

Children's Participation in the Lanzarote Convention

Helen Veitch, Oak Fellow on Children's
Participation in Preventing Sexual Violence

Oak Fellow on Children's Participation in Preventing Sexual Violence

- **Collaboration between the International Centre on researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking and the Oak Foundation.**
- **Purpose: to initiate and support efforts by children and young people to prevent sexual violence against children.**
- **supporting (emerging) work to ensure children's participation becomes a stronger force;**
- **connecting to emerging global initiatives developed by others;**

The International Centre

- **Committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts.**
- **Achieved through:**
 - **academic rigour and research excellence**
 - **collaborative and partnership based approaches to applied social research**
 - **meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people**

The Oak Foundation

www.oakfnd.org

- Private family foundation addressing issues of global social and environmental concern that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged with programmes on women's rights, the environment, human rights, homelessness and child abuse.
- My role: strengthen the Child Abuse Programme's work on children's participation, current focus E Europe and E. Africa
- Exploratory phase to look at children's involvement in the monitoring activities of the Lanzarote Convention.
- Lanzarote Convention viewed as a landmark convention that presents a unique opportunity to pioneer children's participation in its implementation. The Oak Foundation is interested in helping to make this a reality.

Children's Participation is...

"the process of **sharing decisions** which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is a means by which **democracy is built** and it is a **standard** against which democracies should be measured."

Roger Hart, 1992,

For sexually exploited children...

“...the primary concern is about protecting [them] from society rather than considering the opportunities for them to participate in it”

Afua Twum Danso, 2005

From sexually exploitation children...

“Before, I saw what I had been through as a weakness – a horrible part of my life. Well it is still a horrible part but **now I can use my experiences for good.....** I’ve gone from the person who is coming here to ask for help for me, to **someone who’s coming to help other young people.**”

Maisy, 18, in AYPH Be Healthy, 2013

Learning from participatory activities with children to address sexual violence

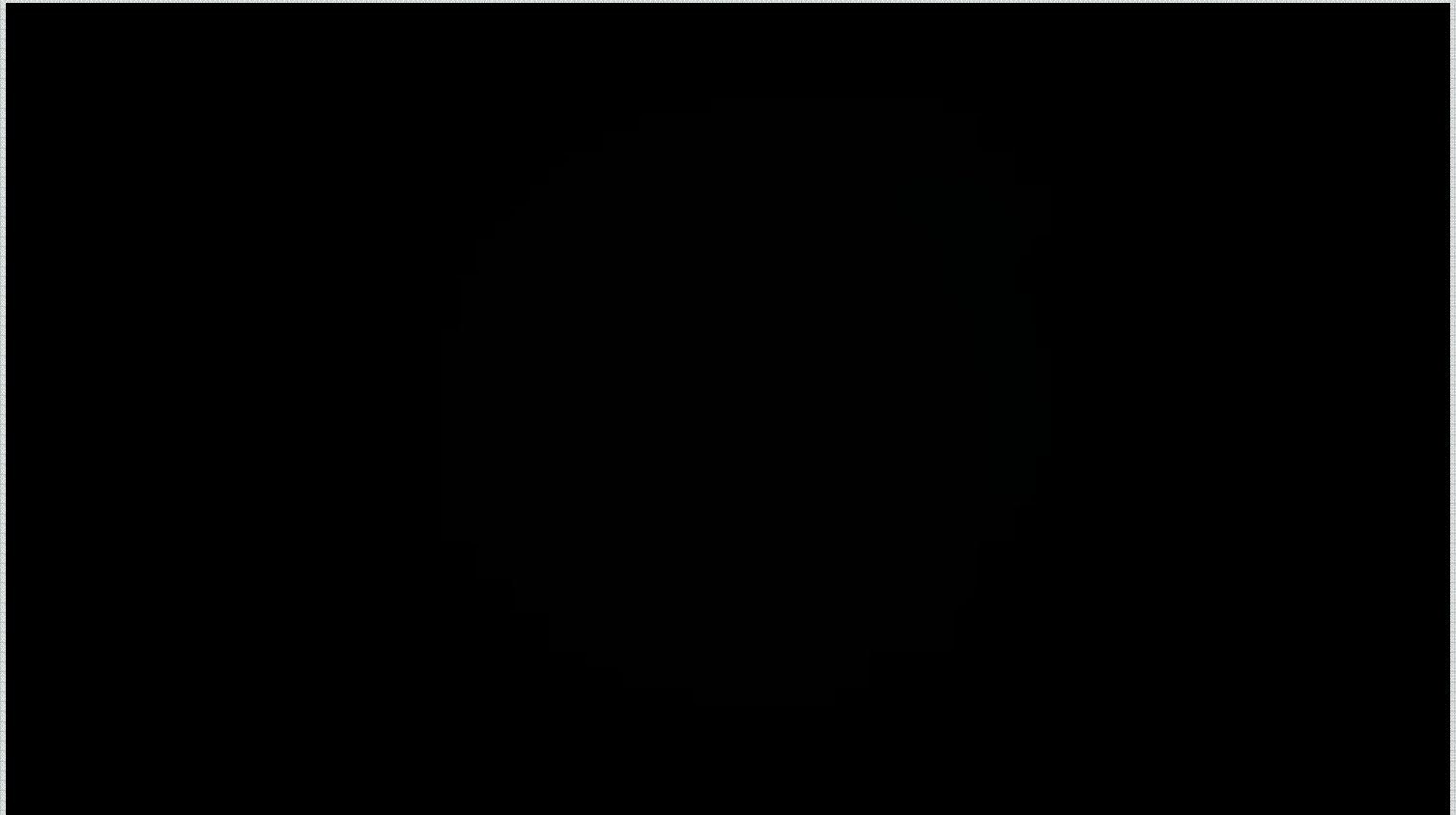
- **Working through strong partnerships with providers of direct support to children**
- **Good risk management**
- **Avoiding undue paternalism**
- **Supporting children's own learning about sexual violence**
- **Offering a range of opportunities for children**
- **Protecting children's anonymity but acknowledging their contributions**
- **Being honest and realistic with children about what influence they will (and won't have)**
- **Preparing professionals for listening and meaningful dialogue**

