



PARTICIPATION OF SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

CP4Europe Webinar on

“The participation of vulnerable children in decision-making
processes – from theory to practice”



Building a Europe
for and with children
Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants

Mariana Yevsyukova
CoE independent expert

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation mostly stay silent, because of



- trauma, guilt and fear;
- lack of knowledge and awareness;
- lack of specialised services to support victims of sexual violence;
- lack of child friendly, confidential, consistent and long-term support;
- lack of resources, including funding associated with care.

‘Feeling stigma prevents you from getting help and from healing.’

Participant of the Global Survivors’ Forum, November 2016

Co-funded
by the European Union



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

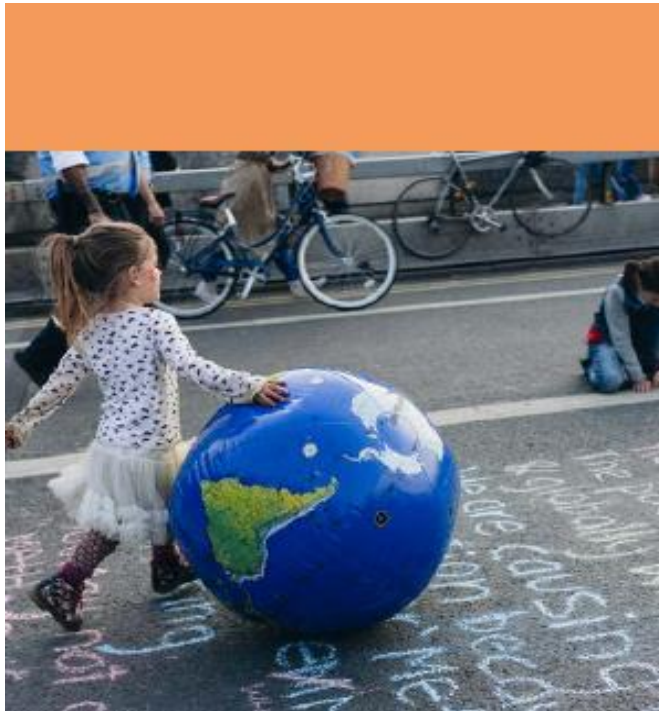


CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



AREAS OF SURVIVORS PARTICIPATION



Survivors can be agents of change if empowered and provided with opportunities of safe and meaningful participation.

- Recovery and reintegration
- Prevention (peer-to-peer)
- Organisational governance
- Research
- Advocacy

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Recovery and reintegration



Children can participate in decision-making regarding their own R&R and to inform and shape the organisations' services. 'Experts by experience' are involved in developing our understanding of what support and opportunities are needed to help children recover and 'move on' .

Peer support helps children and young people normalize their lives. Peer support provides "survivor role models" and lets children know they are not alone.

Participatory group work addressing sexual violence plays a role in empowerment of the individuals – enabling collective action to create change and challenge injustice. It also helps to challenge individual narratives that foster self-blame and shame.

Good practices:

European projects 'LEAP', 'Our Voices', group work-based advocacy projects by Our Voices and Different & Equal in Albania; the National Center for Child Abuse Prevention (NCCAP) in Moldova and ATINA in Serbia; UK based projects 'Be Healthy'; 'One of the Gang'; 'Making Justice Work'; 'Learning from the Experts'

Co-funded
by the European Union



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Prevention



“Speaking out can make us a target. But we speak out to protect other children from being sexually exploited... Access to education is most important for children. It helps with recovery and healing. Every country should have a survivor ambassador / advocate to empower children to speak up.”

Participant of the Global Survivors’ Forum, November 2016

Awareness raising among children at risk

Development of child-friendly materials for peers

Development and implementation of the ‘micro projects’

Good practices:

Youth Partnership Programme on Empowerment of the Child Survivors and At-Risk Youth against Commercial Sexual Exploitation
by ECPAT International in 15 countries during 2006-2011

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Organisational governance



“Government agencies, NGOs and communities can learn from us, but they need to respect and honour what we bring.”

Participant of the Global Survivors’ Forum, November 2016

Multi-level approach that centrally involves children in all stages of governance from the local level to the global level

Listening to children’s voices is equally important as for those voices to be heard

Bottom-up and a top-down process

Revising the categorical approach to setting age limits for participation

Good practices:

ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee, Child Helpline International Youth Advisory Council, SAIEVAC Regional Children’s Forum and Board, Survivors’ run organisations

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Research



Different levels of participation: children as research subject; children consulted on the aspects of research project; children collaborate and work in partnership with the researchers; children supported to lead and have ownership of research activity.

Range of ethical questions and dilemmas doing research involving children in the context of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ethical research on sexual violence involving children includes 4 steps:

1. Answering the question “Should children be involved in your research?”
2. Ethics topics (meaningful child participation; methodology; informed consent, privacy and confidentiality; disclosure of abuse; payment and compensation; conflict of interests)
3. Harms and benefits analysis
4. Third party review

Good practices:

Access to Justice and Remedies Research: Through the Eyes of the Child
by ECPAT International (2017)

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Advocacy



“Not everyone can be part of the public process of advocacy. The children who can participate are the ones who have been hurt the least”.

Placing children’s voices at the heart of organisations that serve them:
Lessons from governance with children who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation

Engaging survivors later in their lives. Older survivors, perhaps even in their late twenties, are more likely to be at a point in their recovery process to engage in advocacy work and participating in governance in a manner that does not risk re-traumatisation.

Participation in advocacy needs to be thought of as opportunities rather than expectations.

Good practices:

Global Survivors Forum for adult survivors of childhood sexual exploitation by ECPAT International and Council of Europe (November 2016)
An exhibition of drawings and testimonies of children, survivors of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



'To be an advocate means we can never truly let go of our trauma'

Participant of the Global Survivors' Forum, November 2016

Conclusions



- There is no meaningful, safe and ethical participation without recovery process
- Every child's recovery process is different
- Survivors get protection and empowerment through participation
- Privacy and confidentiality are paramount in work with the survivors of childhood sexual exploitation and abuse
- Strict ethical codes should be applied working with the survivors of childhood sexual exploitation and abuse

This is a giant step in the right direction for those who think they know better. However, there is still the need for the voices of children and young people (...) to be fully addressed and integrated into all programs of action. Governments should support the participation of children and adolescents (...) We are one step closer to solutions that are more effective, appropriate and sustainable

Final Appeal of children and young people, Second World Congress against CSEC, Yokohama, 2001

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



Thank you for your attention

www.coe.int/CP4EUROPE



Building a Europe
for and with children
Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe