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as well as with similar national data protection laws. Data retention policies are up to individual child helplines, based on costs, risk management considerations, and national regulations.

### **Aselo is not the only option**

While Child Helpline International has a vested interest in Aselo, there are other software products available and many solutions in operation, developed by child helplines themselves. This will not change. We encourage our members and partners to explore other solutions and to share experiences.

Aselo can also complement existing solutions by being utilized in a portfolio approach, where only some components are utilized. For example, child helplines may choose to only use only the case management suite of features, while handling calls and chat via mobile phones. Alternatively, other child helplines have adopted the omnichannel interface to consolidate incoming conversations across different social media platforms.

### **How can you arrange a demo of Aselo?**

Please contact Humairaa Mahomed at Tech Matters, [humairaa@techmatters.org](mailto:humairaa@techmatters.org). You can learn more about Aselo and view a demo video at <https://aselo.org>.