EXAMPLE 1: Making Justice Work

Participatory research in the UK: collaborated with nine ‘experts by experience’ (13 – 19 years) over 16 months on data collection; analysis and dissemination

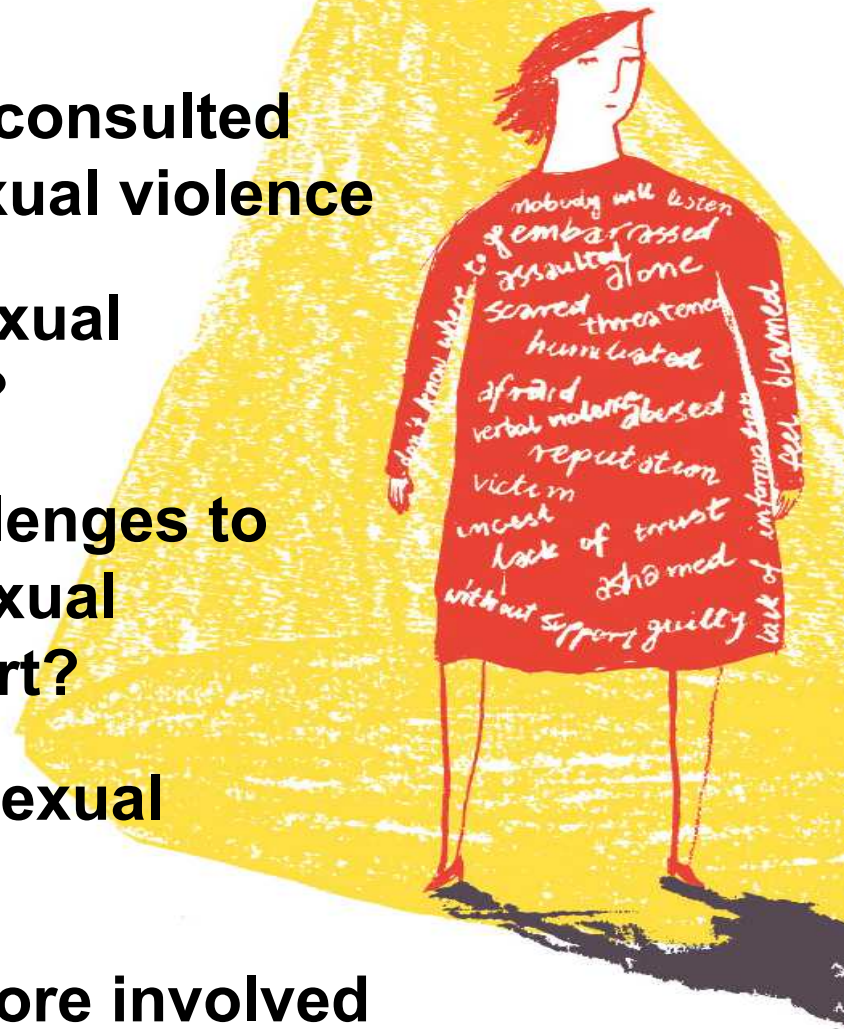
- **Used workshops, mapping activities, focus groups and solution focused dialogue events with practitioners and policy makers to explore opportunities for change in justice system**
- **All young people accessed through and supported by specialist practitioners.**
- **Participants gone on to set up a peer support initiative for young people affected by CSE who go through justice system**

Film produced by young people



EXAMPLE 2: Our Voices - consulting with young people in Albania, Bulgaria and UK

- 47 children and young people consulted who have been affected by sexual violence
- What are the issues around sexual violence in their communities?
- What are the barriers and challenges to young people talking about sexual violence and accessing support?
- What should be done to stop sexual violence?
- How could young people be more involved in preventing sexual violence?



How and why involve young people?

- How young people could be more involved in preventing sexual violence?
- Why should young people be involved?
- What are the barriers in getting young people involved?
- How can we help more young people get involved?



Relevant recommendations from the first monitoring report

- Committee interested in the ‘**actual situation on the ground**’ (data collection) and that all parties should ‘**take into account the specificities** of sexual abuse committed in *the circle of trust*’ (main recommendations F)
- **Consultations** or **research** with children who have experienced these specific situations to give a picture of the ‘actual situation on the ground’ and to validate or verify good practice (which is often based on the views of adults).
- Key area in 1st monitoring report is **children-friendly criminal proceedings**. Recommendation 22-54
- Worth examining **how children’s voices can deepen all the pictures** we’re getting from monitoring... i.e. child helplines?

Piloting children's participation

- **Opportunity to pilot children's involvement** in the monitoring of the Lanzarote Convention presented at Lanzarote Committee meeting in March
- Pioneering work
- Pilots would work at **national level in 2-3 countries**
 - require collaboration between government and NGOs
 - can work on different issues at different levels
- **Malta** expressed an interest!
- I'm here to **explore this idea further**, to support and facilitate making this a reality.

For more information and resources visit
our website www.beds.ac.uk/ic

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