



ECPAT Taiwan Secretary General Li-Feng Li with staff member Teng Chia Hui.

Joy Lai says, in order to reduce the amount of child pornography uploaded and viewed on the internet. Ms Lai has worked for ECPAT Taiwan for two and a half years is the hotline manager for the Web547 hotline.

“We receive about 500 reports per month, says Ms Lai, “about both child and adult pornography.” The situation is getting worse, she says adding, once an image is on the internet, it never disappears. “Most of the children in the images (reported) are from Western countries or Southeast Asia.”

“It’s illegal to possess child pornography in Taiwan,” says Ms Saito, but it’s much harder to limit access to child pornography in Japan, where magazines featuring minors are easily available, even at convenience stores. Attempts to eliminate child pornography from store shelves, she says, is often thwarted by people claiming it would be censorship and violation of freedom of speech rights.



Participant Oshima Tetsuya with some products made in ECPAT’s rehabilitation programme.

After giving onboard lectures and workshops about the commercial sexual exploitation of children, guest educator Saito Keiko of ECPAT/STOP Japan accompanied 22 Peace Boat participants to an information exchange at the office of ECPAT Taiwan during the ship's call to Keelung.

The staff and volunteers at the organization operate an online reporting service through which the public can alert authorities about child pornography on the internet. They work closely with local police units, the government and internet service providers.

All levels of society – schools, government, police – need to cooperate,



Joy Lai (center) with Peace Boat guest educator Carmelita Nuqui and volunteer Meme Watanabe

It’s difficult to inform young people about sexual exploitation, says ECPAT Taiwan’s international affairs officer. Yi Ling Chen is also in charge of youth participation projects, such as organizing human rights-oriented summer camps and a volunteer group, Youth Act Together in Taiwan (YATT), that helps inform youth about the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

“The child prostitution problem in Taiwan is not as serious as it was 20 years ago,” says Elaine Chen, “but it is still happening.”

ECPAT Taiwan has a small shelter in Taipei, where the staff offer psychological support and life management skills to girls who are former child prostitutes. Most of the girls are 15-18 years old, she says, and many have left homes with domestic problems: Prostitution is a last resort for them.



Peace Boat participant Kitahara Osamu performing a traditional lion dance for the ECPAT staff

No matter what the reason, “children should never be allowed to sell themselves,” says Ms Saito.

The shelter also helps women from other countries, who are trafficked to Taiwan and forced into prostitution. During the visit to ECPAT in Taipei, Peace Boat participants did not visit the shelter, in order to protect the identities of the women and girls, but their exchange with the ECPAT staff and volunteers showed participants how effective education and government lobbying can be.

“The most important thing is to think how we can support the victims to go back into society,” Peace Boat participant Higuchi Nozomu says, “instead of focusing on the prevention of prostitution. Prostitution can’t be simply eliminated but I was please to know that people were taking actions.”

For more information about ECPAT Taiwan, visit www.ecpat.org.tw

With translation assistance by Fukuda Hikari

ECPAT PROFILE

ECPAT – End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes – is an international network of people and organisations cooperating to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children, in all forms. Since beginning in 1990, ECPAT has grown to include partners in 75 countries around the globe and it has a special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

For more information, see the ECPAT International homepage: www.ecpat.net