Child helplines are on the front lines of responding to children in crisis. With well-publicized short-code telephone numbers (similar to 911 in the United States), child helplines in more than 140 countries are taking urgent phone calls about children suffering from neglect, violence, abuse, mental health challenges and more.

The challenge: Globally, child helplines receive more than 30 million calls annually, and those helplines are struggling to fully meet the needs of children in crisis. Millions of phone calls go unanswered. And most helplines face challenges from outdated technology and limited channels of communication – relying almost solely on voice calls. However, more people – especially children – increasingly use social media and text messaging as their primary means of communication. Today’s young people often feel more comfortable discussing serious or delicate issues on text or chat functions, instead of a voice call. The pandemic has created another issue – the lack of space to make a private call. What’s needed is a modern cloud-based contact center that makes it possible to both connect with children on the platforms they use, as well as improve the productivity of human counselors.
**Co-creating the next generation of helpline contact centers**

To address these needs, Tech Matters is developing Aselo™, an open source, cloud-based contact center platform. Aselo is being created in partnership with Child Helpline International (CHI) and its more than 160 members in nearly 140 countries. With CHI’s help, we chose 10 national child helplines representing the diverse global membership. These 10 helplines have been testing each new prototype release since late 2019, resulting in a child-ready platform that launched in early 2021. CHI’s membership saw a real benefit in joining together to build an innovative common platform, rather than having each helpline pay for individual tech solutions.

**Aselo’s design**

- Provides a completely integrated modern contact center system for children to reach counselors through phone, SMS, webchat, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp;
- Is cloud-based, making remote work by counselors possible;
- Implements the new CHI unified data framework, allowing easy data aggregation across countries, providing powerful tools for advocacy for children and laying the groundwork for greater use of evidence-based practices;
- Is customizable to address the needs and languages of individual helplines;
- Includes chatbots to be more responsive to children and save time for counselors;
- Provides extensive contact center reports and dashboards for managing operations and analyzing trends.

“Once Aselo is fully implemented, we envision that the global child helpline movement will be able to serve 100 million children annually – more than triple the number of children we currently support each year – without significant increases in costs for individual child helplines. And Aselo’s design offers new opportunities to understand and advocate for the needs of children. This innovation advances the entire field.”

*Jeroo Billimoria, founder, Child Helpline International and Childline India Foundation.*
How Aselo works

- Uses a single-screen, browser-based interface, integrating multiple communications channels simultaneously and enabling counselors to help more children/youth at once.
- Supports privacy and security of data about children as a central requirement. All data collected belongs to the individual helpline (not Tech Matters).
- Runs on the Twilio Flex programmable contact center platform, which integrates well with existing telecom operators and social media companies.
- Enlists a community-based and modular design process, addressing the top priorities of child helpline users.
- Uses a cloud infrastructure which Tech Matters will operate for most child helplines adopting Aselo.
- Is open source allowing helplines to freely improve, adapt, and operate the platform using their own or hired technologists if they prefer.
- Is overseen by an advisory board with representatives including Jeroo Billimoria, founder of CHI, Patrick Krens, CEO of CHI, and leaders from child helplines using Aselo.

Our Supporters

Aselo was initiated with One Family Foundation; other major supporters include: Child Helpline International, the End Violence Fund, Twilio.org, Schmidt Futures, Facebook, and the Jenesis Group.
Let’s Connect

Do you want to know more about this initiative and how you or your organization might use – or support – Aselo and its applications?

Whether you’re the Executive Director/CEO, a board member or a counselor at a helpline, an organization that works to fund or support a social issue, or a tech person with a desire to apply your talents to the tech for good field, we’d love to talk with you. Contact us at contact@aselo.org or visit Aselo.org.

About Tech Matters

Tech Matters is a Silicon Valley based nonprofit with a mission to bring the benefits of technology to all of humanity, not just the richest 5%.

Since the social sector is often decades behind in applying tech for good, Tech Matters works hand-in-hand with social change visionaries to build tech solutions needed for real systems change, to create large-scale, positive impact.

Tech Matters is staffed by tech experts with a passion for social justice and a commitment to further positive social change.

You can find us at TechMatters.org, and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.