Protecting children from sexual violence

A comprehensive approach

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Foreword

Scientific research suggests that around 20% of children in Europe are victims of some form of sexual violence. Public attention is still drawn towards the lurking stranger depicted in media, yet children are most in danger of abuse from those around them. It is estimated that in 70% to 85% of cases, the perpetrator is known to the victim.

Child sexual abuse can take many forms: incest, pornography, prostitution, trafficking, corruption and peer sexual assault. Sexually abused children suffer more than an intolerable violation of their physical integrity: their mental health can also be affected and their bonds of trust with adults destroyed. Children who are sexually abused often take refuge in silence because they feel shame, guilt and fear. Some child victims are so young that they have no idea what is happening to them and very often children do not know where or how to seek help. The consequences of sexual abuse can follow children into their adult lives – lives which first person accounts often describe as lived out in hidden sorrow and pain.

Although it is difficult to have exact figures on the extent of the problem, the number of cases brought to justice for sexual abuse committed in child care institutions is steadily rising. No institution is immune. Institutions that lack adequate prevention, protection and monitoring measures are perfect hunting grounds for child predators, who often choose children with disabilities because of their special vulnerability.

Unfortunately, a child victim's ordeal is not always over when the abuse is disclosed. Far too often, children also fall victim to legal loopholes, social services that lack co-ordination or have not been adequately trained. It is therefore important to secure a comprehensive and coherent legal system to reduce the risk of impunity. It

is equally important that the justice system and other professionals dealing with abuse cases protect the child victim and take all the necessary measures to minimise the negative impact that their procedures might have on them. Convicting a perpetrator does not always mean that justice has been done. In cases where images of a child's abuse are not removed quickly from the Internet, the child's recovery process can be seriously undermined.

Child victims of sexual violence have the right to adequate psychological and medical treatment. Sometimes children will also express the desire to change schools or where they live.

Perpetrators of sexual violence are not always adults. Children themselves can exhibit sexually harmful behaviour. An emergent body of research shows that, if properly treated, a child who sexually harms another has a very low level of recidivism. Adequate service provision is the key to identifying this kind of behaviour, assessing the level of risk, setting up intervention measures, all without losing sight of the fact that children who harm others are still children and cannot be treated in the same way as adult sex offenders. Most child perpetrators are themselves victims of abuse or neglect.

The entry into force on 1 July 2010 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse represents a significant advance in preventing sexual violence, protecting children and combating impunity. The convention is firmly anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is the first instrument to treat sexual abuse of children as a crime, irrespective of where or by whom it is committed – at home, in a child care institution, through organised crime networks or the Internet. It is open to ratification by non-European countries as well and requires lawmakers to extend the statutory limitation for bringing child sexual abuse cases to trial, in some cases long after the victim has reached the age of majority. It stresses the importance of data collection and

sex education, and calls for setting up services where children can report abuse. It stipulates that judicial procedures must be child-friendly, taking into account fully the trauma of abuse and the need to safeguard the victims' security, privacy, identity and image. It also calls on countries to encourage the participation of children in designing awareness-raising campaigns and policies to prevent sexual violence.

In 2010, the Council of Europe will launch a campaign on sexual violence against children. One of its aims is to draw governments' attention to the importance of ratifying this convention without delay and to promote the implementation of its measures at local, national and international levels. In view of the difficulties that many countries have in addressing the issue of sexual abuse within the circle of trust, the public awareness-raising materials of the campaign focus on this particular problem. By creating "the under-wear rule" for the campaign, the Council of Europe hopes to alert parents' attention to the issue of sexual abuse and give them advice on how to discuss it with young children. We hope we will be able to count on governments and media support to disseminate this material, in particular the child-friendly TV spot, which will help children recognise, avoid and report abuse.

This book contains a collection of papers addressing some of the many issues that arise when planning action against sexual violence. Identifying its forms, defining concepts and reviewing what scarce data we have in Europe are all good ways to introduce the topic before addressing laws that need to be changed, policies that should be developed and the urgent need for professional training, awareness raising and concerted action.

This publication is intended to inspire legislators, judges, the police, policy makers, social and health services professionals, child-rights advocates, teachers, researchers, parents and caregivers. I trust it will also guide choices made by religious leaders, financial institutions and the business community. Last, but not least, I hope it will

also inspire and motivate the media to contribute to raising awareness of sexual violence against children, thereby helping our societies to shift from a state of denial to one of informed, committed and concerted action.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Part one

The reality of sexual violence against children in Europe and existing legal frameworks

1.
Overview of the nature and extent of child sexual abuse in Europe

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Introduction

The sexual abuse of children occurs throughout Europe, from the Inuit in Greenland (Curtis et al., 2002) to the Balkans (Flander, Cosic and Profaca, 2009) and from Spain (Pereda and Forns, 2007) to the Russian Federation (Dalenberg and Palesh, 2004). In 2003, the Council of Europe published *Child sexual abuse in Europe* (May-Chahal and Herczog, 2003) containing chapters on sexual abuse in particular countries (Romania, Germany, Poland, England), and chapters focusing on legal obstacles to rehabilitation, therapeutic help for victims, working with perpetrators, and telephone helplines. A number of European prevalence studies from the late 1980s to 2000 were examined which varied in terms of method and sampling. The authors made some comments about child sexual abuse in Europe that are still true today:

- "the majority of cases are not known about by official agencies in any European country" (p. 10);

- differing definitions and methodologies make it difficult to suggest overall prevalence figures;

- reliable figures on trafficking are "impossible to obtain" (p. 13); the exploitation of minors through prostitution is widespread "although accurate data on its nature and extent is not available" (p. 13).

In this chapter, we first consider the issue of varying definitions and research methodologies, a prerequisite for interpreting the research findings. Secondly, we summarise recent research findings on prevalence of sexual violence against children in Europe, largely focusing on studies published from 2003 to 2010. Finally, we conclude with recommendations for the future.

Definitions and methodological considerations in child abuse research

In order to contextualise the literature on prevalence a preliminary discussion of the methodological issues pertinent to this field of research is necessary. These methodological issues need to be taken into account in any interpretation of the research presented in this chapter. Such issues include definitions of child sexual abuse, methods of data collection, gender of victims and abusers.

Definitional issues

The Council of Europe defines sexual abuse as:

> a) engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities (this does not apply to consensual sexual activities between minors), and b) engaging in sexual activities with a child where use is made of coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence (Article 18, Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, CETS No. 201).

It is important to outline this definition at the beginning of this chapter as the reader will note that variations in definition is one of the many issues that has plagued the child abuse literature for many years, and not least the prevalence literature. Three key issues of note in this definition are age, specificity of behaviour and consent.

Age. Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years. As the age of consent to sexual behaviour varies from country to country within member states of the Council of Europe, so too do definitions of child sexual abuse. Some studies have only investigated sexual behaviour in children under 12 years of age (Curtis et al., 2002) while others, variously, have explored sexual behaviour below the age of 16, 17 and 18 years. Some studies use a five-year age difference when investigating abuse between minors, but this does not always capture the power imbalance evident in sexually abusive interactions between peers. Curtis et al. (2002) included two questions related to child sexual abuse in their study in Greenland: "Have you ever been forced to have sex?" (p. 61), using under 13 years as the cut off age and "Who was the offender?" (p. 61). This suggests that sexual violence against 14-year-olds was not counted as child abuse, and confining the definition to require force excludes a broad range of sexually abusive behaviours.

Specificity of behaviour. The term "child sexual abuse" is probably the most commonly used term when reference is made to sexual violence against or exploitation of children. Such a definition as outlined above takes account of a broad range of sexually abusive behaviours, the intentionality of this behaviour and the power imbalance in the relationship between the abuser and the victim. As can be seen from the studies reviewed below, there is considerable variation in the definitions used in studies. According to Manly (2005), child maltreatment is difficult to operationalise because of the social stigma attached to the phenomenon; the fact that it often occurs in the privacy of family homes and may result in severe consequences if disclosed. Manly notes that difficulties and variations in defining demarcation lines between abusive and normative behaviours are evident from one locale to another and one country or state to another.

Consent. In addition to considerations of definitions of the actual behaviour that constitutes child sexual abuse, there is the question

of consent. Most studies include the concept of consent and many stipulate age differences, usually that of five years. However, this masks the considerable problem of peer abuse. In a 2002 study in the United Kingdom, between 58% (touching) and 70% (sexual penetration) of respondents who reported abuse described the perpetrator as boyfriend or girlfriend (Cawson et al., 2000).

Differences in sampling

Variations in sampling methods and ensuing sample characteristics have also been identified as possible contributors to the significant differences found in prevalence rates from study to study. Such differences include sample size, age group of respondents (in particular adult versus child samples), gender of sample and whether the sample is drawn from the general population, student groups, child protection agencies or clinical services. Studies relying on adult samples only have found higher prevalence rates than those based on reports from children.

It would appear, at least in some countries, that child abuse rates are in decline. If so, different age cohorts will report variable prevalence rates. McGee et al. (2010:3) examined data from an Irish prevalence study for cohort effects. They found lower rates of experience of child sexual abuse in young adults compared to older adults, suggesting that levels of sexual abuse in childhood may be decreasing. The results showed lower levels of child sexual abuse among those born before 1930. Child abuse was most frequent among those born between 1930 and 1986, "so it may be fair to say that the 1980s heralded the beginning of a decline in child sexual abuse". This is consistent with findings from the US (Jones, Finkelhor and Kopiec, 2001) and Australia (Dunne et al., 2003).

Access to representative samples of populations is a challenge for researchers and much more so in the case of gathering data on children and young people. Schools are generally considered to be a good means of recruiting participants and schools have been used to gather both information on young people themselves (such as

Edgardh and Ormstad, 2000, in Sweden) and on parents (such as Figueiredo et al., 2004, in Portugal). However, Edgardh and Ormstad also included a small sample (n=210) of school non-attendees in their study and found that female non-attendees reported a significantly higher prevalence of sexual abuse.

Child protection services use labels that are subject to evidentiary standards that vary across locales. Manly (2005) notes the limitations of relying on authorities such as child protection services for sampling, suggesting that the behaviour that comes to the attention of authorities may be at the more extreme end of the spectrum of child maltreatment. Significant numbers of unsubstantiated reports of child maltreatment are typically excluded from research studies. Gilbert et al. (2009:69) note that there is frequently a 10-fold difference in the reporting rates of child abuse in community surveys, compared to official figures, and conclude "that only a few children who are maltreated receive official attention". Due to the low reporting rate of sexual crimes to law enforcement agencies and to questions regarding substantiation of children's reports to child protection services, official statistics held within governmental agencies or departments are not considered reliable sources (ISPCAN, 2008). Hussey and colleagues (2005) found no significant differences between outcomes measures for children aged 4 to 8 years with substantiated reports of child maltreatment and children with unsubstantiated reports. In fact, the children with unsubstantiated reports differed on more dimensions from a group of children with no reported maltreatment than did those with substantiated reports. As Manly points out, studies such as this lend support to the argument that many reports are deemed unfounded due to lack of evidence or other systemic issues rather than the absence of child maltreatment.

Not unexpectedly, clinical samples have shown the highest prevalence rates of all. Studies of parents have found especially low prevalence rates.

Methods of data collection

Variations on how data are collected have been cited as reasons for the considerable variation in prevalence rates noted from country to country and from study to study. Responses to survey questionnaires are highly dependent on question construction, with responses varying according to how the questions are asked. This is particularly evident in the case of questions that address sensitive topics such as sexual behaviour (Tourangeau and Smith, 1996). Fricker et al. (2003) examined the effect of context and question type on endorsement rates of childhood sexual abuse. They found that the use of behaviourally specific questions increased the endorsement of child sexual abuse in line with previous research by Finkelhor (1979). Both studies also found that endorsement of sexual victimisation increases with the number of screening questions asked. Response rates in themselves have been shown to influence reported prevalence rates with higher response rates resulting in lower reported prevalence rates (Gorey and Leslie, 1997). Studies using face to face interviews have elicited higher prevalence rates than those relying on questionnaires.

Self-report methods, therefore, according to Manly, raise significant concerns as a reliable method of investigation given that any self report could potentially result in criminal prosecution. Nevertheless, most studies do in fact rely on self reports, though these are predominantly adult studies with the accompanying limitations of retrospective recall. Few studies have attempted to ask children or young people directly. Ethical concerns are an issue – informed consent and the potential to cause distress. However, studies which have looked at the impact of participating in such studies with adult populations indicate that most people report a positive benefit from participating (Newman, Walker and Gefland, 1999; Griffin et al., 2003; McGee et al., 2005).

Delays in disclosure

Reluctance to disclose experiences of abuse and significant delays in disclosure have been found in both child and adult studies (Goodman-

Brown et al. (2003); Smith et al., 2000; McGee et al., 2002; McElvaney, 2008). London et al. (2007) conducted a review of 11 retrospective adult studies and noted a consistent finding that only one third of adults who suffered childhood sexual abuse revealed the abuse to anyone during childhood. McGee et al. found that in their sample of adults who disclosed childhood sexual abuse, 47% had never told anyone prior to the survey. Studies of adults have found delays of up to 50 years (McElvaney, 2002). Lamb and Edgar-Smith (1994) found that the mean age for first disclosure was 18 years, while the mean age of abuse onset for those in the sample was 8 years, resulting in an average delay of 10 years in their sample of adults. In the Collings, Griffiths and Kumalo (2005) study of children who had experienced penetrative abuse, 47% had reported the abuse within 72 hours, 31% from 72 hours to one month after the abuse, and 22% more than a month after the abuse. However, Smith et al. (2000) estimated that 48% of young women in their survey had told no one for more than five years after the event. Clearly, significant delays in disclosing sexual abuse inhibit any attempt to reach an accurate estimate of the extent of the problem of child sexual abuse in society.

Response rates

A further feature of research into child sexual abuse are response rates that are rather low relative to other, less sensitive, topics. For example, Niederberger (2002) reported a response rate of 56% and May-Chahal and Cawson (2005) a response rate of 69%. Non-response rates of 30% are common. Whilst many studies report that non-respondents are similar to respondents (in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic status and so forth), we can never be sure that non-respondents are choosing not to participate due to painful or uncomfortable memories about childhood maltreatment.

Towards common data collection strategies

The Concerted Action on the Prevention of Child Abuse in Europe (CAPCAE, 1997; May-Chahal et al., 2006) co-ordinated a project involving child welfare researchers in Belgium, England, France,

Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain over a two-year period. The aim of the project was to review the effectiveness of prevention strategies in the participating countries. They found significant difficulties in insufficient specificity of data in all countries studied, noting that prevention services in European countries need to collaborate in collecting specific data as a matter of routine. The lack of such specificity, the authors note, results in services basing intervention on unspecified risk that is unacceptable in many European countries and to many parents, thus impeding child prevention strategies.

There have been concerted efforts on the part of researchers to explore the commonalities between monitoring systems of child abuse across various jurisdictions. Fallon et al. (2010) compared three surveillance systems (two from the United States and one from Canada) identifying the strengths and limitations of each approach. They highlight that the United States National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) includes those children not reported to child protection services because it includes reports from sentinels, while the United States National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) both include a "suspected" level of verification that includes those children where abuse has not been substantiated but remains a significant concern.

Although there are continued efforts in North America to create uniform approaches to the measurement of child maltreatment, there remain enormous inconsistencies and variations in definitions used in child welfare legislation and by agency officials and researchers (Runyan et al., 2005). Recent international efforts to develop standardised surveillance systems have been spearheaded by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's Working Group on National Child Maltreatment Data, the progress of which has been documented in a special issue of the journal *Child Abuse & Neglect* (2009, volume 33). In that issue, AlEissa et al. (2009) offer some examples of the systems that have been developed

and the difficulties experienced. In Belgium, there are plans in 2011 to introduce a centralised electronic database which will be available to social workers on teams within the Child and Family Agency and the six Confidential Child Abuse Centres in the country. The unique political context in Belgium makes it difficult to co-ordinate record keeping at a federal level. In England, data is collected on all children about whom there are reported concerns, according to national guidelines for safeguarding children, as is also the case in Ireland. According to AlEissa et al., government statisticians regularly meet with local authority representatives to review the data collection process and its uses. Finally, they describe the reluctance on the part of the German Government to systematically gather data in a standardised way at a national level and the lack of co-ordination between health services and child protection services. Professional fears of the potential harm of stigmatising families, relatively strict data protection laws and the responsibility of communities to guarantee child protection were cited as obstacles to the development of national data collection efforts.

The methodology employed in searching the literature for this chapter involved searches of the empirical literature, searches of governmental departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the field of child abuse, and contacting researchers in the field. The authors had recently completed an international literature review on prevalence commissioned by Unicef/ISPCAN (Lalor and McElvaney, in press) and were able to draw on this paper as a starting point. A search was conducted of the major databases of published studies in the social sciences (Social Sciences Citation Index; PsycINFO) with the following terms: "child abuse in Europe"; "child sexual abuse in Europe"; "prevalence of child abuse in Europe"; "child sexual exploitation in Europe". More general search terms such as "child abuse prevalence" and "child abuse epidemiology" were also used and the results filtered by Council of Europe countries. We also searched Google and Google Scholar using the same search terms, and examined the bibliographies of all articles for further sources. This initial search highlighted a key point of this chapter: the lack of

any serious effort on the part of European governments to fund prevalence studies in Europe. Our search was limited to studies published since 2002. Finkelhor's (1994) review covered studies worldwide from the 1980s and the 1990s. Pereda et al.'s (2009) study covered up to 2007. In addition, the Council of Europe publication *Child sexual abuse in Europe* (May-Chahal and Herczog, 2003) brought together much of the work conducted in Europe up to the late 1990s. We did not confine our search as Pereda et al. did to English speaking articles, thus Lampe's (2002) review, published in German, was helpful in identifying studies not previously included in English published reviews. Our use of material from these initial articles was confined to studies that investigated prevalence. Bibliographies of these articles enabled the authors to use a snowballing approach to gathering further related published articles. The final method involved making contact with researchers in the field, requesting direction to national policies or unpublished works that would be relevant to this chapter.

The nature of child sexual abuse and exploitation in Europe

The sexual abuse of children takes many forms. Most prevalent is abuse by a relative or acquaintance, but it can also take the form of trafficking for sexual exploitation, pornography (including online pornography)[1] and sexual abuse by clergy and other authority figures. Most studies show females report more abusive experiences than males.

Global / regional prevalence of child sexual abuse

A number of studies have reviewed prevalence rates and suggested global or regional prevalence estimates. For example, Finkelhor (1994) found that epidemiological studies in 19 countries produced findings similar to North American research (incidence rates ranging from 7% to 36% for women and 3% to 29% for men).

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1. We have not included images of sexual abuse of children ("child pornography") on the Internet in our review, as it is examined elsewhere in this book.

Lampe (2002) reviewed 24 European studies conducted in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Spain and found overall prevalence rates of 6% to 36% in girls and 1% to 15% in boys under the age of 16.

May-Chahal and Herczog (2003) examined a number of European prevalence studies and reported rates of rape were 0.9% for females and 0.6% for males. When broader definitions of child sexual abuse are used, the rates were 50% for females and 25% for males.

The UN *World Report on Violence Against Children* reports a World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under 18 experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence during 2002 (Ezzati et al., 2004, cited in Pinheiro, 2006). Sexual violence predominantly affected those who had reached puberty or adolescence, and girls were at greater risk of sexual violence than boys.

Pereda et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 65 child sexual abuse prevalence studies from 22 countries.[2] The analysis showed that 7.9% of men (7.4% without outliers) and 19.7% of women (19.2% without outliers) had suffered some form of sexual abuse prior to the age of 18. Overall, the highest prevalence rates for child sexual abuse (34.4%) were reported in Africa (Morocco, Tanzania, South Africa). Europe showed the lowest prevalence rates (9.2%). America, Asia and Oceania have prevalence rates between 10.1% and 23.9%. Of course, these are very general conclusions, based on studies with varying methodologies and sample sizes.

Prevalence of child sexual abuse in Europe

The sexual abuse and exploitation of children occurs in all Council of Europe member countries. A comprehensive list of all studies is

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2. Of the 65 articles, only three were conducted in a Council of Europe member state and published since 2002 – Figueiredo et al. (2004) in Portugal; May-Chahal and Cawson (2005) in the UK; Pereda and Forns (2007) in Spain. This reflects the low levels of research into child abuse in Europe. For example, at the time of writing, "child abuse in Europe" returned 32 results in the Social Sciences Citation Index, whereas "child abuse in the US" returned 247 results.

beyond the scope of this short chapter. Instead, the material below is presented in two sections. Firstly, brief descriptions of studies from across Europe are noted to indicate the geographical spread and the variety of forms of sexual violence against children in Europe. Secondly, studies notable for large samples or probability samples or cross-country comparisons are presented in more detail.

Selected studies indicating range and nature of child sexual abuse in Europe

- An estimated 4 000 children were trafficked to European countries from Albania between 1992 and 2002 (Gjermenia et al., 2008).

- In a sample of 2 880 10-16-year-old Internet users in Croatia, 27% (36% of males and 15% of females) were exposed to sexual content, mostly images of human nudity and sexual activity (Flander et al., 2009). Of those using chat rooms, 28% (35% of girls and 23% of boys) reported being asked inappropriate questions regarding sex in general, private body parts, experience of masturbation, sexual experience, clothes, suggestions implying a meeting or sexual activity.

- In north-west England, a survey of 2 420 children found that 19% reported that they had been the victims of attempted or completed sexual abuse or an abduction incident away from home, consisting of "indecent exposure (40.8% of victims), touching (25.8% of victims), and abduction (23.1% of victims), each occurring on their own; and incidents involving multiple types of act (10.2%)".

- Lay and Papadopoulos (2009) document the sexual maltreatment of unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia) in England. Much of the maltreatment is perpetrated by compatriots.

- In a sample of 226 women surveyed three to eight months after delivery of a healthy child in a university hospital in Germany,

11.5% reported "unwanted sexual contacts with or without physical contact e.g. touching of genital organs, breast, kissing etc." before age 18 (increasing to 14.6% if "not sure" responses are included). A total of 41.6% of the perpetrators were related to the women and 83.3% were well known to the victim (Leeners et al., 2006).

- A convenience sample of 458 high school students (median age 17) in western Bosnia and Herzegovina found 13% of girls and 21% of boys were "sexually abused" before the age of 14. The authors (Sesar, Živčić-Bećirević and Sesar, 2008: 251) speculate that the higher prevalence rate found in boys may be due to the "anonymous nature of the questionnaire, which is better for collecting data on sexual abuse from men".

- A UNICRI (2003) report describes the trafficking of minors and young women for sexual exploitation from Nigeria to Italy. Exact prevalence figures are impossible to achieve, but the report speculated that Nigerians make up the majority of foreign prostitutes in Italy.

- A study of a representative sample of 1 629 10-18 year-olds in Moldova found that 10% of respondents reported "that they have been sexually abused/molested". Also, "One in ten children states that adults involve them in watching pornographic films" (Ministry of Education and Youth and Unicef, 2007).

- Situation analyses of child sexual abuse in residential institutions in Poland, Lithuania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Latvia, Ukraine and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" have recently been conducted as part of a Daphne III programme co-ordinated by Polish NGO Nobody's Children Foundation and are posted at: <http://www.canee.net>. For example, a survey of 495 children/youth in Poland aged 15-18 found 8% reported having been raped or forced to have sexual intercourse in the past year.

- The Vatican has struggled to deal with child sexual abuse by clergy for years. Particularly high profile scandals have occurred

in Ireland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Belgium, although instances occur in most European countries. The issue has received more academic attention in the United States than in Europe (for example, Frawley-O'Dea, 2007; Terry, 2008).

Studies with large samples, or probability samples, or cross-national comparisons[3]

In this section, we shall look in more detail at studies with large samples, or probability samples or cross-national perspectives. First, we examine two cross-national studies, the Baltic Sea regional study on adolescents' sexuality and the CAPCAE project, followed by a Dutch study that employed the US National Incidence Survey methodology of estimating prevalence of child maltreatment. Summaries of main findings of prevalence studies in a range of countries are presented in Table 2 below.

The Baltic Sea regional study on adolescents' sexuality. Mossige, Ainsaar and Svedin (2007) compare findings from the Baltic Sea regional study on adolescents' sexuality (see Table 1 below). Approximately 20 000 young people around age 18 participated. The child sexual abuse element of the study compares data from respondents in Norway, Sweden, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland (n= 11 528).

Table 1: Child sexual abuse in five Baltic states

	Norway N=1966		Sweden N=1571		Lithuania N=1336		Estonia N=285		Poland N=1094		All N=6252	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Indecent exposure	14.5	21.8	8.2	27.1	14.8	21.3	7.7	15.4	21.5	15.9	14.2	21.9
Indecent touch	17.7	33.6	14	56.2	12	31.9	10.1	42.5	23	20.6	16.4	37
Sexual intercourse	6	9.7	3.7	9.2	19.2	13.3	0	7	25.1	8.4	11.9	10

Source: extracted from Mossige et al. (2007, pp. 35-6).

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3. The Balkan Epidemiological Study on Child Abuse and Neglect is currently underway and will survey children and parents from nine countries across the Balkans using the ICAST instruments developed by ISPCAN: <http://www.becan.eu>.

As we can see, Swedish females report high levels of indecent exposure (27%) and indecent touch (56%), relative to neighbouring countries. Experiences of unwanted sexual intercourse among females range from 7% (Estonia) to 13.3% (Lithuania). Overall, this large sample of Baltic youth report that 10% have had unwanted sexual intercourse, 37% have experienced indecent touch and 21.9% report having experienced indecent exposure. Mossige et al. note that these rates are higher than most international studies citing the inclusion of peer abuse as a possible explanatory factor. The higher prevalence rates in men noted in Poland were also found in Sesar et al.'s study in Bosnia and Herzegovina mentioned earlier.

The CAPCAE project. May-Chahal et al. (2006) outline the results of the CAPCAE project, a two-year, nine-country child welfare study in Belgium, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. A total of 2 356 cases, reported to a selection of child protection services between October 1996 and 1997, were collected. This is one of the few studies where comparisons across European countries are made. Overall, child sexual abuse accounted for 34% of the cases reported to this sample of child protection services across nine countries. "Rape/penetration" accounted for 6% of all cases in this study (from lows of 0% in Ireland, Spain and Italy, to a high of 28% of cases in Belgium). "Sexual: contact" accounted for 24% of all cases (from a low of 2% in Ireland to 53% of all cases reported in Belgium). "Sexual: non-contact" accounted for 4% of all cases (with a range of 0% in England and Ireland, to 9% in the Netherlands).

Netherlands. Euser et al. (2010) conducted the first national prevalence study of child abuse and neglect in the Netherlands. It was not a self-report study, but rather relied on "concurrent, standardized observations of more than 1 000 professionals working with children and their families" in order "to obtain reliable overall prevalence estimates of child maltreatment". It is modelled on the National Incidence Survey in the US which is based on "reports of professionals working with children (sentinels) to calculate the prevalence

rates of child abuse and neglect" (p. 6). Data were collected over a three-month period and extrapolated to the calendar year 2005. Results show that an estimated 0.13% (n=4 834) of children were sexually abused in 2005. The authors conclude: "The absence of previous Dutch prevalence studies precludes any conclusions about the stability of the current rate, and repeated monitoring ... is therefore urgently needed" (pp. 15-16).

"Headline" findings on child sexual abuse in Europe

In Table 2, we have presented the main findings of recent (2002-10) European prevalence studies noteworthy for methodological features such as large samples and/or probability samples.

Table 2: "Headline" findings on child sexual abuse in Europe*

Country	Study	Prevalence	Perpetrators
Denmark	Helweg-Larsen and Larsen (2006), n= 5 829 15-16 year-olds (constituted 11% of all 9th grade students in Denmark)	Females: 15.8% "unlawful sexual experiences before age 15" with "someone much older"; 9.2% reported "attempted or completed intercourse". Males: 6.7% "unlawful sexual experiences before age 15" with "someone much older"; 4.2% reported "attempted or completed intercourse".	Most of the unlawful sexual experiences were not perceived as abuse by respondents. 15.8% of girls and 6.7% of boys reported sexual experiences before the age of 15 that were defined as child sexual abuse.
France	King et al. (2006) n=12 256 adults	1.3% (0.7% male; 2.1% female) reported a "forced sexual relationship" ("touching or attempted rape or rape") before age 18.	Not reported

Findings should not be seen as comparisons in prevalence across countries, due to differences in study design, definitions and sampling

Country	Study	Prevalence	Perpetrators
Georgia	Lynch et al. (2007-08), n= 1 050 11-17 year-olds living at home (or in "collective centres") and n=301 11-17 year-olds living in residential child care	9% reported "some form of sexual abuse happening in the home". 17.3% reported sexual abuse.	Most (61%) incidents involved another young person. Most involved being talked to in a sexual way or shown pornography (5% and 3.9% of total sample, respectively). 1.6% said someone "tried to have sex with them" (no breakdown for penetrative abuse). The "vast majority" of incidents involved other children showing pornography or unwanted kissing.
Greenland	Curtis et al. (2002), n=1 393 random sample of adult Inuit population	Females: 7.8% "forced to sex as a child (under age 12)" Males: 3.2% "forced to sex as a child" (under age 12)	Against females: 54% family members (18% fathers) Against males: 21% family members; 53% "more distant person"
Ireland	McGee et al. (2002), n=probability sample of 3 118 adults nationwide	Females: 20.4% contact sexual abuse before age 17, 5.6% penetrative abuse before age 17. Males: 16.2% contact sexual abuse before age 17, 2.7% penetrative abuse before age 17.	Against females: 24% family members; 52% known to victim; 24% strangers Against males: 14% family members; 66% known to victim; 20% strangers
Portugal	Figueiredo et al. (2004) n=932 parents of primary school children	2.6% report behaviours including "inappropriate touching, sexual fondling, intercourse/rape, and exhibitionism/flashing" – no breakdown reported. No difference in gender or age experienced abuse (under or over age 13).	Not reported

Country	Study	Prevalence	Perpetrators
Spain	Pereda and Forns (2007), n=1033 university students (30.7% male).	Overall, 17.9% (15.5% of males and 19% of females) reported contact sexual abuse before age 18. Of these abuse experiences, the majority (83%) occurred before age 13.	
Sweden	Steel and Herlitz (2005), n=random sample of 2 810 adults	13.9% of the women and 5.6% of men reported "unwanted or forced sexual contact during childhood or adolescence" before the age of 18. For 55% of males, and 50% of females, the abuse occurred once. 0.6% of males and 2.9% reported unwanted or forced "intercourse".	Not reported.
	Priebe and Svedin (2009), n=4 339 male and female high school seniors	"Someone has pawed you or touched your body against your will" – 54.7% for females and 15.2% for males. Sexual intercourse "against your will" was reported by 10.5% of females and 4.7% of males. When any form of penetration is included (sexual, oral or anal), this increases to 13.5% for females and 5.5% of males.	Most perpetrators of non-contact abuse (such as indecent exposure) were strangers. For penetrative abuse of females, perpetrators were family members (7.4%), friends/ acquaintances (64.1%) and strangers (28.5%). For males, the equivalent rates are 5.7%, 56.6% and 37.3%, respectively. The authors speculate liberal attitudes towards adolescent sexual behaviour may be a factor; high expectations may make it difficult for a young person to say "no" or for this to be heard.

Country	Study	Prevalence	Perpetrators
Switzerland	Niederberger (2002) n=980 women aged 20-40 years old, general population probability sample	39.8% reported "abuse" (any sexual interaction (excluding those between children) before the age of 16). 14.7% reported "severe abuse" (any form of contact abuse). A breakdown for penetrative abuse is not given.	24.5% of perpetrators belonged to broad family circle, 24.5% were strangers. Most frequently used strategy was "seduction", rather than "force".
Turkey	Alikasifoglu et al. (2006), n=1 955 9th-11th grade females (age range 15-20; mean 16.3 years), randomly selected from schools across Istanbul	11.3% reported that someone touched their private parts in a way they did not like. 4.9% were forced to have sexual intercourse.	92.9% of perpetrators were male; 5.7% were female and 1.4% reported both male and female perpetrators. For sexual intercourse, perpetrators were strangers 35%; boyfriend 23%; acquaintance 12%; family member 1.5%; friend 13.6%; relative 15.2%
United Kingdom	Radford et al. (2010), n=random probability sample of 2 160 0-10 year-olds, 2 275 11-17 year-olds and 1 761 18-24 year-olds	Contact and non-contact child sexual abuse experienced by 1.2% of under-11 year-olds and 16.5% of 11-17 year-olds. Severe (contact) sexual abuse experienced by 0.5% of under-11 year-olds and 4.5% of 11-17 year-olds. Girls face the highest risk.	Very rarely caregivers; most frequently known adult men (sometimes women)

As can be seen from Table 2 and the comments on methodological issues earlier in this chapter, significant differences are evident between studies in age cut off points used and definitions across studies. Also, there is significant variation in the extent of detail given in studies in relation to type of abuse and information regarding the perpetrator. For these reasons, we cannot directly compare across studies. However, we can make some overall observations. Prevalence rates for penetrative child sexual abuse are higher for girls than for boys. For females, rates for penetrative abuse range

from 2.9% to 10.5% (Sweden); 3% (UK); 4.9% (Turkey); 5.6% (Ireland); 7.8% (Greenland). For males, rates for penetrative abuse range from 0.6% and 5.5% (Sweden); 1% (UK); 2.7% (Ireland); and 3.2% (Greenland). When broader definitions of contact sexual abuse are used, prevalence rates for females range from 10% (UK); 11.3% (Turkey); 13.9% (Sweden); 15.8% (Denmark); 19% (Spain); 20.4% (Ireland); 39.8% (Switzerland). For males the following rates for broader forms of child sexual abuse are reported: 6% (UK); 6.7% (Denmark); 15.2% (Sweden); 15.5% (Spain); 16.2% (Ireland).

Table 2 confirms the extent of child sexual abuse across European countries as a significant public health problem requiring urgent attention both nationally within European states and internationally at a regional level.

Recommendations and conclusions

The data gap

There is no co-ordinated centralised measure of the incidence of child sexual abuse in Europe comparable to the US National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS) referred to earlier in this chapter. Instead, independent research studies using a range of definitions and methodologies exist. These vary in size and sophistication. However, even the most comprehensive, using national probability samples, are generally "one-off" and provide only "a snapshot in time". They are rarely repeated using methodologies that would allow comparisons across time, so we have very little data on trends in child abuse.

Interestingly, those studies that use large probability samples are notable for being funded by bodies other than the state. In Ireland, the "Sexual abuse and violence in Ireland report" (SAVI) was part funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, with matching funding from the state. In the United Kingdom, the forthcoming prevalence study was undertaken by a charity, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In eastern Europe, much of the extant research was initiated or funded by Unicef.

The lack of reliable empirical data on the sexual exploitation of children has been recognised for some time. The European Union's STOP II programme for the years 2001-02 was intended to prevent and combat trade in human beings and all forms of sexual exploitation of children, including child pornography. In reporting on a STOP II project (European Data Collection on Sexual Offences against Minors) Vermeulen, Dhont and Dormaels (2001:72) highlighted the need for "an international or European monitoring centre within the field of sexual exploitation of and trade in children".

Figueiredo et al. (2004:672) noted:

> Given differences in family organisation, rural versus urban living, religious affiliation and socioeconomic status in different areas of Europe, the widespread investigation of rates of childhood and adolescent abuse is required to understand both the different contexts of such abuse and its lasting ill-effects in different cultures and community settings.

In the "United Nations study on violence against children" Pinheiro (2006:27) recommended:

> that States improve data collection and information systems in order to identify vulnerable subgroups, inform policy and programming at all levels, and track progress towards the goal of preventing violence against children. [and]… develop a national research agenda on violence against children across settings where violence occurs.

CAHRV (2007:28) noted that "Childhood violence prevalence research is still underdeveloped in Europe". Unicef's (2007) overview of child well-being in economically advanced countries relied exclusively on mortality rates to reflect child safety, noting the lack of common definitions and research methodologies, inconsistencies between countries in the classification and reporting of child abuse as the reason for the omission of data in relation to the level of child abuse and neglect in each nation when discussing child safety standards.

So, there have been numerous calls for a co-ordinated approach to gathering data on child abuse prevalence in Europe. Euser et al. (2010:16) conclude:

> ... a European initiative is needed to co-ordinate child maltreatment prevalence studies in the various countries to compare the effects of country-specific policies on child maltreatment. We hope that these efforts will contribute to the ultimate goal: a childhood free of abuse and neglect for all children.

It is important that Council of Europe member states have accurate estimates of the prevalence of child sexual abuse. Reliable data are essential to inform society about the nature and prevalence of child abuse and to challenge those who deny or minimise the scale of the problem. In many regions, the secrecy and silence surrounding child abuse means that it is not widely recognised, which undermines efforts at prevention, reporting and treatment. For example, in Moldova "only 10% of parents surveyed admit that it [child sexual abuse] exists in the country at all and just 5% recognise it as existing in their community" (Ministry of Education and Youth and Unicef, 2007:39).

Measuring child maltreatment

Numerous measures exist for collecting prevalence data on child maltreatment. Given the data gap on child abuse in Europe, the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tools Retrospective version (ICAST-R) is of note. The ICAST-R instrument has been designed to be cross-culturally robust and was designed by an ethnically and linguistically diverse group of international child protection experts. It is "based on consensus from international experts, translates clearly and has satisfactory properties for adoption as a survey tool to estimate prevalence and describe perpetrators and other contextual aspects of child abuse" (Dunne et al., 2009).

It would be useful to consider its use across Council of Europe countries, allowing cross-national comparisons for the first time. With just 15 core items, this is a short questionnaire, and has the advantage of being specifically designed to be useful across languages and cultures.

A model for multi-country studies already exists in the form of the WHO multi-country study involving 24 000 survey respondents in 10 countries (García-Moreno et al., 2005). Data were collected on child sexual abuse (defined as someone touching them sexually, or making them do something sexual they did not want to, before the age of 15) and the identity of perpetrators. Considerable variation existed across research settings, providing information on possible protective and risk factors.

This WHO multi-country study is a useful model for a comparable study in Europe.

Conclusion

It is impossible to know the true incidence or prevalence of child sexual abuse in Europe (or anywhere else). Victims rarely disclose to official sources. Prevalence studies must grapple with low participation rates and confounding definitional and methodological variations. However, well-designed studies, with large general population probability samples can give us a proxy estimate of sexual violence against children sufficient for policy making, prevention measures and therapeutic interventions. Such measures are amplified in utility if they are carried out regularly using uniform measures and sampling strategies.

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2.
The United Nations legislative framework for the protection of children from sexual violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation

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The protection of children from sexual exploitation has long been an area of particular concern for the international community. As a result, significant standards have been established over recent years to ensure children's protection from sexual abuse and from slavery-like practices, including sale, prostitution and pornography. These concerns have also figured prominently on the agenda of human rights bodies and mechanisms.

Building upon important treaties drawn up by the League of Nations, including the 1926 Slavery Convention, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted in 1949 the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.[4]

The protection of human rights violations that fall within the broad notion of slavery as given special attention by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as by core human rights treaties, including the international covenants on human rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

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4. The convention which also had a section on the protection of migrant women and children built on, *inter alia*, the International Agreements of 18 May 1904 and of 4 May 1910 for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic later amended by the Protocol approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 3 December 1948, and the International Convention of 30 September 1921 for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children.

Women, and most importantly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The protection of children from all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, is a core dimension of these treaties and of the agenda of the treaty bodies[5] established to supervise their implementation.

Pursuing a similar concern, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights[6] established a working group on slavery in 1974, which considered severe forms of exploitation of children, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking. The working group promoted the development of a Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, adopted by the commission in 1992.

As an expression of its deep commitment to fight any form of sexual exploitation of children, the commission (UN, 1990a) also appointed in 1990 a Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to:

- raise awareness of these child rights violations;

- conduct national and regional workshops:

- undertake fact-finding missions to assess trends:

- help prevent and tackle the root causes of the sexual exploitation of children.

In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna Declaration, 1993) echoed these concerns, calling for the strengthening of national and international mechanisms and programmes to combat children's rights violations and to ensure the protection of children economically and sexually exploited, including through child pornography, child prostitution or sale of organs, and other forms of sexual abuse.

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5. This includes the Committee on the Rights of the Child foreseen by Article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
6. The commission was created in 1946 as the main UN human rights body; in 2006 it was replaced by the current Human Rights Council.

These important developments and the growing attention paid by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to these serious human rights violations laid the foundation for the 1995 UN General Assembly resolution calling for the drafting of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in co-operation with the committee and the special rapporteur. The protocol was adopted by the assembly in 2000 and entered into force in 2002 (UN, 2000).

In 1996, the Government of Sweden hosted the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, jointly organised with Unicef and ECPAT International, and in which 122 governments participated. The congress adopted a strategic agenda for action which was framed by the legal obligations undertaken upon the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other legal commitments to protect children. The agenda for action became a critical reference for the work of the CRC and for states parties' actions.

Two subsequent world congresses were later held, in Yokohama in 2001 and in Rio de Janeiro in 2008. They have helped to further refine the implementation process of international standards in this area, while promoting steady attention to the prevention of these child rights violations, to the protection, recovery and reintegration of child victims, and to the participation of children and adolescents in actions designed to address these phenomena. The most recent world congress, hosted by the Government of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro, identified in addition crucial time bound targets to leverage progress in strategic areas where change remains urgent. This includes putting in place by 2013:

- concrete mechanisms and processes to facilitate co-ordination at national, regional and international levels for enhanced co-operation amongst stakeholders;

- an effective and accessible system for reporting;

- follow-up and support for child victims of sexual exploitation;

- independent child rights institutions to monitor actions taken for the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children and the protection of victims.

This brief overview illustrates the significant and intense policy and standard-setting developments targeting the protection of children from sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, and which have gained a particularly high profile on the international policy agenda since the late 1980s.

The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the UN General Assembly in November 1989 was a key step in this direction. The provisions of the convention:

- provide crucial references for legislative, policy and other measures to prevent and address the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in its different forms;

- promote respect for the dignity of the child at all times;

- fight inequity and discrimination and the marginalisation of the most vulnerable;

- envisage children as agents of change rather than passive recipients of care and assistance.

Breaking new ground, the convention also recognises the critical importance of building a culture of respect for children's rights, within which children need to play a central role. With this in mind, states are required to make the principles and provisions of the convention widely known to children, as well as to adults (Article 42).

In the area of the sexual exploitation of children, the convention highlights the importance of combating child rights violations, together with the need to invest in prevention and to ensure the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims in an environment that fosters the health, self respect and dignity of the child.

This normative foundation provides a sound basis for states' detailed actions aiming at children's effective protection, including from:

- inducement or coercion to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;

- exploitative use in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices and in pornographic performances and materials;

- exploitation through the sale and traffic in children for any purpose or in any form;

- any other form of exploitation that may be prejudicial to any aspects of a child's welfare.

While recognising the critical importance of national action, the convention equally acknowledges the transnational nature of these phenomena, and the need for bilateral and multilateral co-operation to fight impunity and secure children's development in a safe and protective environment.

The overall importance of the standards set forth by the convention led to its entry into force in September 1990 in an unprecedented manner, that is only nine months after its formal adoption. Coinciding with its entry into force, heads of state and government participating in the 1990 World Summit for Children (UN, 1990b) expressed a strong commitment to work towards the earliest possible ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The first years of the CRC's work confirmed the critical relevance of protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation, which were perceived as hidden and clandestine in nature and associated with public apathy and indifference. To overcome this situation, the committee decided to devote a thematic debate to the topic in 1993. The discussion was critical to reiterate the indivisibility and inter-relationship of children's rights, all of them inherent to the human dignity of the child, as well as to call for a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to child protection from exploitation. The debate also led to the adoption of important recommendations, which called for steady efforts in the promotion of public information, education

and capacity-building on the rights of the child, breaking the silence surrounding these issues, and for urgent legislative, policy and other measures to ensure children's effective protection.

On this occasion, the committee emphasised key principles which still maintain their crucial relevance today (CRC, 1994). These include:

- the need to protect the child as a victim, while ensuring the special protection of those at risk; and

- the absolute prohibition of activities that are contrary to human values and dignity; that expose children to discrimination and jeopardise child development and education; that involve cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; or involve the sale of children or situations of servitude.

These principles influenced the development of new standards, including the International Labour Organization Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. A few years later these principles were given renewed attention with the development of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children which addressed all forms of violence in all settings, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was clear in its strong condemnation as well as in its call for the protection of children against all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, in time of peace and in time of war.

The convention established a new threshold for the realisation of children's rights. It established states' overall accountability for the protection of all children below the age of 18 and it bridged human rights and humanitarian law to emphasise the responsibility to safeguard the human rights of children at all times. It also encouraged states to apply the most conducive norms for the realisation of children's rights, so that the minimum standards of the conven-

tion could be systematically enhanced and the best interests of the child upheld in all circumstances.

The convention's strong normative framework was further complemented and reinforced with the adoption of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

The provisions of the protocol are critical to the safeguard of children's rights. They provide states with strategic guidance for implementation and they help to narrow the gap between the standards adopted by the international community and the reality on the ground. They establish states' responsibility to realise children's rights and protect them from violence and exploitation, while also acknowledging the role of non-state actors, including the private sector, in pursuing these aims. The provisions also identify protection measures, but further stress the critical role of prevention, and in an increasing globalising world, the imperative of promoting cross-border co-operation.

Moreover, the protocol calls on legislative reforms to prohibit and criminalise the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to safeguard the rights of child victims and to promote their recovery and reintegration. It requires child-sensitive services and well-trained staff for children to seek counselling and advice and report on violations of their rights without fear of reprisal.

To overcome the clandestine and transnational nature of these crimes and fight impunity within and across borders, the protocol promotes international co-operation and mutual assistance between judicial bodies and law enforcement agencies. And to break the cycle of child marginalisation and exploitation, it underscores the role of prevention, and promotes the association of civil society and the involvement of children and adolescents in awareness raising, information and education initiatives, in order to leverage support for the protection of children from sale and sexual exploitation.

The year 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 10th anniversary of the adoption of its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.[7] The convention remains the most widely ratified human rights treaty, and by July 2010 the optional protocol had been ratified by 137 countries. The ratification and implementation of these treaties remain critical for the safeguard of children's rights and their effective protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.

A commemoration is always a time of celebration. But it is also a moment of reflection – reflection on the important steps promoted and progress achieved in the protection of children's rights. But it is also a reflection on the critical areas where, in spite of a widely shared commitment, challenges have persisted and opportunities for change can no longer be missed.

Over the past few years, the international community has reaffirmed commitments to promote the ratification of the optional protocol and to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation. Worldwide advocacy, awareness raising and social mobilisation initiatives have been promoted by civil society organisations, by children and young people, and also by the private sector to break the silence around these child rights violations and press for policy action to prevent children's abuse and exploitation. These commitments need to be translated into action. And it is important to be reminded of the many challenges that persist and of the urgency to act.

Every year, millions of children continue to be sold into marriage, illegal adoption, forced labour, prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation. Largely invisible, stigmatised by society, marginalised by their families, still too often criminalised and deprived of liberty, they are not only victims of exploitation, but also of silence and indifference. They remain a low priority on the policy agenda, are by-

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7. The optional protocols were adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/RES/54/263) on 25 May 2000.

passed by social investment, ignored by statistical information and excluded from the public debate. For these millions of children, the time for celebration has not yet arrived. We feel pressured by the urgency of their cause and the opportunity to make a difference.

With universal ratification of the convention and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation can become a global priority, not only as a moral concern but as a legal imperative. With universal ratification there will be a shared normative foundation to guide concerted efforts, to prevent any loophole in child protection systems and to fight impunity within and across borders. With universal ratification, there will be no safe haven for perpetrators.

Today, no one would question the dramatic and unacceptable nature of the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and child abuse as serious child rights violations. These realities have gained visibility within and across nations, and they have generated increasing policy action to prevent and address them. At the same time, what has been achieved so far still has limited capacity to ensure the effective protection of children. Stronger efforts are required to move forward in our endeavours.

With the sound normative foundation provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocol and with the important lessons we have learnt from the implementation of these children's rights standards, there is a critical foundation to accelerate progress in the steps ahead. Strong child protection systems can be built and children given a true opportunity to develop to their potential without the risk of violence, abuse and exploitation in any of its forms.

The agenda may seem demanding and daunting, but with strong political will, change is clearly within reach.

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3.
Sexual violence against children – The European legislative framework and outline of Council of Europe conventions and European Union policy

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The European regulatory framework to combat sexual violence against children consists of a range of conventions adopted since the year 2000, which need to be seen in conjunction with other, more wide-ranging instruments, notably those relating to judicial co-operation. It is therefore a question of examining several instruments, which together form a complex and diverse, though cohesive, framework. Invariably preceded by recommendations,[8] or even universal conventions in some cases,[9] this regulatory framework essentially rests on three conventions which all possess common characteristics: the Convention on Cybercrime (23 November 2001), the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (16 May 2005) and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (25 October 2007). With its active efforts in the fields of judicial co-operation, harmonisation of criminal law and protection of children and victims of abuse, the European Union is doing much to strengthen this regional framework.

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8. Such as Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2001)16 on the protection of children against sexual exploitation.
9. Principally the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), and the International Labour Organization convention concerning the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour.

Common features of the Council of Europe conventions

The Council of Europe conventions (referred to here as the European conventions) have three features in common. First, they are comprehensive instruments which together address all the various aspects of the fight against certain forms of crime, and cover not only criminal law issues but also those of prevention and assistance to victims. Rather more subtle in the case of the Convention on Cybercrime, this characteristic is very pronounced in the other two conventions, whose aims and objectives lend themselves more naturally to such an approach. Moreover, the introduction of provisions on prevention and assistance to victims is strongly supported by the Council of Europe's experience in the human rights field.

Second, the conventions are open-ended in that they are not reserved exclusively for Council of Europe member states. As well as the European Community and the states allowed to participate in the negotiation process, any state which so requests can accede, provided it meets certain conditions. Specific procedures exist for this purpose. Such openness reflects the desire to give the conventions a universal character, particularly in the light of the values embodied therein.

Third, the conventions are dynamic instruments, designed to keep pace with developments in crime and ways of tackling it. They accordingly introduce binding procedures to enable parties' compliance with their obligations to be verified and the identification of common interpretations and "good practice". Although they vary from one convention to another, these monitoring procedures essentially rest on a body known as the Conference of Parties, sometimes supported by a group of experts such as Greta, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

General philosophy of the European conventions

Material scope and criminal law provisions

Designed first and foremost as criminal law instruments, the European conventions identify a range of acts that the parties agree to treat as criminal offences. Reflecting a consensus on core values, such harmonisation of criminal law makes for better co-operation in judicial matters, in so far as it fulfils the traditional requirements relating to dual criminality.

Specific provisions extend the scope of these provisions to the criminalisation of "aiding or abetting" the commission of offences and the "attempt" to commit offences. The conventions, however, do not define these concepts, which have never been harmonised in international criminal law. Furthermore, the scope of the requirement to criminalise "attempted" offences is often limited, or liable to be limited, by the possibility of making reservations, for it is sometimes difficult to treat mere preparatory acts or conduct that occurs too far in advance of the commission of an offence as criminal.

The Convention on Cybercrime deals only marginally with the sexual exploitation of children. Drafted in response to the growth of information technologies, which has spawned new forms of crime and made it easier to commit certain offences, this convention covers two areas: offences which are inherently computer crimes and the use of information networks or systems for the purpose of committing conventional offences, for example relating to child pornography.

The scope and extent of the obligations to criminalise certain acts is closely related to the definitions and the possibilities for making reservations. In the case of child pornography, the convention requires parties to establish as criminal offences:

- producing child pornography for the purpose of its distribution through a computer system;

- distributing or transmitting, and also offering or making available (for example by placing online or creating paedophile sites) child pornography through a computer system;

- procuring child pornography through a computer system for one-self or for another person;

- possessing child pornography in a computer system or on a computer-data storage medium.

Such conduct must be treated as a criminal offence whenever it is committed "without right", thereby implying that there are some circumstances in which it may be "allowed", for example in order to satisfy the requirements of freedom of thought, freedom of expression and the right to respect for private life, or to provide a defence in respect of conduct related to "pornographic material" having an artistic, medical or scientific merit.

As regards definitions, the convention allows the parties some latitude, particularly as it does not define what constitutes "pornographic material" or "sexually explicit conduct".[10] It follows that material having an artistic, medical or scientific merit, for example, may be considered not to be pornographic. Secondly, it defines what is meant by "computer system", favouring flexible terms that can be applied as extensively as possible to take account of rapid developments in technology. It also defines the term "minor" as all persons under the age of 18.

Most importantly, the convention provides a definition of the term "child pornography", which includes materials that visually depict:

- a minor engaged in "sexually explicit conduct" (which effectively covers sexual abuse of a real child);

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10. It was admittedly intended, however, to cover all conduct, real or simulated, showing the different types of sexual intercourse, either between minors, or between an adult and a minor, of the same or opposite sex, or lascivious exhibition of the genitals or the pubic area of a minor.

- pornographic images which depict a person appearing to be a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct;

- "realistic" images representing a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, which covers situations where no actual child is involved, merely depictions (such as pictures which have been altered or even generated entirely by computer).

Lastly, as well as "attempt" to commit an offence, the convention provides for some possibilities to make reservations, with regard to the term "minor" (parties may set an age limit lower than 18 years, but not lower than 16 years), the criminalisation of conduct consisting of "possessing" child pornography, "procuring child pornography for oneself or for another person", and certain elements of the definition of child pornography (only material that depicts children engaged in sexually explicit conduct cannot be excluded).

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings requires parties to establish the following conduct as criminal offences: *(1)* "trafficking in human beings", *(2)* knowingly using the services of a victim (in an effort to discourage demand by making it possible to prosecute "the client" if he or she knows – or is aware – that the person whom he or she is using (to perform some service or other) is a victim of trafficking), *(3)* certain acts relating to travel or identity documents when committed to allow trafficking in human beings[11] (thereby making it possible to punish the actions of criminal gangs in trafficking victims through countries and into the countries where they will be exploited).

Here again the scope and extent of these obligations hinges on definitions. In the case of trafficking in human beings, the convention borrows the definition used in the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons,

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11. Namely, forging a travel or identity document, procuring or providing such a document and retaining, removing, concealing, damaging or destroying a travel or identity document of another person.

especially women and children, which the convention builds on and reinforces. Trafficking in human beings is considered here to consist in a combination of three basic components:

- the performance of certain actions: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons";

- the use of certain exhaustively listed means: "the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person";

- the pursuit of an objective, namely the "exploitation" of the person concerned. Within the meaning of the convention, exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal or organs. The convention does not specify what is covered by these various forms of exploitation, not least because states have differing views on the exploitation of the voluntary prostitution of others.

This definition has been widened in one notable respect: where the person in question is a child (that is within the meaning of the convention, any person under 18 years of age), his or her recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt for the purpose of exploitation is to be regarded as "trafficking in human beings" even if it does not involve any of the means listed under the second indent.

The first universal instrument to address this subject, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, requires parties to criminalise various acts grouped together under the terms "sexual abuse" and "sexual exploitation", between which no distinction was intended by the negotiators and which cannot be confined solely to offences committed for commercial purposes. These acts cover:

- *"sexual abuse"*, stricto sensu, which includes engaging in "sexual activities" with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities, or where use is made of coercion, force or threats, or abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, or of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child. The term "sexual activities" is not defined, thus allowing the parties some degree of freedom;

- *offences concerning child prostitution*, which include "recruiting" or "coercing" a child into prostitution, "causing" him or her to participate in prostitution, "profiting from" or otherwise "exploiting" him or her for such purposes, and "having recourse" to child prostitution. The convention provides a definition of child prostitution whereby the use of a child in prostitution can be occasional and any kind of remuneration or benefit, whether given or promised, suffices in order to meet the legal requirements of the offence;

- *offences concerning child pornography*, which require parties to criminalise the same acts as those referred to in the Convention on Cybercrime, but without confining them to offences committed "by the use of a computer system". In a new move, the convention also requires parties to treat as a criminal offence "knowingly obtaining access", through information and communication technologies, to child pornography, even if the material is not downloaded or recorded on some device or other. Based on the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the definition of "child pornography", which complements these provisions, covers any visual depiction of a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child's sexual organs "for primarily sexual purposes" and excludes, for example, material having an artistic, medical or scientific merit. The convention does not, however, define the term "sexually explicit conduct", which is left to the discretion of the parties. There is some scope for parties to make reservations, firstly as regards knowingly obtaining access to child pornography and,

secondly, as regards the production or possession of images which consist entirely of simulated representations or realistic images of a child who does not exist in reality, or which involve children who have reached the legal age for sexual activities, where the images are produced and possessed by them with their consent and solely for their own private use.

- *offences concerning the participation of a child in porno-graphic performances*, which include "the organisation" of por-nographic performances involving children, "recruiting" a child for such purposes, "coercing" or "causing" a child to participate in such performances, "profiting from" or otherwise "exploiting" a child for such purposes, and "knowingly attending" such perform-ances (in the case of this last offence, however, parties may choose to apply the relevant provisions only in cases where the children involved in the pornographic performances have been "recruited" or "coerced"). Although it is left to the parties to decide what con-stitutes "pornographic performances", for example having regard to the public or private, or commercial or non-commercial nature of the performance, the convention is intended to deal essentially with organised live performances showing children engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

- *corruption of children*, which is intended to address the act of causing a child below the legal age for sexual activities to witness sexual abuse of other children or adults or sexual activities.

- *solicitation of children for sexual purposes ("grooming")*, which requires parties to criminalise the intentional proposal, through information and communication technologies, of an adult to meet a child who has not reached the legal age for sexual activities, for the purpose of subjecting him or her to sexual abuse or producing child pornography. Requiring that the proposal to meet be "followed by material acts leading to such a meeting", this ground-breaking provision can be used to punish conduct consist-ing in making contact with children, usually over the Internet, in order to expose them gradually to sexually explicit material.

Ancillary criminal law provisions

Like other criminal law conventions, the European conventions also contain a number of ancillary provisions, which are discussed below.

Jurisdiction criteria. The conventions lay down the criteria that parties must introduce into their national law to enable them to prosecute the offences referred to in the conventions. These criteria cover the traditional principles of "territoriality" (offences committed on their territory or in similar circumstances, specifically on board ships or aircraft registered in the state concerned) and the "nationality" of the perpetrator, and even in some cases the victim. Except in the case of the territoriality rule, reservations are sometimes possible. The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse is the one with the widest criteria, as it also requires the perpetrator and the victim to have their "habitual residence" in the territory of the state concerned, although these provisions are optional or may be the subject of a reservation. To make it easier to combat "sex tourism", the text also contains provisions designed to remove the usual barriers to prosecuting the most serious offences committed abroad, whether a substantive requirement (dual criminal liability) or a procedural one (complaint from the victim or denunciation from the authorities of the state in which the offence took place). Because of its exceptional nature, however, removal of the requirement for dual criminal liability may form the subject of a reservation, limiting its scope to cases of "sex tourism" stricto sensu.

Corporate liability. Employing similar wording, the conventions require the parties to introduce provisions in their national law so that legal entities can, in certain circumstances, be held liable for offences committed on their behalf by a person in a leading position in those entities or where such a person fails to supervise or check on an employee or agent of the entity, thus enabling them to commit an offence. In view of the wide range of national legal traditions in this area, it is expressly provided that such liability need not necessarily be criminal, but may be civil or administrative.

Type and level of penalties. The conventions require the parties to introduce "effective, proportionate and dissuasive" sanctions including, in the case of individuals, prison sentences (sometimes with the added stipulation that these must be capable of giving rise to extradition) and, in the case of legal entities, monetary sanctions. The conventions may also require the parties to introduce other penalties, such as confiscation, closure of the establishment used to commit the offence and temporary or permanent denial of the right to exercise the activity in the course of which the offence was committed. The conventions on trafficking in human beings and the protection of children against sexual abuse likewise require parties to provide for the possibility of imposing more severe penalties in certain established circumstances, such as: endangerment of the victim; where the offence was committed against a minor or a particularly vulnerable victim; where the offence seriously damaged the physical or mental health of the victim; where the perpetrator was a public official; where recourse was had to acts of torture or serious violence; where the offence was committed by a member of the child's family or a person close to the child; where the offence involved more than one perpetrator; or where the offence was committed by a criminal organisation, and so forth. The very flexible wording of these provisions is intended to take account of states' legal traditions, not all of which recognise aggravating circumstances. In contrast, the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings also requires the parties to provide for the possibility of not punishing victims in certain circumstances, especially where they have been compelled to engage in unlawful activities.

Co-operation in the criminal justice field. The importance of the conventions with regard to international criminal law is evidenced by the inclusion of provisions to facilitate and expedite co-operation between states in matters relating to investigations and prosecutions, covering the traditional areas of mutual assistance (gathering evidence) and extradition (arrest and surrender of persons being prosecuted or convicted). These provisions, some of which are more detailed than others depending on the convention, have one point

in common: they are all complementary and subsidiary in nature. The fact is that the Council of Europe already has a number of conventions on judicial co-operation in criminal matters that apply to all criminal offences,[12] so only provisions that lay down basic principles (such as the principle that co-operation is to be provided "to the widest extent possible") or define specific forms of co-operation, made necessary by the aims of the instrument in question, have been included. The conventions can nevertheless provide a basis for co-operation between states in cases where no other instrument exists between them, in particular with states that are not members of the Council of Europe. The Convention on Cybercrime is the one that has the most extensive rules in this area: it seeks to ease and speed up arrangements for the transfer and processing of requests for mutual assistance, notably as regards possible reasons for refusal, and requires the parties to introduce rules enabling them to provide the specific forms of co-operation it describes.

Other provisions – procedural law, prevention and assistance to victims

Despite their over-arching nature, the general philosophy of the three conventions and the provisions they contain can differ widely.

Procedural law provisions. The Convention on Cybercrime, which focuses mainly on the punitive aspect, defines the powers necessary for the investigation and prosecution of offences related to computers, committed by means of a computer system or for which evidence relevant to the offences exists in electronic form, with a view to meeting the specific needs arising from the difficulty of identifying the perpetrator of an offence and from the volatility of electronic data. Although there is some scope for making reservations, the convention accordingly contains provisions on the expedited preservation

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12. Namely the European Convention on Extradition (ETS No. 24), the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (ETS No. 30), their additional protocols (ETS Nos. 86, 98, 99, 182) and the Convention on the Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime (ETS No. 141).

of stored computer data, expedited preservation and partial disclosure of traffic data, search and seizure of stored computer data, real-time collection of traffic data and interception of content data.

The other two conventions also contain procedural provisions, but here the primary goal is victim protection. They allow offences to be prosecuted without any need for a complaint by the victim, allow victims to file complaints in their states of residence, allow certain non-governmental organisations and associations to assist and support victims, and allow court proceedings to be modified in order to protect the victim's private life, identity and safety.

To the same end, the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse contains specific provisions, such as:

• the adoption of specific investigative and criminal procedure measures ensuring that the needs of the child are taken into account (for example in the field of privacy protection and hearings with children: limiting the number of successive interviews with children because they can have a traumatising effect, videotaping interviews, having children interviewed by the same people in a reassuring setting, possibility of in camera hearings and videoconferencing in court proceedings, and so forth);

• special training for personnel involved in proceedings;

• children's right to be kept informed of the progress of proceedings, the possibility for victims of being heard, of supplying evidence, of having their privacy protected, and of being protected against any risk of retaliation and repeat victimisation owing to the constraints of criminal procedure, right to receive free legal aid, and so forth;

• limitation period to begin when the child reaches majority, in the case of the most serious offences.

Prevention and assistance measures. The trafficking convention and the sexual abuse convention have a similar philosophy and contain important provisions relating to prevention and assistance to

victims, which there is no need to list here, and to which the co-operation arrangements apply by extension.

Focusing on human rights, the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings provides a comprehensive legal framework for the protection of victims and witnesses, including provisions relating to the identification, assistance, compensation, protection of victims' identity and private life, their repatriation or return, and the provision of specialised services. It also includes specific provisions relating to victims who are present in the country illegally or who have short-term residence permits (provision of a recovery and reflection period, issuance of residence permits, and so forth). With regard to prevention, the convention encourages the development of programmes for persons vulnerable to trafficking and for relevant professionals, and requires parties to adopt measures designed to discourage demand as regards sexual exploitation, such as introducing prevention and border detection measures and ensuring the quality and security of travel and identity documents.

Reflecting the need for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach, the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, which specifically addresses the needs that exist in these areas, likewise combines prevention, victim assistance and provisions relating to the setting-up of specialised authorities and co-ordinating bodies, such as independent institutions to promote and protect the rights of the child.

On the subject of prevention, it lays down obligations concerning for example:

- the recruitment, training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children;

- education for children, including awareness raising on the safe use of the Internet;

- the development of preventive intervention programmes or measures for perpetrators of sexual offences against children, whether

they have been convicted or charged, or even if no offence has been committed or reported to the authorities (based on the principle of self-referral or free and informed consent, such programmes and measures must be accessible at all stages of the proceedings, inside and outside prison);

- awareness raising of the general public (awareness campaigns, prohibition of any advertisement of the offences described in the convention);

- participation of children, the private sector, the media and civil society in the design and development of preventive measures, with the focus on the information and communication technologies sector, the travel and tourism industry and the finance and banking sectors.

As regards protective measures and assistance to victims, the convention lays down rules designed to:

- make it easier for professionals who are normally bound by professional secrecy rules (such as medical staff) and any person who knows about or suspects sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of a child to report their concerns or suspicions;

- develop assistance services, such as telephone or Internet helplines to provide advice to callers;

- facilitate their recovery (emergency treatment, psycho-social assistance, possibility of removing the alleged perpetrator or the victim if the offences were committed in the home, and so forth).

European Union policy

Since the Tampere European Council in 1999, the European Union has developed numerous initiatives in the field of substantive criminal law and co-operation in criminal matters, not least in order to harmonise member states' legislation and improve co-operation between judicial authorities. Combating the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children is an integral part of the EU's action and

policy in the criminal justice field. In addition, other measures seek to enhance the prevention of offences against children, including sexual abuse. Particular mention should be made here of the efforts made since 2007 to encourage member states to adopt mechanisms for alerting the general public ("abduction alert" mechanisms) when children are abducted or go missing in circumstances that endanger their lives or safety. Thus, thanks to European Commission guidelines based on the national experience of certain member states, common criteria can be proposed and procedures agreed for raising the alarm in several neighbouring member states at once, whenever child abduction occurs in a border area.

As regards judicial co-operation, the instruments adopted are not designed specifically to combat child sexual abuse but can be used to facilitate, expedite and improve co-operation in this area. Such is the case with the new co-operation instruments provided by the European Judicial Network and the Eurojust unit, the European Union Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 29 May 2000 and its additional protocol of 16 October 2001 and the instruments designed to facilitate the exchange of information between member states on the basis of the "availability" principle, notably between national law enforcement agencies. Special mention should be made, however, of the instruments for implementing the principle of "mutual recognition", of which the "European arrest warrant" remains an iconic example. Since 2002, the use of this principle has gradually widened to encompass the whole area of judicial co-operation, whether it involves surrendering suspects or convicted persons, preserving and gathering evidence, implementing pre- and post-trial supervision measures, or executing sentences (custodial sentences, financial penalties, confiscation orders). One of the key elements of added value provided by these instruments lies in the removal of dual criminality for certain acts listed under categories of offences, which include notably "trafficking in human beings" and "the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography".

As regards harmonising criminal law, the instruments adopted cover numerous areas, which there is no need to list here. Some do nevertheless deserve a special mention, given the subject matter of this study. They include framework decision 2002/629/JHA of 19 July 2002 on combating trafficking in human beings, framework decision 2004/68/JHA of 22 December 2003 on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (which provide common definitions, charges and penalties), framework decision 2001/220/JHA of 15 March 2001 on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (which establishes certain minimum rights for victims in criminal proceedings and special protection measures) and the directive of 15 March 2006 on the retention of communications traffic data, which is designed to make it easier to gather evidence of offences committed using information technologies. More specifically, framework decision 2004/68/JHA requires member states to criminalise offences concerning sexual exploitation of children (procuring, sexual abuse, coercing a child into participating in pornographic performances) and child pornography (production, distribution, supply, possession, etc.), and to introduce into their national law harmonised criminal penalties, as well as rules on the criminal liability of legal entities and jurisdiction.

These last two instruments are currently being revised. Anxious to incorporate the progress resulting from the latest European conventions into EU law, the Commission tabled two draft framework decisions, which were recast as draft directives following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. This policy of incorporating the Council of Europe's achievements into EU law has a number of merits: it paves the way for additional progress, not least by reducing the scope for reservations and harmonising the levels of sanctions imposed, and ensures heightened scrutiny of the transposition of the instruments by member states, thanks to the powers vested in the Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

Regarding the proposal for a directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims, the EU Council

agreed on a general approach at its meeting on 4 June 2010. The proposal widens the definition of trafficking to include new forms of exploitation (including exploitation for the purposes of begging – or other criminal activities), further harmonises the penalties, increasing the minimum penalty from 5 to 10 years, depending on the circumstances, and introduces the principle of "non-punishment" of victims who have been forced to commit criminal offences due to the exploitation to which they have been subjected. It also seeks to ensure successful prosecution of offenders (limitation period to begin when the child reaches majority, training for investigators, use of special investigation techniques), introduces new jurisdiction clauses (making it easier, for example, to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction), provides better protection for victims, in particular children, and improves co-ordination mechanisms at a national level (introduction of "national rapporteurs").

The proposal for a directive on combating sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, which builds on the European convention, is still being negotiated. Its main elements of added value lie in the introduction of new charges, increased harmonisation of criminal penalties and the requirement for member states to adopt measures prohibiting activities involving regular contact with children and to implement any prohibitions pronounced within the European Union, the introduction of a non-punishment clause for child victims, amendment of the jurisdiction rules to ensure that offenders face prosecution even if the offences were committed outside the EU, and better protection for victims and their families. The proposal contains a number of elements not found in the Council of Europe convention: it extends the scope of the offences (not least by ruling out the possibility of making reservations), introduces standard minimum levels of penalties, and builds on the main achievements of the convention (particularly where jurisdiction rules, the exercise of extraterritorial jurisdiction and the provisions for investigating offences and bringing charges are concerned).

Conclusion

As can be seen from this necessarily brief description, the Council of Europe conventions designed to combat sexual violence against children are extremely diverse and cover a very wide field, ranging from prevention to assistance to victims and punishment. Their subject matter, which covers a broad range of criminal acts, underscores their complementary nature. The convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation, for example, covers all the various types of conduct encountered in this area and endeavours to define forms of sexual abuse that have emerged more recently (notably with the first internationally approved definition of "solicitation of children for sexual purposes" or "grooming"). The Council of Europe trafficking convention deals with acts that occur at an earlier stage but which lead to the exploitation of individuals, in particular sexual exploitation, while the cybercrime convention addresses the problem of the frequent use of new communication technologies to commit child sexual abuse and seeks to provide appropriate responses. These are complementary conventions, therefore, which the European Union is building on by creating new instruments, which in turn drive progress within the Council of Europe and should in future contribute to a dynamic process of revision.

Part two

Sexual violence against children – Preventing and reporting

4.
Children's participation in policy and practice to prevent child sexual abuse – Developing empowering interventions

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Introduction

Child participation is an important component in the development of policies and practices that impact on child care services. All children and young people can play an important role in shaping the services that are designed to support them. This includes children and young people who have been sexually abused and who have experienced sexual violence. A central premise of the Council of Europe campaign to stop sexual violence against children is the involvement and participation of children and young people in establishing and maintaining the campaign. This chapter gives two examples of how sexually abused children and young people have been instrumental in developing effective services to prevent sexual violence and to support victims.

What is child sexual abuse?

It is important to understand that child sexual abuse is when a child or young person is used sexually by another who may, or may not, be known to them. The child or young person may be pressurised, forced or tricked through physical or non-physical contact into taking part in any kind of sexual activity, including being forced to view pornographic materials. The abuse may take place through use of technologies such as the Internet or mobile phones and the child may or may not be aware that the abuse is taking place. The abuser

may be a family member, may be someone holding a position of trust (such as a religious figurehead or a professional), or may be from rival communities or enemies in time of war. The abuse can take place within all racial or religious cultures and the abuser or victim may be male, female or transgender. Child sexual exploitation, where a child or young person willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, swaps or exchanges sexual activity for payment or reward, is also a form of child sexual abuse. Although there is some consensus between cultures, religions and different legislative frameworks across the world about what constitutes child sexual abuse, there are differences in the legal age of the child's consent to sexual activity, the appropriate levels of supervision of children and the "treatment" of offenders. Despite these variations, there is considerable overarching agreement that child sexual abuse is a serious and underreported crime. In addition, there is increasing awareness of older young people as both victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse, raising intricate questions for practitioners about the relationship between welfare and justice interventions. In these cases, as in all others, the central message that comes from research in the field is that the victim is not to be blamed for the sexual abuse or exploitation they have experienced.[13]

Therapeutic work with victims of sexual violence can focus on helping the victim to acknowledge that the abuse was not their fault. This can be a long and complex process supported by the active participation of children and young people through child participation work. Once the young person begins to understand that they are not at fault for their abuse, they can be encouraged to take an active role in providing child-centred definitions of their experience, suggesting resources that might help and playing an active role in raising public awareness of the issues concerned. Two examples given below explore this in more detail. But first we need to explore what "child participation" is and why and how it has developed, considering the strengths and
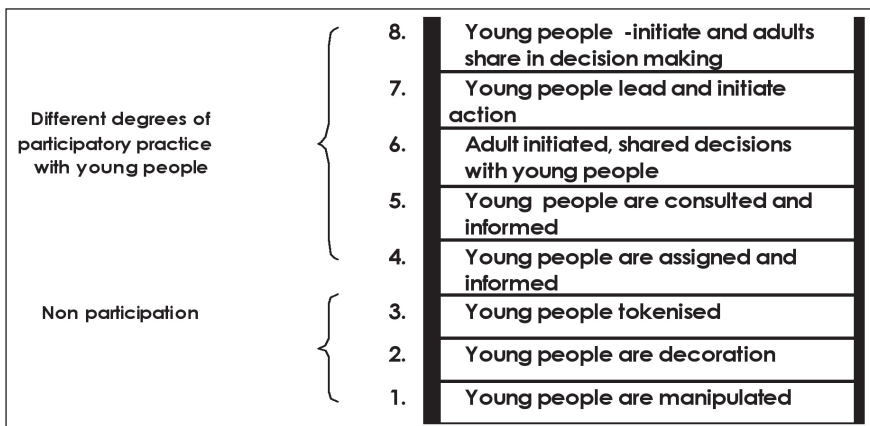
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13. For further clarity about forms of child sexual abuse, see Pearce, 2010; Sedlak et al., 2010; <http://www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk>; and Council of Europe, 2008: Articles 18-23; Palermo Protocol, 2000: Article 3.

opportunities as well as the inherent problems in its employment as a method of working with sexually abused children and young people.

What is child participation?

The participation agenda "has its roots within international development work ... promoting the involvement of individuals and communities in all aspects of development" (Warrington, 2010:64). Participation recognises that those directly affected by issues are among those most able to define their problems and contribute to the development of appropriate solutions.

But what is participation, how is it affected and is it appropriate for children who have been sexually abused? Is participation an exclusive and tokenistic gesture or is it a genuine attempt to give real control to all young people, including those who may be vulnerable and abused? Can participation place an additional burden on an abused and damaged individual who needs therapeutic support rather than involvement in policy and practice decision-making procedures? Research has demonstrated that these questions are essential considerations for any service planning to develop child participation and that the full scope of participatory activities needs to be considered (Kirby et al., 2003:41). Providing a generic framework for these different interventions, Hart (1997:41) has produced a "ladder of par-

Different degrees of participatory practice with young people		8.	**Young people -initiate and adults share in decision making**
		7.	**Young people lead and initiate action**
		6.	**Adult initiated, shared decisions with young people**
		5.	**Young people are consulted and informed**
		4.	**Young people are assigned and informed**
Non participation		3.	**Young people tokenised**
		2.	**Young people are decoration**
		1.	**Young people are manipulated**

Hart's Ladder of Participation.
Reproduced with permission of Earthscan Ltd, www.earthscan.co.uk

ticipation" which identifies different levels of young people's involvement. He argued that 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" (Hart, 1992:5).

While this ladder is helpful, the formulaic approach can falsely create a fixed hierarchy resulting in practitioners being fearful of failing to reach the ultimate aim at level 8. In contrast, it is helpful to look at the developing relationships between children, young people and adults as they negotiate their different positions of power and need. Coleman (2010) contrasts an "imperialist model" of relationships between adult and child (where adults assume power) with a "partnership" model where the bi-directionality of the interaction between child and adult is recognised. The partnership model notes a two-way process of power sharing, where the adult impacts on the child but also where the actions of the child impact on, and change the behaviour of, the adult. Principles of participation need to recognise both aim and process: the aim of reaching levels 5 to 8 in Hart's model above and the process of how to achieve this through genuine "partnership" based interventions.

With this understanding it is helpful to consider the final question: is participation relevant for all young people, including those who have been sexually abused? The explanatory memorandum of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse notes that policy "must of necessity be informed by children's own views and experiences in accordance with their evolving capacity". It also recognises that the needs and welfare of the child are paramount, and that in many cases children and young people who have been sexually abused or exploited demonstrate significant mental, physical and sexual health problems and are in need of continued protection from abuse. Research into interventions with children and young people who have been victims of sexual violence argues that there are times when it would be inappropriate to ask or expect the victim to participate in service

development. Indeed, there are times when the responsible professional has to take control of the situation and relieve the child from the burden created by the abuse they have experienced (Hilarski et al., 2008).

However, all too often the "victim" label is used to prevent children and young people from being active agents in their own development and recovery. Many victims of child sexual abuse are motivated to use their experience to improve service delivery for themselves and others. They welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of services and indeed see this participation as part of the therapeutic process facilitating their recovery. Whilst is it helpful to ensure that a thorough risk assessment is carried out on the child or young person to ensure that they are ready and able to participate, and to determine the appropriate level of participatory activity, it is also important to ensure that the opportunity is available to all, irrespective of previous experiences of sexual abuse or violence. The two examples below illustrate this in practice.

"Out of the box": developing training / awareness raising materials with and for young people

"Out of the box" is a booklet produced by young people for young people (Pearce, 2009). The need for the booklet arose from two events. Practitioners noted at a UK conference that there was a dearth of child friendly descriptions of what sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is, of what victims may feel and how they may challenge the abuse and remove themselves from abusive situations. In addition, an outreach sexual health and youth work NGO called Street Reach, based in a northern town in the UK, was celebrating some of their young people's achievements. These young people were asking for the opportunity to participate in training other young people to recognise indicators of abuse. The need for the "Out of the box" project was, therefore, shared between adults and children with a joint aim: providing a foundation for partnership on the agreed task of producing a booklet written by young people for young people aiming to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The project staff and children and young people agreed that participation with the "Out of the box" project was dependent upon a joint risk assessment to determine whether participation may place a young person in danger. A support service ran alongside the project providing therapeutic intervention for cases where unresolved or undiagnosed problems came to the fore throughout the duration of the work. Young people were given financial support to enable them to attend meetings, and, in some cases, were taken by project workers to and from their home so that they were not placed at risk of harm whilst undertaking journeys across the city.

In total 18 young women and one young man aged between 14 and 18 took part in the project, each undertaking different roles depending upon their stage of development and their availability. Regular consultation and planning meetings were held on both an individual and group basis ensuring that the young people took equal control in the development of the work. This included developing policies to ensure confidentiality and safety that considered how much personal information was appropriate for the young people to share in their stories, poems and drawing, and ensured accountability processes if any concerns about further harm or abuse were identified. As the project developed, the young people simultaneously refined writing and drawing skills, becoming more aware of the need for shorter, sharper messages both about the harm that sexual violence can cause and the positive ways that young people can remove themselves from danger. The young people decided with graphic designers what the booklet should look like, how many pictures and words should be on each page and where the booklet should be launched.[14]

A number of important lessons were learnt from this process. Genuine consultation and participation through partnership work meant that the project took longer than had been budgeted for or expected. The project extended from the planned 18 months to 36 months. The project team had to be flexible, adapting to meet

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14. See <http://www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk> for more information.

changing circumstances and vulnerabilities of the young people concerned. During these 36 months a core group of six young people remained as regular attendees, while others experienced changes in their home placements or schools, or experienced further relationship problems. One young woman became pregnant during the work of the project, resulting in the need for child care provisions to support her attendance. Two young people went missing from home or care, causing a feeling of depression and anxiety amongst the remaining group. Finally, potential conflict between children and practitioners needed resolving when planning dissemination of the booklet at conferences in cities unfamiliar to the young people. Practitioners rightly expressed concern about whether they should limit the opportunity for young people to travel and speak about their work for fear of the young people becoming too "visible" and for fear that they may be targeted by perpetrators for further victimisation. Discussing these concerns with the young people resulted in a selection process to identify and train "speakers", and to ensure that all were safeguarded from undue exposure. These invaluable lessons were repeated in a different participatory project described below.

The young people's advisory group for the child trafficking advice and information line

The young people's advisory group for the National Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL) is a project run by the National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Project (NSPCC), a UK NGO offering advice and information to practitioners in their work with trafficked children and young people. This includes those who have been trafficked into and within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Alongside its aim to offer advice and information, it runs two young people's advisory groups: one male (membership 5 young men) and one female (membership 15 young women). All are aged between 14 and 23 and were trafficked into and within the UK, experiencing sexual violence, abuse and exploitation.

The young people's advisory groups were established for two reasons. Firstly it was recognised that trafficked children and young

people were, by the nature of the abuse, separated from each other. They needed a forum to share their experiences, develop understanding of what had happened to them and convey this information to service providers. In addition, CTAIL recognised the need for young people's participation in determining the direction of CTAIL service development.

A professional multi-agency group exists to oversee the development of CTAIL services and representation from the young people's advisory group is included. Before each meeting the advisory groups prepare contributions that are collated into a progress report. This report is submitted to the multi-agency professionals meeting and two young people are selected to present the report.

This process has enabled vulnerable and marginalised groups of young people to meet and develop a shared identity. They have raised hitherto unrecognised concerns. For example, they identified shared experiences of poor and unsafe accommodation following placement in local authority care, leading to a review of supporting housing provision for trafficked and, in particular, for sexually exploited young people. They have increasingly played an important role in delivering training to practitioners, giving child-centred definitions of exploitation. In addition, two young people have requested that the work they carry out with CTAIL be accredited, giving them "awards" through a "UK youth achievement award" programme for their role in participating with the development of service delivery and training. As a result, two young women have taken part in the programme, each participatory activity being identified as one of eight "challenges" needed to achieve a final award. These awards will be the first formally recognised and accredited achievement that the young women can use on their developing curriculum vitae.

Conclusions

As with "Out of the box", the CTAIL young people's advisory group has shown that sexually abused and exploited young people can gain skills, knowledge and confidence through participation programmes

that are carefully planned and supported. Young people taking part in a participatory project need advanced awareness of the importance of safeguarding. They need training and support to speak to large audiences and advice about managing inappropriate questions about their experiences. There have been dilemmas in maintaining boundaries between practitioners and young people when both are simultaneously working as "partners" together in the delivery of training. These lessons carry important considerations which, with further discussion and commitment, will advance the scope for children and young people to advance their own progress through contributing to the development of child-centred services. Victims of child sexual abuse, exploitation and violence should not be denied this opportunity. While there are necessary steps to be taken to safeguard vulnerable children and young people from abuse, the label of "victim" should not be a reason to prohibit them from having a say in the development and delivery of services that aim to meet their needs.

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5.
Towards a child-friendly justice and support for child victims of sexual abuse

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Introduction

It can be argued that societal awareness of child sexual abuse seems to go through different stages of development. The first stage is characterised by denial whereby the existence of the problem is at best minimised or at worst flatly denied. The perception is that even children themselves are to be blamed instead of adults, as the abuse may be due to aggressive children who "seduce" innocent men (Salter, 2003). The second stage may be referred to as the stage of admittance, whereby child sexual abuse is seen as a horrible incidence of psychopathic aggression or outrageous sexually deviant behaviour. Alternatively – in the case of intra-familial child sexual abuse – it may be perceived as one of the many symptoms of the dysfunctional family without a clear understanding that responsibility can never be placed on the child. We now know, however, that the root of child sexual abuse is essentially of a social nature and cannot adequately be explained by individual acts of paedophiles or expressions of family dysfunction. This requires us to understand that child sexual abuse and exploitation are complex issues with many facets, which include child pornography, prostitution and trafficking, and sexual abuse within and outside the family. It could be said that society has reached the stage of social recognition once it recognises that it has a collective responsibility to safeguard the unequivocal right of the child to be protected from all forms of sexual abuse. Collective responsibility means implementing measures to protect vulnerable children that are not confined to individual actions, such as

incarcerating perpetrators or providing family therapy, but ones which are truly child focused and comprehensive with regard to prevention, intervention and rehabilitation.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

In Europe, the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in 1996, represented a landmark in the development of social and political awareness of child sexual abuse in many European states. This event launched a take-off in international collaboration on child sexual abuse, including within the Council of Europe. Parallel to this, many if not most Council of Europe member states introduced various national measures to address the problem, which aimed at prevention, more effective legal procedures and substantive criminal laws, and support for child victims. However, Europe still has a long way to go in securing the best interests of the child when dealing with child sexual abuse cases (May-Chahal and Herczog, 2003; Save the Children International Alliance, 2002). Perhaps the progress already achieved in Europe represents a shift from the denial stage to that of *admittance*, providing ample opportunity to move forward towards the *social recognition* stage. International tools have already been developed to support proactive measures at local, regional and national level, and construct more effective, comprehensive and child-friendly interventions.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) invites the member states of the Council of Europe to revisit domestic legal provisions as well as the existing structures responsible for handling cases of child sexual abuse. The forthcoming Council of Europe guidelines for child-friendly justice will also contribute to a more professional approach in addressing the serious threat that sexual abuse represents to the well-being and healthy development of children.

The silent crime

Child sexual abuse is often referred to as the crime of secrecy. It is a well-known fact that child victims of sexual abuse can experience great difficulties in disclosing the abuse. Young children often lack the vocabulary needed to express themselves and may not even know that their rights have been violated. Children may be too ashamed or embarrassed to talk about their experience, or too afraid to tell as they may have been threatened and fear the consequences of disclosure. In some instances, their affection for the perpetrator restrains them from telling or they may think that they will not be believed. Nevertheless, and even though from the child's perspective there are many good reasons for not disclosing, research findings tell us that the majority of sexually abused children do disclose the abuse at one point or another. Younger children most often tell their non-offending caretakers and older ones, especially adolescents, are more likely to turn to their peers to unburden their secret.

What is important is that we can safely assume that the more society is aware of and sensitive to the problem, the more child victims are likely to disclose their experience. We know that some child victims recant their disclosure, especially if they are met with scepticism. Therefore it is paramount to listen to the child without questioning what is being said and provide encouragement, support and understanding.

Disclosure – the key to unlocking abuse

Disclosure is not the only problem facing child victims of sexual abuse. Due to the nature of the crime, collaborating evidence to the child's disclosure of sexual abuse is commonly lacking. As sexual abuse is typically a very private act, witnesses other than the child victim are usually not found. Medical evidence generally identifies abuse in less than 10% of cases and is conclusive in only half. And although child abuse victims often manifest behavioural or psychosomatic symptoms, there is no empirically based list of "abuse indicators" that can provide accurate data on possible abuse (Poole and

Wolfe, 2009). In fact, recent research concludes that hard evidence (including physical, medical, witness account, photographs, videos and so forth) exists in a minority of sexual abuse cases and is consistent with the common perception among researchers and practitioners that the most important evidence of abuse is the child's narrative (Herman, 2009).

Investigative interviewing

In the absence or scarcity of other evidence, the child's disclosure represents the most valuable source of information on which the whole case may rest. Retrieving the information by interviewing the child victim is therefore crucial to the successful handling of child sexual abuse cases. It is precisely in this area that mistakes are most often made, due to a lack of professional competence in implementing forensic interviews. Many high profile cases in the past have revealed how inappropriate interviewing techniques used by untrained interviewers appear to have compromised and contaminated children's testimony with disastrous effects (Ceci and Bruck, 1995). Repetitive and unstructured interviews can distort the child's account with harmful effects on the criminal procedure. Suggestibility is a major problem when a child is interviewed by those who are not trained to obtain the child's disclosure. This happens when the interviewer asks misleading questions and uses an unstructured approach, often leading to discrepancies in the child's narrative. A well-known example of this is when child victims answer questions the way they think the adult expects them to answer.

In recent years research evidence has clearly shown that children are able to provide valid and reliable information, and that they can be remarkably competent informants when interviewed by professionally trained interviewers (Gudjonsson et al. 2010). However, the quality and quantity of the information children provide are greatly influenced by the way in which they are interviewed. Hence, structured interview protocols have been developed in which professional recommendations have been translated into interview tools to maximise the reliability, amount and quality of information obtained

from suspected child abuse victims. Some of these interview protocols have greatly improved the reliability of the interviewing thus increasing the probability of appropriate legal and therapeutic interventions to the benefit of the child (Lamb et al., 2007).

Interestingly, the authors of the most recent research on children's testimonies recommend that when interviewers follow internationally recognised best-practice guidelines, alleged victims of abuse should be interviewed more than once to ensure that more complete reports are obtained (La Rooy et al., 2009). A special investigative technique has been developed for this purpose, referred to as the extended forensic evaluation (Connell, 2009). However, it should be emphasised that there is consensus among professionals that suggestive and unstructured repetitive interviews are damaging and can jeopardise the judicial procedure and subject the child victim to serious traumatic experience.

The need for an interdisciplinary and multi-agency approach

The information obtained from the child's disclosure is highly significant as it plays a central role in *(1)* ensuring the safety of the child; *(2)* providing assistance to the child victim with the aim of physical and psychological recovery; *(3)* revealing the crime for purposes of the criminal investigation, prosecution and sentencing; and finally *(4)* preventing the perpetrator from reoffending. Therefore the child's disclosure is crucial for all the different entities in society whose responsibility it is to carry out these tasks.

In most European states child sexual abuse is dealt with by a number of agencies. Child protection systems or the social services at the local level (sometimes NGO service providers are entrusted with this role) ensure the child's safety and provide the appropriate support services, including therapy. Health professions need to be involved for a medical examination and treatment. The police are responsible for the criminal investigation and the prosecution for determining whether there should be an indictment. Finally, the role of the court system is to determine the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender.

In order to fulfil their roles, all these different agencies need to examine the child victim's account. Consequently it is commonplace that children are subjected to repeated interviews by different professionals in many locations – a condition that according to research findings amounts to a re-victimisation of the child that can even be as painful as the original abuse (Berliner and Conte, 1995).

An additional problem for the child victim may be the adverse facilities where the interviews are carried out. Police stations, courts, hospitals and social service offices are typically not very child friendly locations and can magnify the child victim's unease. It is well known that high levels of stress can preclude optimal expression by the child victim. The latent messages to the child victim conveyed in certain locations can also reinforce some harmful misconceptions. For example, children often associate police stations with places where criminals are brought. This may reinforce feelings of guilt, which is one of most harmful symptoms of sexual abuse that child victims struggle to overcome.

The child-friendly approach

How can we overcome the inadequacies described above as well as provide optimal protection and assistance to child victims when investigating sexual abuse and ensuring that children are not revictimised by the very system designed to protect them? More than a quarter of century ago in Huntsville, Alabama in the United States, District Attorney Bud Cramer initiated a new concept, the children's advocacy centre (CAC). Cramer's primary goal was to obtain more successful criminal prosecution of sex offenders, but he also wanted to create more humane conditions for children who were submitted to multiple interviews and inquiries in police stations, hospitals and social service offices. This was a beginning of a movement that today has grown to a network of about 700 accredited and associate child advocacy centres nationwide in the United States.

The National Children's Alliance, an organisation created to administer federal funding for the centres has issued the following accreditation standards:

- multidisciplinary teams;
- cultural competency and diversity;
- forensic interviews;
- victim support and advocacy;
- medical evaluation;
- mental health;
- case review;
- case tracking;
- organisational capacity;
- child-focused setting.

The standards reflect the ambitious goal of housing child-friendly, professional and quality services for child-victims of sexual abuse under one roof.

In recent years, a number of evaluations and research results have been published on the advocacy centres' effectiveness and outcomes for children and their families. Findings include, for example, higher rates of parent and other caregiver satisfaction and suggest that a child-friendly environment works well for children; significantly more children from the advocacy centre samples said that they were "not at all" or "not very" scared during the investigation, as opposed to children from the comparison sites (Jones et al., 2007). Other studies point out additional benefits such as faster law enforcement procedures, improved medical examinations and better cost efficiency.

The European Children's Houses (Barnahus)

Following the Stockholm World Congress in 1996 the government agency for child protection in Iceland implemented the first study on the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the country. The findings caused considerable turmoil as the number of cases dealt with by child protection services, police, prosecution, courts and the medical professions revealed that the seriousness of the problem could no

longer be doubted. The study also pointed to the default of the system in addressing the issue professionally, which was resulting in the revictimisation of children due to a lack of interagency co-ordination.

The starting point of the restructuring of the organisation and work procedure in Iceland was its commitment to Article 3.1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: "In all action concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration."

The strategy of defining the needs of the child as a "primary consideration" was prioritised: replacing a system in which the child victim had to adapt to the demands of the different agencies with a service which focused on the needs of the child. The American child advocacy centres became the role model which was adapted to the Nordic welfare tradition in Icelandic society. Housing multidisciplinary services in a child-friendly setting, the Children's House (Barnahus) opened in 1998; it is located in an ordinary residential area and has an environment designed to make the child feel secure and comfortable.

The core concept of the Children's House is the joint investigative interview, executed by a professionally trained interviewer under the formal authority of a court judge. This takes place in a specially designed interview room which can be observed via closed circuit television by representatives of the police and prosecution, the defence lawyer, the child's legal advocate and the child's social worker from the local child protection services. This procedure is equivalent to a court testimony if the suspect is indicted – thus the child does not need to testify again at the main hearing. This procedure is designed to ensure professional criminal investigation and "due process" (fair trial) for the suspect without compromising the principle of the best interests of the child.

The local child protection services can also refer suspected child victims of sexual abuse to the Children's House for "exploratory" interviews. This happens when a child's disclosure is weak or ambiguous

or the alleged offender has not been identified or is below the age of criminal responsibility. All interviews are videotaped for multiple purposes, including that of the medical examination and therapeutic services, which also take place in the Children's House.

The Icelandic Children's House was identified by the International Save the Children Alliance as a "best practice" model among nine European states in the study "Child abuse and adult justice" in 2002. The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) presented the Children's House with the "Multidisciplinary Team Award" at their International Congress in York in 2006. The Children's House has generated interest and inspiration abroad.

In 2005, a children's house (Barnahus) was inaugurated by Queen Silvia in Sweden, who had taken a personal interest in the project through her work with the World Childhood Foundation which she founded in 1999. This was in Linköping, where child specialists at the Bub-Elefanten, a national competence centre for child sexual abuse, had been urging for child advocacy services and a children's house for many years (Rädda Barnen, 2009). Earlier the same year the Government of Sweden recommended establishing children's houses around the country and proposed pilot projects in six cities, to be evaluated under the auspice of the relevant state agencies. The first evaluation report, from the University of Lund, is positive and promising (Socialstyrelsen, 2008). Since 2005, children's houses have been set up in more than 20 cities in Sweden.

In Norway, an inter-ministerial working group submitted a report on children's houses (Barnas Hus) under instruction of the Norwegian Parliament in 2006, and the following year the first centre was in operation (Justis- og Politidepartamentet, 2006). Norway now has seven children's houses. Denmark has one and an interdisciplinary working group affiliated by the National Institute of Public Health has put forward proposals to set up more (Forskningsnetværket, 2009). In Finland, the Ministry of Justice will launch a children's house pilot project before the end of 2010, with Greenland following suit.

The growth of the child advocacy centre / children's house model across state borders and the positive experience from northern Europe and the United States clearly shows that this child-friendly approach is a viable option to further safeguard the rights of child victims of sexual abuse irrespective of cultural or socio-political differences.

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6.
Against all odds – Communicating about sexual violence

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The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (hereafter the Lanzarote Convention) belongs to a generation of treaties pursuing three main objectives: the protection of the victims, the prevention of the crime and the prosecution of the offenders. The convention identifies the measures that have to be taken at national and international level to achieve these three objectives.

Chapter 2 of the Lanzarote Convention is devoted to the preventive measures which mostly focus on the need to educate, train and raise the awareness of children, persons working in contact with children and the public at large.

One obvious assumption behind this set of measures would be that the more information people have about the problem, the easier it is to address it. We could indeed assume that, in principle, the only urgent thing to do is to inform about the various forms of sexual violence and to raise the alert on the risks that children run. However, sharing information is not always enough to empower people, to influence attitudes and, even less, to positively change behaviours.

There are many examples showing that people's access to knowledge does not necessarily motivate a change in their attitude or behaviour. Despite all the warnings about the risks they take, people keep driving too fast, smoking too much and having sex without protection. In most countries, the legislator has to intervene for our safety's sake:

limiting the speed on the roads, forbidding smoking in public places, regulating alcohol consumption and imposing the use of seatbelts in our cars, fences in our swimming pools or smoke detectors in our homes.

According to Article 8.1 of the Lanzarote Convention, "Each Party shall promote or conduct awareness raising campaigns addressed to the general public providing information on the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and on the preventive measures which can be taken".

The point of raising awareness about sexual violence is very much about giving children and adults alike the knowledge and the tools to prevent, recognise, report and combat sexual violence. However, communicating about sexual violence is an exercise against all odds. First, because it entails demolishing the walls of silence and secrecy created by paralysing feelings such as shame, fear and guilt. Second, because we have to build it upon very weak foundations and with a lousy safety net.

The secret topic

This form of violence is nourished by the taboos surrounding sexuality. Most parents do not see the need to talk about sexuality until their children reach puberty. Many parents resist the idea of schools providing sex education "too early". The amazing amount of fancy words that are used to replace or disguise the anatomic truth of a penis or a vagina is just an indicator of adults' difficulties in tackling "the issue". Children who feel adult's embarrassment are less inclined to put questions or to disclose abuse.

In its Article 6 (Education for children), the Lanzarote Convention attempts to conciliate government's obligation to protect children through education with the need to involve parents in this task:

> Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that children, during primary and secondary education, receive information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well

as on the means to protect themselves, adapted to their evolving capacity. This information, provided in collaboration with parents, where appropriate, shall be given within a more general context of information on sexuality and shall pay special attention to situations of risk, especially those involving the use of new information and communication technologies.

The hidden and all mighty monster

The odds are that one out of five children may be victims of some kind of sexual violence. Between 70% and 80% of sexual aggressions are committed by people that the child knows, trusts and even loves. It is therefore crucial that awareness raising efforts do not create sterile anxiety or distress in either parents or their children. We all need to trust the people we love and live with, as much as we need to be prepared to react adequately if someone betrays us. Communication has to be empowering and avoid overwhelming the target audience with negative feelings.

The unknown data

The lack of comprehensive research and disaggregated data concerning sexual violence makes it difficult to clearly define the problem and the factors that can influence a person's behaviour (be they environmental, social or personal). This lack of information constitutes a handicap for the communication effort that risks missing the target. It also prevents parents and professionals getting a clear idea of what needs to be done.

Profiling the target public can be extremely useful and reveal some wrong assumptions. For instance, researchers at East Tennessee State University in the United States suggest that the fear of having leathery, wrinkled skin may keep young girls out of tanning salons and help them reduce their risk for skin cancer, more than the threat of deadly melanoma. Young people may be more inclined to reduce alcohol consumption if they believe they will lose popularity, while adults may be more reactive to the threat of losing their driving licence.

The absent safety net

Most national campaigns on child sexual abuse encourage children and adults to report abuse through a helpline or to a person they trust. A major obstacle to the efficacy of this message lies, however, in the lack of clear protocols on the way to report on and to act upon disclosures of child abuse. Unfortunately, instead of a safety net, children often get trapped in a complex web of proceedings and badly prepared services.

The Council of Europe campaign to stop sexual violence against children

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Despite (or rather because of) all the difficulties described above, the Council of Europe decided to launch a campaign to stop sexual violence against children with two main objectives. First, the campaign aims to support the signature, ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. The second objective is to raise the awareness of the public in general as to the extent of sexual violence within the circle of trust and the ways to prevent and report it.

The challenge is obviously immense, in particular taking into account the very limited resources and the geographical coverage: 47 countries and their diverse political, social, economic and cultural contexts. Experience gained within the previous Council of Europe campaigns (against discrimination, against domestic violence, against trafficking in human beings or against corporal punishment) shows, on the one hand, the Organisation's ability to mobilise all its partners and achieve important results. On the other hand, it also indicates a potential which is not yet being exploited, in particular when it comes to communicating with the public at large.

For its campaign against sexual violence, the Council of Europe will build on the positive experience of the campaign against domestic violence which counted on the support of campaign teams at national level. This campaign also benefited from the decisive contribution of the national parliaments and local authorities, thanks to the very active involvement of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. All bodies and institutions in the Organisation will contribute with their specific networks and expertise to achieve the objectives of the campaign against sexual violence.

Governments have been invited to set up national campaign teams involving all relevant governmental sectors (education, justice, health, social services, youth, family) as well as other key actors, such as the parliament, local authority networks, ombudspersons, professional networks, civil society, the business community and the media. Through these teams, we hope to make the Council of Europe input and material more country-relevant while stimulating ownership, creativity, information sharing and debate at national level.

The corporal punishment campaign has shown that investing in partnerships for the development of highly professional communication material was particularly effective for communication with the public at large. The positive, family-friendly TV spot produced in 2008 to communicate with adults on the need to educate children without violence was extremely well received by the public, encouraging media across Europe to broadcast it on a pro-bono basis. This very positive experience encouraged us to follow the same avenue in the preparation of the TV spot against sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse being a highly sensitive issue, we also sought the advice of NGOs with expertise in communicating on this very topic (such as the NSPCC, Barnados, ECPAT, the Nobody's Children Foundation or Save the Children). The results of an expert consultation held in Strasbourg (December 2009) helped us to prepare the outline of our campaign. The next stage was to obtain the involvement of a leading communication agency with a network of offices across Europe. We

were extremely lucky to obtain Grey's agreement to embark in this adventure. In the most professional and committed way, the team of Grey Amsterdam helped us to focus and developed "The Underwear Rule" concept, an animated TV spot, a website and a children's book.

The Underwear Rule is a mnemonic, a learning aid aiming to help parents to explain to children that there are parts of their body nobody should touch. The products developed aim at raising awareness on the extent of the problem of sexual abuse while empowering parents and children to prevent it by taking a few very easy steps. We very much hope that this material will be made available in the national languages of all Council of Europe member states. Our main challenge will be to obtain the support of the key actors at national level: policy makers, parliaments, ombudspersons, professional networks, NGOs and the media. We know that we are taking a risk, communicating against all odds. But the potential gain is so worth it.

7.
Sexual abuse of children with disabilities

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Introduction

The sexual abuse of children with disabilities is a distressing and difficult area of safeguarding practice that demands a coherent and consistent response. It tends to provoke splits where the risks are either dismissed out of hand or escalated into a justification for disproportionately restrictive measures.

If handled wrongly, misconceptions about abuse can seem to justify ways of working that suppress a child or young person's autonomy and *joie de vivre* instead of empowering them to manage and enjoy their relationships. But if downplayed, responsible adults may fail to provide disabled young people with proper sex education and with information that will allow them to avoid undue risks or with permission to enter into relationships safely. They may also fail to give disabled children and young people information about how to report any sexual behaviours that are coercive or disrespectful, using the same channels as other young people.

Historically children with disabilities have been excluded from these ordinary expectations and it was not thought that they would have an independent sexual life or mix freely with their peers. It has taken many years of campaigning to overcome this limiting stereotype. There are now many examples of positive sexual education and staff training (McCarthy and Thompson, 2010) as well as supported social and sporting opportunities that enable young people with disabilities to develop a

strong sense of their own identity, including their sexuality. Addressing sexual abuse must not be allowed to undermine this agenda.

But the sexual abuse of children and young people with disabilities is a serious problem and one that should be coherently addressed within mainstream child protection agencies and by specialist service providers (Brown and Craft, 1989). This short briefing paper sets out some limited evidence[16] as it relates to five important sets of issues, namely that:

- children and young people with disabilities are at risk of sexual abuse in the same ways as other children;

- they are at additional risk because of their disabilities and because of their placements in specialist service settings;

- they tend to be hidden and / or marginalised within ordinary child protection processes;

- specialist agencies are often excluded from training and information about how to report concerns and manage incidents of sexual abuse that do occur;

- sexual abuse of children and young people causes long-term mental health difficulties and disabled young people are not immune from these consequences.

The effect of this is that children and young people with disabilities are deemed to be at more risk of sexual abuse than other children, but to receive less protection from both mainstream and specialist agencies. This places them in double jeopardy.

Where is the evidence?

Evidence about these issues is scant and dispersed. It is not easy to gather and not easy to interpret. Studies of abuse tend to be based

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16. This paper draws on international data where this is available but the author is primarily drawing on information from the United Kingdom and Ireland which is not to suggest that sexual abuse is more prevalent in these, than in other, European countries.

on reported cases but one of the features of sexual abuse is that it is covert and that coercing a child or young person into keeping the abuse secret is a common integral feature of the abusive relationship. Much abuse occurs in closed systems where boundaries are enforced and rigid, such as in families, residential homes, church groups and sporting clubs. This works against prompt or consistent reporting of all child sexual abuse, but it particularly affects children with disabilities. Such studies are best thought of as studies of reporting behaviour rather than as a litmus test of actual abuse. More accurate information about childhood sexual abuse tends to be garnered from retrospective disclosures in adulthood but by then it cannot be corroborated or substantiated. Hence much of this information remains informal and is vulnerable to being discredited.

Definitions of sexual abuse are also problematic. Some are limited to abuse of children perpetrated by adults, while others include abuse by peers, and some register only penetrative sex while others include any unwanted and/or coerced sexual activity. Many studies of abuse of disabled children focus on particular groups, for example those with intellectual disabilities, while others explore the issues as they affect children and young people with specific impairments. Some studies of abuse perpetrated against children and young people with disabilities are biased towards abuse by service personnel while others focus primarily on abuse carried out by family members. It is rare to be able to compare like with like when reviewing this literature.

The risks

Children and young people with disabilities are at risk in ordinary ways because they are children first and because they live in ordinary families, attend mainstream schools, attend local churches or faith groups, and engage in leisure pursuits in mainstream settings. But they are also at additional risk because of the increased likelihood that they will be separated from their families, accommodated in congregate settings where they encounter multiple caregivers, and are targeted on account of their visible "difference" or "vulnerability".

Ordinary risks

Child abuse, but specifically sexual abuse, has been an important public policy issue over the last two decades in many European countries. Physical and emotional abuse are more likely to be condoned or excused whereas sexual abuse of children is almost universally condemned. There is a growing consensus about the prevalence and dynamics of such abuse. For example, in Ireland two studies were commissioned that provide background information about the abuse of all children (McGee et al., 2002; Goode, McGee and O'Boyle, 2003). McGee et al. suggested in the SAVI report that 20% of all women had been sexually abused with physical contact as girls and that 16% of men had been similarly abused as boys. A further 10% of girls and 7% of boys had been abused in non-contact ways. A total of 40% of these incidents were ongoing and not single occurrences. Of these 5.6% of girls and 2.7% of boys had been raped as children or adolescents and most shockingly 40% had told no one about it. These figures are of a similar order to those emerging in other countries and broadly in line with Kinsey's initial estimate in the United States in 1953 that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 9 boys were victims of child sexual abuse. US figures from a congressionally mandated series of incidence studies, (NCCAN, 1996) suggested that girls are three times more likely than boys to be sexually abused. A range of international studies cited by Goode et al. (2003:10) arrive at estimates of sexual victimisation of between 6% and 54% of girls (depending on the definition of the abuse and the method of study) and 4-16% of boys. But in these studies disabled children, if they are represented at all, have melted into the background and cannot be distinguished from other victims.

This abuse is usually perpetrated by men although there is a growing recognition that some abusers are women, but it is predominately men who become repeat offenders. Men who are motivated to abuse do so within their family networks; they assume positions of authority from which they can access children with a view to offending against them while protecting their own reputations as "pillars of the community" (Turk and Brown, 1993), and they also prey on single

or vulnerable mothers in order to abuse their children. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) reported that the typical child sex offender molests an average of 117 children, most of whom do not report the offence. It is estimated that approximately 71% of child sex offenders are under 35 and know the victim at least casually. A total of 59% of abusers gained sexual access to their victims by targeting and grooming them and this is an important dynamic for professionals to understand if they are to remain vigilant to the risk of exploitation. Children with disabilities may also be abused by their peers and by strangers in public places. They may be at risk within sporting networks (see Brackenridge, 2008) and within the care system.

About 80% of the perpetrators reported in the NCCAN report fell within normal intelligence ranges, but a significant element of abuse of disabled children and young people may be perpetrated by other disabled people who need help in understanding and establishing sexual boundaries. This abuse may not be motivated by malevolence, but sometimes demonstrates the same kinds of targeting of a more vulnerable person. A parallel stream of work has grown up around addressing potentially abusive behaviour on the part of disabled boys and young men (Thompson and Brown, 1997, 1998).

Additional risks as a result of disability

Attempts to quantify the additional vulnerability of disabled children can only be guestimates due to the lack of available and comprehensive information. Abuse of disabled children is not often visible in the information gathered by mainstream child-care agencies or the criminal justice system (Cooke, 2000).

The pattern of targeting and grooming is of particular importance in relation to disabled children and as mainstream services become more vigilant, perpetrators may move into other less attentive services, such as voluntary agencies that serve disabled children and young people, in order to access potential victims. Any visible disabilities might mark a child out as vulnerable, and if they are

isolated from their peer group, have communication difficulties and less information about what to expect from adults and to whom they could report abuse, then they are more likely to be seen as targets. Disabled children and young people who have a negative self-image may also be particularly susceptible to grooming and deception, and to "tricks or treats".

Sobsey (1994) hypothesised that this additional risk was less a feature of a child's impairment than of the settings in which they were placed, and which would expose them to multiple carers, thereby increasing the statistical risk of encountering a paedophile. A social model of vulnerability (Brown, 2002) analyses these issues in terms of the ways in which disabled children are placed at more risk than other children in settings that have not attended to safety (for example in the design of buildings or the recruitment of staff). They are then further disadvantaged because they are not heard or believed when they report and their experiences are not afforded the same significance as those of other children, leaving disabled children with a shortage of therapeutic and supportive services to aid recovery.

Thus children with disabilities face additional risks alongside those they share with other children and young people. Informed guestimates as to the extent of this heightened risk have varied. NCCAN in the United States estimated that the increased risk runs at 1.7 times more than for children without disabilities across all types of abuse and that they are 4 to 10 times more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their non-disabled peers. Sobsey thought that disabled children were approximately twice as likely to have experienced abuse as their non-disabled peers (Sobsey, 1994:4).

Deaf children seemed to experience a particularly high level of sexual abuse. Kvam (2004) reported that deaf women in Norway reported childhood sexual abuse more than twice as often as the hearing population (39.6% as compared to 19.2%) and that deaf men were more than three times as likely to have been abused (32.8% compared to 9.6% in the general population).

The response – Inclusion of children and young people with disabilities in mainstream child protection processes

Despite the consensus that there is an increased risk to children with disabilities, this has not filtered through into increased reporting within statutory child protection systems. Kvam (2000) noted a discrepancy in the other direction within the Norwegian system in that despite the expectation that there would be a higher rate of abuse there was actually a lower rate of reporting. Overall disabled children formed 11% of her sample population, and if the estimates of increased risk are sound, disabled children would have been expected to feature in about one third of the overall cases reported to the authorities; but instead they accounted for only 6.4% of the total reports. Children with severe disabilities were the subject of only 1.7% of cases. The author suggested a number of mechanisms that might explain this fall off in reporting: disabled children are less likely to disclose; they are less likely to have their disclosure listened to; and more likely to have their abuse minimised or brushed aside.

Considerable advances have been made in judicial processes that allow all children and specifically children with additional needs to participate as victims and witnesses. Marchant and Page (1992, 1997) have begun to set out how innovative communication methods could be used in interviews that had twin evidential and therapeutic aims. Research into credibility and capacity to act as a reliable witness in court has also been the subject of recent research (Gudjonsson et al., 2000). There have also been helpful developments in legislation and practice in the UK, including the increased use of video interviews, live video links to allow children to give evidence and be cross examined without having to come face to face with their abuser in court, and in some cases using advocates and intermediaries in the courtroom.

Knowledge of child protection within specialist service agencies

In specialist agencies a primary focus on disability may blind those responsible to the signs and symptoms of abuse. There cannot be

definitive lists of how abuse will be manifested by children of different ages, (dis)abilities and personality. What is needed is a careful vigilance coupled with a commitment to provide children with disabilities with "permission" to tell responsible adults if anyone acts inappropriately around them and to provide disabled young people with information that will allow them to enter into age-appropriate sexual relationships from a position of confidence. Where a child or young person is unable to communicate any concerns, the service should make explicit and ongoing provision for independent advocacy and professional input.

Specialist agencies should design safety into their services from the outset. They should remember that this is not a matter that can or should be dealt with behind closed doors. Disability services should make training in child protection a mandatory requirement for *all* their staff and not an optional extra that is disregarded or downplayed. Policies should set out guidance about how individual staff can raise concerns, about their responsibility to share information on a careful, need-to-know basis, and about their duty to involve outside agencies. But abuse should also be flagged up in generic policies, particularly regarding recruitment, where rigorous checks, gathering of references and careful interviewing are crucial.

The informal culture of a service should also be attended to and any hint that it is inappropriately sexualised should be confronted at the earliest opportunity. Personal care – a feature of many services for children and young people with disabilities – is a sensitive area and must be managed with tact and care. It is not appropriate for this to become a site of sexualised remarks, embarrassment, humiliation or blurred boundaries. Because young people with disabilities may be living in specialist settings and cared for by staff near to their own ages, they may develop attractions that they need help in managing, and which young, often inexperienced staff must be helped to contain (Thompson, Clare and Brown, 1997).

Sexual abuse within the Church

Abuse by clergy shows similar features to that perpetrated by other sex offenders, and the response of the Church bears the hallmarks of resistance and denial as has been witnessed in other organisations. There are, however, some aspects to this abuse that have proved particularly troubling to affected communities, and particularly in those countries, such as Ireland, where social care services and institutional care for disabled children has been organised and run by religious bodies. The separation of church and state, and the secular government's responsibilities for "policing" these arrangements must be rigorously upheld. In Ireland, abuse by clergy was carried out disproportionately against boys: three times as many boys as girls were abused (Goode et al., 2003:25). Most (64%) of this abuse was targeted at children under 13. A significant result has been the sense of betrayal of what was regarded as a privileged relationship between priest and community, especially where the community had trusted their most vulnerable children and young people to the care of the church. These issues have been the subject of considerable public fact-finding and deliberation in Ireland over the last 10 years but this is not to suggest that other countries and other faith groups are immune.

Consequences of sexual abuse for children and young people with disabilities

Sexual abuse of *any* child or young person is a breach of trust that permeates their expectations of others, whether caregivers or future partners. Of course people recover and become strong, but they are left with scars on their souls and in their minds (Higgins and Swain, 2010).

Mental health problems have been increasingly acknowledged as one of the most common consequences of child sexual abuse so that children and young people who suffer sustained assaults, particularly from someone in a position of trust, often go on to exhibit symptoms

of post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder and /or dissociative identity disorders.

Short-term impact of sexual abuse may include withdrawal from school, difficulties in communication and academic delay. This can sometimes lead to confusion about whether a presentation that is defined as a mild intellectual disability or a mental health problem signals a pre-existing condition or a consequence of abuse.

Long-term effects of child abuse include fear, anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, inappropriate sexual behaviour, poor self-esteem, a tendency toward substance abuse and difficulty with close relationships.

These conditions are helpfully thought about as specialised presentations of cumulative post-traumatic stress disorder, since they demonstrate ways of coping with unbearable and terrifying experiences, and of blanking off from traumatic memories, typified by episodes of dissociation and rapid changes of mood and mental states. More recent studies have explored the impact of sexual abuse specifically on children with severe intellectual disabilities, confirming that they share some of these long-term impacts of abuse in childhood (O'Callaghan, Murphy and Clare, 2003).

This fall out from childhood sexual abuse leads many survivors to seek help from mental health services in adolescence or adulthood and, depending on the nature and extent of their suffering, their personal resilience and social supports, they may *become* more "disabled" as a result of this abuse. This should require all mental health services for young people to take both abuse and disability into account. They should ensure that their provision is accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments, is equipped to offer services to people using different modes of communication and be very clear about which elements of their service are offered in mainstream mental health provision and which in specific disability services. Services for children and young people with intellectual disabilities should not propose a second class, or watered

down service to survivors of sexual abuse, but one that is informed by best practice with other survivors.

Disabled children and young people who develop mental health problems or challenging behaviours as a result of abuse are rendered vulnerable to further stigmatisation, and their experiences may be lost behind medicalised diagnoses that fail to acknowledge the events that caused them such distress (Rose, Peabody and Stratigeas, 1991). Plans should be in place to ensure that all staff are proactive in asking about abuse during clinical assessments and that mental health services are explicit about their remit in providing services for survivors (NHS Confederation, 2008).

So in this field disability should be perceived as both a predisposing risk factor to abuse *and* a consequence of it.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Children and young people with disabilities require professionals to keep a close watch on their sexual safety without compromising their hard won freedoms and sexual autonomy. They need safe services that are committed to careful recruitment. They need independent scrutiny and regulation of these agencies and of the individuals who work in them, and they need clear channels for reporting so that any allegations or complaints can be directed to the proper civil authorities in the event that they are harmed. They need recourse to justice just as other children and young people need the law to take their needs into account in the judicial process. They need the criminal justice system to act for them as victims and to respect them as witnesses.

They need mainstream child protection agencies to look out for them, to remember them and their particular needs and vulnerabilities when acting for other children in a family, school or neighbourhood. Professionals and criminal justice officials should remember that disability does not confer an immunity to sexual abuse but creates an additional risk factor and that if they overlook children with disabili-

ties they add to a perception that abuse against a disabled child or young person matters less than abuse against other more "normal" children and/or that perpetrators will not be as rigorously pursued or brought to justice. Mainstream schools, youth clubs and sports associations should also be mindful of the safety of disabled young people and of their particular vulnerability to bullying, intimidation and sexual abuse. Abuse of disabled children should also be made visible in official statistics so that professionals across all agencies can begin to learn about their particular experiences of sexual abuse and their own agencies' responses to it.

Specialist agencies also need to remember that they are a part of, and are accountable to, wider professional networks which confer on them responsibilities to report abuse, to cooperate with investigations and to impose appropriate sanctions on individuals who have offended against the children and young people in their care. The evidence suggests that children and young people with disabilities are at greater risk of sexual abuse but are less protected and supported than their peers. They do not want to be wrapped in cotton wool but they, and their parents, do demand that an equivalent level of consideration be given to their protection as is given to other children. Disabled children and young people should be placed at the centre of robust safeguarding procedures within a criminal justice and social welfare system that is newly sensitised to the sexual abuse of *all* children and young people.

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8.
Preventing and signaling sexual violence against children – Policies and standards for child care in Europe

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Introduction

Protecting children from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation is an inherent part of safeguarding their fundamental human rights. The different approaches to child protection systems are strongly linked to different cultural, religious, political and ideological frameworks.

Since 1989, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), state parties are enacted to pursue legislative, administrative, social and educational policies to support children. This first international instrument devoted to the promotion of childhood recognises children as holders of rights, in particular the "right to protection".

Aware of the need to promote children's rights more effectively, the Council of Europe has drawn up guidelines on how to protect children from all forms of violence ("The Council of Europe Policy guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence"), and conventions on various forms of exploitation (Convention on Cybercrime, November 2001; Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, May 2005; Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, October 2007).

Given the importance of effectively implementing prevention and rehabilitation mechanisms developed to combat sexual violence against children, this chapter focuses on policy frameworks, such as national action plans, civil society intervention, preventive programmes and reported mechanisms. Some of the recommendations provided here are based on the Portuguese experience.

Ongoing policies

The combat against all forms of child violence needs to be integrated into a broader social policy. Its multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature requires a comprehensive approach in order to develop common guidelines for the intervention at all levels of relevant key state sectors and entities dealing with children's issues.

Policy frameworks such as childhood and youth national plans of action, based on the main guiding principles of the UNCRC, have been developed in many countries (Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom). The implementation of the convention is a challenge that involves not only co-ordination on a national, regional and international level, but also between different departments and ministries. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), these action plans should contain time-bound targets and milestones, appropriate human and financial resources, be "knowledge-based" and evaluated on a regular basis.

Children's participation in policy making, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is essential if interventions are to be fully effective. The Portuguese National Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence (INIA – National Initiative for Childhood and Adolescence – 2008-10) involved both children and caregivers in its design process.

In addition to these global planning policies, some countries have developed specific action plans to fight sexual violence against children. One of these is Spain, where in 2002 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launched the first action plan to "Combat the commercial

sexual exploitation of children and youth", which was followed by the action plan to "Combat the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents" (2006-09). In 2009, the United Kingdom's Department for Children, Schools and Families published a document designed to offer further support and clear guidance to everyone involved in child issues – "Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation". In the same context, the Dutch national action plan "Dealing with sexual abuse of children" (NAPS) was drawn up in September 2001. More recently, in 2008, Sweden published its national action plan on "Safeguarding children from sexual exploitation".

Civil society organisations (independent institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and interest organisations) have a positive role to play, not only in raising public awareness on children's rights and in disseminating a new culture of child-adult relationships, but also in preventing and responding to violence against children by providing active support to reported cases. In many countries, national and international NGOs and international agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, are key actors in providing technical and material support for rehabilitation programmes.

Many organisations have developed policies, programmes, strategies and action plans for specific subsets of vulnerable children, such as children affected by armed conflict, child labourers and children without parental care (SOS Children's Villages, Save the Children), and missing and sexually exploited children (Missing Children Europe).

To ensure information exchange and to benefit from the work carried out by partners in the field, co-operation with other international organisations is crucial, in particular with those that are internationally recognised, such as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Unicef, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency and ChildOnEurope – the European Network of National Observatories on Childhood.

Seven central and eastern European countries are participating in the project "Childhood without abuse: toward a better child protection system in eastern Europe", co-ordinated by the Polish Nobody's Children Foundation. This project is developing a comprehensive system of support and protection for abused and neglected children in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland and Ukraine. Most of its partner organisations are NGOs or other foundations, including Unicef, UNAIDS and several child-focused international organisations (International Social Services, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, EveryChild, Defence Child International, Terres des Hommes). This project is an example of joint advocacy initiatives to support state governments in developing effective care and protection systems at all levels (local, national, and regional). In fact, there are other examples of international strategic NGO coalitions formed to ensure joint action on children's rights, among which the NGO group for the CRC, Global Movement for Children, Better Care Network, Global Campaign for Education, ECPAT International campaign to end child prostitution, pornography and trafficking, and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

Co-operation amongst ombudspersons for children through regional and international frameworks is also noteworthy. Within the scope of the CRC reporting process and the Yokohama Commitment, ombudspersons are monitoring government commitments to children's rights at national level. This is an opportunity to develop joint initiatives, as is already the case with the Global Network of Ombudspersons for Children, which is supported by the Innocenti Research Centre.

Ongoing strategies – Portuguese intervention mechanisms

Mechanisms for preventing sexual violence aim to reduce risk factors while strengthening protective factors. Their associated strategies and programmes require a multisector and interdisciplinary approach since there is no simple explanation for sexual violence. Benefits and programmes, such as pregnancy allowances, civil registration at birth,

positive-parenting training, sex education, and the qualification of foster care can make a difference at the prevention level.

Pregnancy allowance

Pregnancy allowance is a monthly benefit granted to pregnant women at the beginning of the 13th week of gestation. It aims to encourage motherhood by compensating for the inherent increased costs during pregnancy and it enables women to receive care throughout their pregnancy, making it easier to detect signs of violence at an early stage. Receiving this benefit also increases awareness of parental responsibilities as early as the prenatal period.

"Born citizen" programme

The "Born citizen" programme promotes children's right to a name and to social protection. The programme provides for the civil registration of all newborn babies at health units. This procedure makes it possible to identify risk situations early on, combat trafficking and monitor and co-ordinate information from three different areas – health, social security and justice – and encourages co-operation between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Justice. From March 2007 to December 2009, up to 84% of all the births occurring in the health units successfully benefited from this programme.

Positive-parenting training

In order to empower parents to better fulfil their role of bringing up their children, training programmes in parental education have been developed, targeting in particular parents with children at risk as well as relevant professionals. The models and content of the programmes, including the teaching materials, were developed by five universities which established a protocol with the Portuguese Government. In addition, as part of an action research programme, these academic institutions are assessing specific interventions carried out on approximately 300 families identified as having parenting problems.

Sex education – Pipas

The "Integrated project for sexual abuse prevention" (Pipas) aims to help young people to develop personal and social skills, and promotes health education and responsible sexuality. Materials which are both playful and pedagogical have been developed for this purpose, and are used as a form of intervention and as part of an action-reflection methodological approach. This project has involved about 2 800 children and young people and is recognised by national and international authorities as a reference tool for the prevention of sexual violence in childhood and adolescence. The impact of Pipas was monitored by the School of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Lisbon. The type of intervention used is determined by age levels and the context and complexity of each particular case. The materials and methodology applied were developed by teachers, educators and technicians.

By implementing the Pipas project, Casa Pia de Lisboa[17] contributed decisively towards the construction of healthy relational environments and promoting the improvement of emotional and sexual relationships. It has also contributed to helping young people reject sexual relations involving violence or coercion and personal relationships based on domination and exploitation.

The DOM plan

The DOM plan (Portuguese acronym for challenges, opportunities and changes) was created by the Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity in April 2008 to address foster care. Its objective is to support

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17. Casa Pia de Lisboa is a public institution whose mission is to promote children's rights and protection, especially children in danger and at risk of exclusion. In addition to implementing the Pipas project, this institution has undergone complete restructurating, in part due to its compromised past. Fewer children are being institutionalised and residential care has been downsized. Casa Pia is made up of 24 children's homes, which in March 2010 were caring for 233 children, representing an average of 9.7 children in each home. Other changes include more child professionals in each care home; targeted specialised training for staff; working with families to reintegrate children; investing in individual life projects for children; and increased surveillance. Casa Pipas is once again actively fulfilling its mission of child protection.

ongoing improvement in the quality of homes for children and young people, by means of constant external monitoring of the programme and follow-up on progress. It also includes strengthening the professional skills of all the technical teams by recruiting 353 senior technicians from different occupational fields; managing vacancies through a central organism; and promoting the rights of children in care, namely through deinstitutionalisation. The creation of individual intervention plans for children ensures that they remain in care no longer than is strictly necessary.

Since the beginning of the plan, 103 training actions have been developed, which have helped reduce the risk of institutional violence or enabled its prompt detection. Children in institutions are particularly vulnerable to abuse, making it crucial for professionals to receive appropriate and specific training to detect violence and abuse.

Rehabilitation mechanisms

The rehabilitation process for child victims of sexual abuse can take place only after the abuse has been reported to the proper authorities or to the services responsible for assessing the validity of evidence. For this purpose, intervention guidelines, helplines and intervention by local entities are invaluable.

Guidelines for intervention

Intervention in cases where evidence points to child sexual abuse should be based on comprehensive guidelines, drawn up to guarantee an efficient and co-ordinated implementation of procedures. In view of this, the Portuguese Association for Victim Support,[18] an NGO, was involved in the Core project and produced two manuals dealing with assisting child sexual abuse victims, "How to understand" followed by "How to act".[19]

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18. This organisation receives financial support from the state on a regular basis.
19. See <http://www.apav.pt/pdf/core_understand.pdf> and< http:www.apav.pt/pdf/core_act.pdf> respectively.

Furthermore, Casa Pia de Lisboa recently elaborated guidelines for action in sexual abuse cases concerning children and adolescents, under the co-ordination of Professor Tilman Furniss.[20] This practical guide was prepared to promote the joint and co-ordinated intervention of several entities and various professionals in cases where there is evidence of sexual abuse. This joint effort enables procedures to be implemented in a harmonious way to ensure the victim's physical protection and emotional support.

Helplines

The purpose of helplines is to signal situations of danger. Some of the current helplines in Portugal are the National Social Emergency helpline, run by the Social Security Institute; SOS Child helpline, run by the NGO Child Support Institute";[21] the ombudspersons helpline Children's Messages; and the Information Line for Victims of Domestic Violence, run by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality. These helplines annually compile information on reported cases, including data on the children concerned, reason for the complaint, follow-up and so forth.

Local commissions – the Commissions for Child and Youth Protection

The Commissions for Child and Youth Protection (CCYP) are recognised entities that promote children's rights within their respective local communities using a holistic approach. They operate under a central nucleus, called the "restricted commission" or as a large group that includes the main local stakeholders, called the "enlarged commission". By December 2009, Portugal had 291 local commissions, representing 93% of Portuguese territory.

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20. Tilman Furniss is a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University Hospital in Munster, Germany.
21. This organisation receives financial support from the state on a regular basis.

Security forces, judicial authorities, as well as other competent entities on child matters, must report children in danger to the CCYP. In 2009, schools were the main referral institutions.

Recommendations

As mentioned in the above examples, policies and strategies to prevent sexual violence against children should be in complete symbiosis with the reporting mechanisms. Only after detection can victims be referred to the appropriate services to begin the rehabilitation process and measures be set up to prevent further abuse.

The following recommendations are top priorities in fighting sexual violence against children.

1. The implementation of prevention policies[22] should:

   - involve children, adolescents, families and professionals;
   - be grounded on knowledge-based evidence, which implies systematic data collection, impact assessments and the exchange of experience at international and national levels;
   - ensure a rights-based approach, namely incorporating child rights perspectives at all levels of the budgetary and intervention process;
   - strengthen family-approach intervention, which may include parenting courses, promoting positive parent-child relationships, conflict resolution skills and opportunities for alternative income-generating activities.

2. Implementation of rehabilitation policies[23] should:

   - promote interdisciplinary co-operation amongst all the different entities involved in the detection process – judicial authorities, social and health care services, schools and NGOs, ensuring that information is shared quickly and accurately;

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22. For example through information and awareness campaigns, beneficial social and economic policies aimed at reducing social inequalities, and educational development policies.
23. These rehabilitation policies include mechanisms for reporting and providing assistance.

- raise awareness of violence against children amongst professionals in contact with children, and throughout the community;

- provide access to child-friendly services, taking into account each child's personal circumstances (age, family context or cultural background);

- offer children the necessary protection in terms of privacy, safety and security.

To safeguard children's fundamental rights and protection against all kinds of violence, abuse and exploitation, all stakeholders should consider these commitments as the elementary principles defining their actions and decisions.

9.
Child helplines as awareness-raising, referral and reporting mechanisms on sexual violence against children

Marieke Noz
Child Helpline International

A key role in reporting sexual violence and abuse

Child helplines are at the forefront of child protection worldwide. Perhaps more than any other child protection mechanism, they are able to listen to, protect and report on the needs and issues of children and young people. This paper will highlight the importance of easy-to-access, anonymous child helplines as a means of reporting accurately on sexual violence, supporting victims with counselling and referral, and calling attention to gaps in child protection systems. Best practice and some of the dilemmas that confront child helplines will be discussed. Data from 2009 on sexual abuse and violence will be presented to highlight the number of reports on sexual violence made through child helplines. In our final recommendations, we provide information on setting up national child helplines where none exist and on improving the effectiveness of existing ones.

Child Helpline International – listening to children and young people

Case study

Janna,[24] age 17, contacted us by phone. Members of the group she had been hanging out with threatened to expose her family to a pornographic

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24. All names and other identifying details have been changed to protect individual privacy.

video they claimed featured her. Unless she paid up, or provided the group with sexual favours, they would show the video. Janna knew the video was a fraud but felt intimidated to the point where she considered suicide the only way out. She did not feel she could confide in anyone. We suggested watching the movie together, to see how damaging (or not) it could actually be, and then chaperoned her at a meeting with her parents. Together with her parents, Janna reported the abuse to the police and the offenders were tried. Janna received counselling and decided to start afresh at a new school. *(CHI, 2010)*.

Child Helpline International (CHI) is a global network of child helplines working to protect the rights of children. CHI was founded in 2003 and has 109 members in 95 countries, 38 of which are European countries. The helplines in our network provide services to children through telecommunications (telephone land lines, mobile phones, fax, Internet) and outreach activities.[25] As can be seen in the case study above, child helplines provide a wide range of critical services, including active listening, counselling and if needed referral services or direct intervention. As the underlying principle of helplines is the protection of children's rights, children are treated with dignity and respect.

In 2009 more than 14 million children or adults on behalf of children contacted a CHI helpline to seek assistance. CHI helplines in Europe responded to nearly 6 million contacts this year alone. Cases related to sexual violence are consistently among the most important reasons for contacting a child helpline: in 2009 in Europe 14% of contacts were related to violence, of which 16% concerned sexual violence. This is an important statistic that should not go unnoticed. Child helplines are therefore very active in this area: raising awareness, conducting outreach and ensuring follow up.

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25. Outreach activities refer to contacts initiated by CHI helplines, such as visiting schools, meeting with street children and so forth.

Enabling, listening, counselling, referring

Enabling

Child helplines offer a range of services to children and young people, and to adults calling on their behalf. Within the CHI network, services range from telephone counselling to in-person, outreach and web-based counselling. Easy access and the anonymity of the service are paramount to the success of child helplines. Most operate with websites or with 3 to 4 digit, easy to remember, toll free telephone numbers to make contact easy, confidential and safe. In Europe, for example, the number 116 111 is reserved as a pan-European number to be used by all existing child helplines, but not all countries in Europe have been able to get the government to support the number.

Table 1 below shows the different communication channels used to contact CHI helplines in Europe and worldwide, giving children and adults on behalf of children access to counselling services.

Table 1: Contact with CHI helplines in Europe and worldwide in 2009

	Europe	% Europe	Total (world)	% world
In person				
Outreach-based contact	8 180	0.5%	1 614 253	12%
Walk-ins/in-person contact	2 958	0%	61 627	0%
Sub-total	**11 138**	**0.5%**	**1 675 880**	**12%**
By post	57	0%	48 660	0%
Telephone based				
Fax	0	0%	968	0%
SMS	21 639	0.5%	206 454	1%
Telephone	5 101 290	91%	11 574 011	83%
Sub-total	**5 122 929**	**91.5%**	**11 754 425**	**84%**

(contd.)

	Europe	% Europe	Total (world)	% world
Web-based				
Chat	142 757	3%	166 213	1%
E-mail	40 378	1%	75 993	1%
Web post and bulletin board	291 810	5%	339 305	2%
Sub-total	**474 945**	**8%**	**581 511**	**4%**
Total	**5 609 012**	**100%**	**14 011 816**	**100%**

Source: CHI data 2009

Listening

Case study

> A grandmother contacted us by e-mail to get advice. The grandmother wrote that she had noticed what she thought might be overly sexual behaviour in the play of her 9-year-old grandson with his younger cousin. The grandmother was worried that what she saw might be an indication of sexual abuse of her grandson by an adult. She worried that the boy was mimicking things done to him in his play with his younger cousin. Although she had expressed her concern to the boy's parents, they had not taken her seriously (*CHI, 2010*).

The child helpline that received the e-mail contacted the grandmother and provided her with support, concrete information and advice about how to deal with the situation. For the grandmother, simply having someone knowledgeable to talk to who could confirm that indeed her instincts warranted further investigation was already substantial. The helpline provided her with articles and information on abuse warning signs as tools with which to make informed decisions and better help her grandson. Ultimately, the grandmother decided to talk to her daughter and take further action herself if her daughter continued to refuse. The child helpline could also assist her if this would be needed.

A recent analysis of contacts from the Dutch child helpline De Kindertelefoon shows that there is a remarkable difference in the severity of cases reported via web-based services and telephone call-ins. The analysis showed that the increased anonymity of indirect contact through online chat services stimulates "callers" to disclose their issues more readily. This has prompted specific child helplines to start or to enhance existing web-based counselling services (Fukkink and Hermans, 2009).

> In 2009 we started services through a contact form on the website. We noticed that this way of communication is very popular as a means of first contact. Many reports concern sexual abuse on the Internet and online prostitution. (*Helpline.org, Poland*)

Counselling

The case study above also illustrates the phases or steps of a counselling trajectory. As with the grandmother, initial contact with child helplines is often exploratory in nature, with "callers" looking for assurance that what they are dealing with is indeed a real problem. The next step is for the child helpline to assess the case and help the caller draw a conclusion. Finally, the child helpline will offer concrete information and help. CHI has developed an initial counselling manual, which contains guidelines and shares best practices from child helplines across the world (see:< http://www.childhelpline.org>). The manual includes training and training updates for counsellors that have been specifically trained to deal with children and child-related issues.

Case study

> The caller, age 17, wanted to help his girlfriend, who was being sexually abused by her father. The girl was terrified of her father and had not reported him to the police. Her mother was unaware of the situation. In the last few days the situation had worsened. The caller reported that his girlfriend was on the verge of suicide, as she did not want to be abused again. The counsellor informed the caller about a crisis intervention centre close to the girl's home, and the caller expressed his relief. By contacting

the centre he was finally able to propose practical measures to his girl-friend as support (*CHI, EU child helpline, 2010*).

Referring and intervention – reflections on confidentiality

Case studies

A female caller reported that she had been raped by her boyfriend. She was worried that she might be pregnant. She wanted to break up with her boyfriend, but was afraid he would take revenge on her. We discussed several possibilities. Breaking up with her boyfriend and reporting the rape, as well as taking a pregnancy test. She did not feel ready to report her boyfriend to the police. We informed her that we could refer her to professional institutions which offered face-to-face counselling. She was interested in this type of support (*CHI, EU child helpline, 2010*).

Andrea, age 9, called the child helpline because she felt trapped in her situation. She just wanted to talk. She had been abandoned by her mother as a baby and was left in her father's care until she was 2. Her mother then claimed custody and she was sent to live with her mother and stepfather. From then on she suffered sexual abuse by the stepfather and mental and physical abuse from her mother. She was very afraid of both of them and did not want to take action. The child helpline spoke with Andrea for a long time, trying to assess if she had anyone in her entourage that she could ask for help, such as a trusted person. Finally Andrea mentioned that she felt comfortable with one of her teachers. The child helpline asked Andrea if they could talk to the teacher to assist her and she consented. The teacher helped Andrea officially denounce her mother and stepfather. Andrea was referred to child welfare services and placed in the foster care of her father's relatives. Furthermore, the child helpline ascertained that Andrea received therapy and was monitored by both the child helpline and the child welfare service, and that she remained in touch with the teacher to keep track of her case (*CHI, 2010*).

The caller, age 15, was raped on the very evening he called us. He had answered an ad placed by a man offering private computer lessons. At

their second meeting the boy had some beers. Then he lost consciousness. When he woke up, he was naked and bleeding at the anus. The man was still next to him. The boy fled the apartment and called us. We discussed the possibility of reporting the man to the police with him, but the caller refused. He was very ashamed of his naiveté and did not want to involve his parents either. We talked about his guilt feelings and showed him that he was not guilty of anything. The boy wanted to think things over and said he would call again (*CHI, EU child helpline, 2010*).

The case studies above illustrate how a child helpline is bound by consented intervention and referral. Child helplines must follow strict confidentiality protocols before referring a caller to other actors in the child protection system. When a referral is for information only it is less complicated, but in the cases cited above where other persons and organisations are brought into the process, the informed consent of the individual involved is compulsory.

This golden rule should be broken only when a child is in immediate danger. In such cases a child helpline may have to make the decision to breach confidentiality. Confidentiality is one of the core principles which make child helplines effective, and it is crucial to ensure anonymity and easily accessed, non-official contact. Because of the confidentiality clause, callers are enabled and stimulated to proactively contribute to finding a solution to their problem. This alone is already empowering. The caller is in control and will, once consent is obtained, receive professional support. Nevertheless, there are times when counsellors will find themselves face to face with a situation where breaching confidentiality is paramount to a child's survival. They must also be able to suppress their own feelings of injustice and abide by the wishes of the caller, as clearly shown in the case above.

Ultimately, breaching confidentiality is supported by protocols that have been drawn up for this purpose by helplines worldwide. These protocols are informed by organisational and cultural values, as well as each society's conception of childhood and parenting.

The protocols are also grounded in international and national laws and conventions, such as children's needs as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are also based on children's hierarchy of needs.[26] This model orders the basic needs of children, with physical safety as the highest need and the philosophical principle of consented intervention as a need when all others are being fulfilled. In addition, Child Helpline International supports its network members in drafting and fine tuning their protocols.

Child helplines as reporting services

Helpline reports

In 2009 we witnessed a huge increase in the number of calls concerning sexual abuse, sexual bullying and suicidal tendencies *(The Safety Line, Czech Republic).*

In 2009, 32 cases of child sexual abuse were identified from calls to the helpline number 116 111. With the support of authorised institutions, the best measures for stopping abuse and recovering from the negative effects of such a traumatic situation were put into effect (*Telefonul Copilului, Romania*).

Of all the reasons for which this helpline is contacted, so many are related to sexual abuse that each year if rated according to importance, sexual abuse topics would be in the top 10 that NSPCC/Childline UK receives (NSPCC/ Childline UK, United Kingdom).

Calls about physical, emotional and sexual abuse and violence increased to 48% of all calls received in 2009. This is 9% more than in 2008. It is disconcerting that half of the reported cases concern family incest. It should be noted that most police charges were not incurred by the victims, but by adults close to the victim. These cases often remain undocumented out of fear of escalating the situation and due to a distrust of

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26. See Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory at <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/regsys/maslow.html>.

the institutions competent to protect and provide care and psychosocial support to the victims (*SOS Helpline for Children and Youth, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"*).

The examples above clearly show the importance of child helplines as a crucial service and lifeline for children, but they also show that helplines are in a unique position to collect accurate data on concerns and issues facing children and young people. Because helplines are easily accessible and are a first, unofficial contact, children are often more inclined to discuss problems with them than with other (no less important) services, making helplines privy to vital information not usually shared with parents, peers or educators. This is all the more true for the particularly sensitive topic of sexual violence.

CHI has been collecting data, based on contacts of its member helplines, since 2004. Child helplines can use the overall data they collect to disclose sexual violence and measure its severity, identify gaps in child protection systems and identify needs for follow up. These data provide relevant stakeholders and duty-bearers with very real tools for advocacy and policy making, making child helplines ideally suited to serve as reporting mechanisms on child rights issues. Child protection services also make use of the data to improve and/or advocate for preventive measures and improvement. In addition, child helplines have specific data that can support preventive action in their localities as well.

Child helplines also work in co-operation with specific child protection services, such as children's ombudspersons or the higher councils. The overall aim is to achieve a comprehensive child protection service in every country in the world.

All CHI data are available in our yearly flagship publication *Connecting to children*. Examples of CHI data collection and its vast extent in 2009 are given in the two tables below. Table 2 gives figures on the commercial exploitation (including sexual) of children worldwide. Table 3 gives figures on the abuse and violence against children per world region.

Table 2: Commercial exploitation of children per region in 2009

Commercial exploitation	Africa	%	Americas	%	Asia-Pacific	%	Europe	%	MENA	%	World	%
Bonded child labour	8 467	29%	8	1%	4 730	12%	53	1%	648	35%	13 906	19%
Child sexual exploitation	**2 082**	**7%**	**117**	**11%**	**4 087**	**11%**	**797**	**20%**	**127**	**7%**	**7 210**	**10%**
Child trafficking	2 607	9%	288	28%	6 744	17%	69	2%	6	0%	9 715	13%
Children in armed conflict	87	0%	0	0%	3 033	8%	0	0%	10	1%	3 130	4%
Children used for begging	2 655	9%	382	37%	1 440	4%	2 665	67%	95	5%	7 238	10%
Children used for criminal activity	1 520	5%	32	3%	1 504	4%	48	1%	37	2%	3 141	4%
Domestic child labour	7 504	25%	13	1%	6 727	17%	222	6%	20	1%	14 486	19%
Kidnapping	181	1%	128	12%	3 949	10%	11	0%	20	1%	4 289	6%
Other child labour	2 381	8%	40	4%	5 006	13%	69	2%	8	0%	7 504	10%
Unspecified and other	2 093	7%	22	2%	1 305	4%	47	1%	869	47%	4 381	6%
Total	**29 577**	**100%**	**1 030**	**100%**	**38 570**	**100%**	**3 981**	**100%**	**1 840**	**100%**	**75 002**	**100%**

Source: CHI data 2009

Table 3: Abuse and violence against children per region in 2009

Abuse and violence	Africa	%	Americas	%	Asia-Pacific	%	Europe	%	MENA	%	World	%
Bullying	954	2%	17 391	11%	20 461	25%	76 412	32%	1 709	10%	116 928	21%
Domestic violence	6 799	12%	9 474	6%	8 059	10%	4 310	2%	860	5%	29 502	5%
Emotional	6 375	11%	22 299	14%	5 760	7%	18 791	8%	2 148	12%	55 373	10%
Neglect	6 720	12%	27 920	18%	4 764	7%	18 788	8%	1 087	6%	60 279	11%
Physical	13 330	23%	23 446	15%	16 987	21%	58 725	24%	3 593	20%	116 082	21%
Sexual	*5 774*	*10%*	*15 967*	*10%*	*10 104*	*12%*	*44 052*	*18%*	*921*	*5%*	*76 819*	*14%*
Unspecified and other	14 487	25%	26 905	17%	9 592	12%	16 655	7%	7 178	40%	74 818	14%
Witness to violence	2 890	5%	10 748	7%	4 254	5%	3 211	1%	457	3%	21 560	4%
Total	**57 329**	**100%**	**154 150**	**100%**	**80 981**	**100%**	**240 944**	**100%**	**17 953**	**100%**	**551 361**	**100%**

Source: CHI data 2009

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated the importance of child helplines as a counselling and referral system for children and young people in need. Furthermore data have shown that child helplines are crucial partners for information in the effort to eradicate sexual violence against children in Europe and worldwide. We conclude therefore by seconding the recommendations made by both the United Nations and the Council of Europe in several legal texts, the most recent of which is the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201, Article 13): "Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage and support the setting up of information services, such as telephone or Internet helplines, to provide advice to callers, even confidentially or with due regard for their anonymity."

Recommendations

Based on the data presented in this chapter Child Helpline International recommends that all governments in Europe either support the installation of a toll free, easy to remember and anonymous 24-hour national helpline for children, or provide more support for child helplines that already exist.

To set up a national helpline, governments should:

- provide funds to establish and run the service;
- allocate a toll free 3- to 6-digit number (116-111);
- ensure the helpline works with an intervention and follow-up model so that each caller will receive counselling, rescue if necessary and intervention to ensure long-term rehabilitation of the child;
- provide funds to strengthen co-operation with existing referral institutions.

If a child helpline is already successfully in place, governments can:

- recognise the child helpline as a tool for child protection;
- ensure sustainability, by facilitating long-term planning and protecting an optimal amount of children by providing long-term funding;
- recognise helplines as a resource for gathering data on children's issues at national level, and allocate funds according to the needs derived from this data.

Child Helpline International has developed several guidelines and manuals for organisations interested in starting a child helpline. Among our publications are:

- *How to build your child helpline manual (2010)*
- *Counselling manual (2010)*
- *Good governance manual (2009)*
- *Fundraising manual (2008)*

These can be requested from <info@childhelplineinternational.org> or from Child Helpline International, Herengracht 418, 1017 BZ Amsterdam. See also: <http://www.childhelplineinternational.org>.

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10.
Training professionals – An essential strategy for eradicating child sexual abuse

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Introduction

Eradicating child sexual abuse should be a social and institutional commitment expressed through the development of effective intervention programmes that include three elements:

- training family and child professionals;
- co-ordinating services dealing with children in five areas – education, health, social welfare, the police and legal system;
- creating specialised treatment services for victims and aggressors.

All three elements are interrelated, but the first – training professionals – is an essential condition for both the co-ordination and creation of specialised services. Training child and family professionals in child abuse in general and child sexual abuse in particular should be a core component of the protection system, and should not be around just because the issue is politically and socially sensitive. Otherwise, the system will fail in fulfilling the very purpose for which it was created: to ensure the optimal development of children and safeguard their right to be protected from all forms of violence.

This chapter analyses some of the elements that the relevant state institutions should consider when defining their strategies for training professionals.

Training areas

States should ensure that training relevant to child sexual abuse is part of the university educational curricula of all those who will work directly with children and adolescents in any of the five above-mentioned areas. This is especially important for those who will be responsible for children's welfare and development, such as peda-gogues, teachers, psychologists, educators, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, prosecutors, police, social workers or sports coaches, among many others.

This kind of training should complement children's and adoles-cents' normal school education, meaning that society at large should undergo education in child abuse prevention as part of the sexual-affective education taught in schools (Wurtele, 2008). Children and adolescents need to know what sexual abuse means, how to recognise it and how to be responsible for their own relationships and feelings. They must also understand that people they love can inflict damage upon them, know what to do if they become aware of a case of sexual abuse or if it happens to them, and what resources are available to help them (Horno, 2008a).

This would eliminate the social taboo surrounding the issue and make disclosure easier. And when they become adults, even those who will not work as child professionals, will have acquired the tools to protect the children they relate to on a personal level.

This kind of approach to sexual and affective education treats chil-dren as active beings engaged in society and capable of self-protective behaviour. It will also put a stop to the discourse of protectionism, defeatism and victimisation which, based on a misunderstanding of the concept of prevention, is often transmitted to children – a biased view that gives children the impression they are helpless, and which will only increase the risk of abuse.

Network building as a core component of training

Training should be interdisciplinary and linked to the creation of local primary prevention circuits. Prevention works when it is implemented through effective networking, backed by an explicit commitment from the institutions and individuals involved. Networking has proved to be more effective at the local level.

Training professionals in active service should not take place in isolated units within training programmes in their fields, but should be interdisciplinary with other professions and areas. A professional sexual abuse training programme, using a good practice model, should be conducted locally, setting up a common work space for the different areas involved. This will create a shared language and agreed protocols for action that will remain in place after the training is completed, and enable professionals to learn about work strategies used in other professions that they will have to work with everyday if they want to develop effective intervention (Alonso and Horno, 2004).

An experiential methodology

Whatever the methodology chosen for each specific training programme, a common mistake is to approach technical training as a rational assimilation of strategies and expertise. Training on child sexual abuse should also include experiential work on violence. This will enable professionals to incorporate concepts not only intellectually but in a personal and emotional way as well.

The understanding and conceptualisation of violence is universal, although strategies to address it should differ according to the context. Similarly, violence is a continuum of experiences ranging from the most common forms of physical and / or psychological punishment to the most extreme forms of abuse. For it to be understood in all its magnitude, experiential work is needed: theoretical concepts are never set out a priori; they are constructed by participants using concrete examples from their own lives and in which they feel

involved. In this way, theoretical contents are legitimised experientially and the professionals are able to "feel inside each concept" they have to use in their work (Horno, 2008b).

Experiential methodology plays a key role in helping professionals recognise abuse in its exact dimension and find resources for self-protection that they will later pass on to families and children. In so doing, they will break with a cold and detached vision of the problem, one that carries with it a heavy burden of powerlessness and victimism, and of prejudices and rejection as well.

Another key aspect of training should be to correct misleading definitions of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse tends to be understood as a form of violence primarily related to sex. However, sex is not the only element which identifies sexual abuse as violence; the abuse of power exerted by the aggressor over the victim must also be taken into account. In this case, the abuse of power is performed in a sexual way, which gives this kind of abuse a number of characteristics that must be addressed. However, professionals should not approach a case of sexual abuse as a matter of sexual relationships, but as they would when facing other forms of violence. Professionals must also learn to differentiate between child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, which are related problems, but ones which require different working strategies.

Two key concepts must be taken into account in the design of training methodology. The first one is the universality of sexual abuse issues, which goes beyond any specific culture. Different cultures assign different meanings and causes to the experience of abuse, but it is essential that professionals understand the elements that define the experience of both the victim and aggressor.

The second key concept is the difference between a learning environment and a therapeutic one. It is not uncommon for sexual abuse training to revive experiences from professionals' own lives, experiences that may require therapy work and for which a distinct space

should be created, especially when the training is generating a high level of personal stress.

Violence is detected and understood in its magnitude when it is experienced viscerally from the flesh as a child – and not intellectually as an adult. Crucial concepts such as "damage" or "power" cannot be understood unless we learn to identify them in our own lives first. Only then can they be understood in the emotional framework of the people that professionals work with. Training workshops that last no more than a short period (10-12 hours) can produce lasting changes and provide teams with the elements needed to structure their professional interventions through an emotional understanding of the families and the children they work with (Horno, 2008b).

Training axes

Training for professionals should target three differential axes: prevention, detection and intervention, each of which should have a different focus and distinct content.

Prevention

Prevention of child sexual abuse requires differentiating primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies. Primary prevention is all action taking place at the level of the general population and includes sexual and affective education in school and awareness campaigns, among others (Lyles, Cohen and Brown, 2009). Secondary prevention includes activities developed with populations at risk (it is important to remember that every child by virtue of being one is at risk of sexual abuse). Tertiary prevention includes all activities carried out in a particular environment (school, neighbourhood, community) where a case of child sexual abuse has already occurred (Horno, Santos and Del Molino, 2000).

Therefore professionals should be introduced to a prevention approach that is based on a good practice model within an overall approach that promotes good treatment for children and sexual and affective education. This approach recognises the child as a rights

holder and the importance of empathy. It respects a child's development and promotes positive affective bonds and non-violent conflict resolution.

Training for professionals should encourage acquiring the skills needed to design preventive strategies, taking into account both potential victims and potential aggressors, whether they are adults or minors.

Detection

Training on abuse detection is the most commonly taught, but not always using the most appropriate approach. This is particularly important because many professionals lack the skills needed to detect child sexual abuse, fear legal proceedings and their implications and encounter problems in building effective networking.

Besides these difficulties, which are derived from the system itself, other problems arise from the nature of abuse. For example, offenders are often difficult to detect because they tend to be socially integrated, have a high intellectual level and opportunities to access children. Professionals must be enabled to understand the dynamics of power that aggressors use to abuse children if they are to properly assess and act upon the damage caused to the victim. These can range from creating the opportunities that will give them access to children, choosing the most vulnerable victim possible (Verdugo and Bermejo, 1999), creating a relationship of power – and if possible of affection and intimacy – with the victim, through to ensuring the victim's silence and submission. Detecting domestic abuse is often hindered by the social need to consider families as a safe and protective environment – which sometimes they are not.

Cases of abuse can be detected by the direct disclosure of the child, by observing a child's behaviour or through third party information. Precisely because few children disclose abuse when it first happens, knowledge of sexual abuse indicators is essential if cases are to be correctly identified. There is no specific and differential set of symptoms of abuse, but a series of indicators that should alert professionals

to the possibility of abuse. In most cases no physical injury can be identified, so behavioural indicators are of vital importance – especially considering that abuse may have affected all areas of a child's development. Thus indicators need to be behavioural as well as cognitive, social and emotional.

Intervention

The third axis is training for intervention in cases of child sexual abuse. In this area it is essential to differentiate between therapeutic intervention and other intervention objectives – it must be clear from the beginning that only those professionals with specialised training should undertake assessments and therapeutic interventions with children and adolescents, whether victims or sex offenders (Echeburúa and Guerricaechevarría, 2000). A model of good practice used for training professionals responsible for treatment programmes must provide for specific training, supervision of work being carried out and joint intervention in the cases. Therapeutic intervention with the child should always be done on a team work basis.

For professionals who will not be involved with specific therapeutic treatment but will still face child sex abuse cases, it is important that they are trained on how to react when directly confronted with disclosure. They must be able to counteract a child's sense of being at fault. Shame, guilt and anger are emotions that play a fundamental role in abuse and have to be dealt with at the time of the disclosure. Professionals must provide the necessary emotional support, never question the veracity of the events described and accompany the child during the whole process, including social and judicial proceedings. And, of course, they have to find resources and help ensure that the specific security measures needed to protect the child are put into effect.

In conclusions, training professionals in child sexual abuse involves a change in political and social attitudes towards this issue, and the way in which it is confronted. Training should instil in those

accompanying and working with victims and perpetrators alike a sense of hope and of life, and enable them to understand the scientific and social significance of their work. Training programmes that accomplish this will not only empower professionals to carry out their work, which can be very trying personally, with unflagging commitment, it will also endow this work with meaning that goes far beyond that of the merely professional.

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The responsibility and co-ordination of professionals in tackling child sexual abuse

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Introduction

The problem of abuse and neglect in general, including sexual abuse, was systematically tackled first some 15 years ago in Croatia. Data concerning the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Croatia proved to be very similar to those in other countries. A study conducted by Vranić, Karlović and Gabelica (2002), showed that 19.7% of the subjects had experienced sexual abuse. A more recent Croatian study shows that 14% of young people report that they have been exposed to sexual abuse (Buljan Flander, 2007; Luca Mrđen, Ćosić and Buljan Flander, 2007). Increased public awareness and the growing number of reports of abuse, as well as survey results, have produced the effect of "blowing the lid off" the issue in Croatia. The changes that have taken place in policy and practice here are the result of government and non-government organisation (NGO) actions. It is clear that the problem of abuse and of mental health care in general has outgrown the capacities of the existing system.

Significant changes in the law and in child protection policies dealing with abuse led to the creation of the Child Protection Centre in Zagreb, a specialised institution that works with traumatised children, including the sexually abused. In this centre, a specialised team approach is provided for each child. The centre also has the important function of facilitating co-operation between various institutions aiming at better child protection.

Training, research and publishing activities

In addition to its work with traumatised children and their parents, the centre's activities include research, training, publishing and public actions. In the past few years the centre has conducted several surveys, some of which have contributed to public awareness of issues surrounding abuse and neglect in general, leading to a better understanding of the problem of sexually abused children and to designing prevention and intervention programmes in the field of mental health care. The prevalence study we conducted on child and adolescent sexual abuse deepened our insight into the issue and also examined the consequences of child abuse trauma on mental health in adolescents (Buljan Flander, 2007; Luca Mrđen, Ćosić and Buljan Flander 2007; Profaca, 2008). Research into young people's exposure to sexual content on the Internet was conducted in cooperation with the NGO Brave Phone (Buljan Flander, Ćosić and Profaca, 2009). The results obtained were used to draft preventive programmes and to design multidisciplinary training programmes for professionals. Furthermore, a study of the experiences and attitudes of primary health care physicians was conducted, which showed that physicians were aware of their lack of knowledge in this area and of their need for further training (Buljan Flander, Ćosić and Štimac, 2008).

The centre has also published a series of handbooks for professionals and parents. Dealing with the protection of children from sexual abuse are: "Sexual development of children" (Krmek and Milanović Lambeta, 2006), fliers for parents of sexually abused children, "It's happened – what now?" (Profaca, Puhovski and Gojković, 2006); "Signs and consequences of sexual abuse", "Myths and facts about sexual abuse", "Family support of the sexually abused child", "Treatment of the sexually abused child" and "Parents' most frequent questions".

Since 2003 and in addition to its ongoing training in the field of education, social care, judiciary, police and so forth, the centre has conducted several systematic training programmes on the issue of

responsibility and co-ordination in child abuse, including child sexual abuse. These were supported by the relevant ministries and the city authorities. The table below outlines these programmes.

Table: Training programmes on sexual abuse for child professionals

Participants	Training focus	No. of participants	Partners
Social care centre professionals	Child abuse and neglect	170	Ministry of Health and Social Care
Elementary school professionals	Abuse of children and bullying in the family and at school	640	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
Secondary school professionals	Youth and abuse in the family and at school	250	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
Family centre professionals	Child abuse and neglect	20	Ministry of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity
Judiciary professionals	Child abuse and neglect	40	Judicial Academy
Ongoing training for physicians	Child abuse and neglect	62	-
Paediatricians, family and school physicians	Prevention and intervention in the area of child abuse and neglect	150	Ministry of Health and Social Care
Professionals from various fields (education, health care, social care, judiciary, police, NGOs)	Multidisciplinary approach and co-operation in interventions in the area of child abuse and peer bullying	100	Government of Croatia

Professionals' sensitisation to various forms of child sexual abuse

In training professionals from various fields, it is important to clearly define how the effects of child sexual abuse are manifested and problematic sexual behaviour in children and adolescents which requires intervention and preventive measures.

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse involves a dependent, developmentally immature child or adolescent engaged in sexual activities which they cannot understand or give mature consent to (Hobbs, Hanks and Wynne, 1999). Child sexual abuse traumatisation is complex and is usually caused by more than exposure to a single traumatic event. Child professionals need to understand the connection between the trauma of sexual victimisation and the different levels of a child's adjustment to it. During the different phases, a child has to cope both with the abuse itself and with the surrounding social environment after the abuse. According to Hartman and Burgess (1989) these periods comprise several phases.

With regard to the *first phase* (pre-traumatic phase), it is important to assess the child's family history, including the quality of family relations, the family's social resources, family values and the quality of their lifestyle (and the degree of stress), and the child's support sources. To assess these factors is to assess the vulnerability of the child. Although this represents the family situation prior to abuse, it is important to know about the child's family environment and its impact of the child's development. These factors are important for further recovery of the child.

The second phase (exposure to a traumatic event/events) includes exposure to sexual abuse and the child's way of coping with it. *The third phase* (disclosure/confiding) relates to the child's disclosure of the abuse, and how the child's social environment reacts. In this phase, it is important to focus on the characteristics of the child's disclosure, symptoms and reactions of persons who play a significant

role in the child's life, such as parents, teachers and so forth. *The fourth phase* (the aftermath of trauma) covers a longer period of time (about two years) and includes the police investigation, legal consequences and the child's therapeutic treatment. This period focuses on behavioural changes, adjustment and support for the child.

All of the above have to be taken into account when training professionals, including the distinct role that each will play during the various phases.

Children with sexual behaviour problems

Problematic sexual behaviour can sometimes be spotted in children ages 6 to 12. Despite earlier observations about the connection between problematic sexual behaviour in children and sexual abuse, we know today that the intentions and motives for such behaviour may not be connected to sexual satisfaction. It is not clear whether there is an increase in incidences of this type of behaviour or if the increase stems from public awareness and changes in reporting. Definitions of problematic sexual behaviour describe it as behaviour initiated by children, which includes contact with private parts of other children and which is potentially embarrassing for both. Since these children make up a heterogeneous group, training for various professionals in this area should try and define at least some of the characteristics and origins of problematic sexual behaviour and its relation to family factors, which may not necessarily indicate a history of sexual abuse, but other characteristics and forms of abuse instead. Thus it is important to focus on the complex family, societal, developmental and biological factors, and possible individual or group treatment for children with problematic sexual behaviour and their parents (Saunders, Berliner, Hanson, 2004; Bonner and Fahey, 1998; Bonner, Walker, Berliner, 1999).

Adolescent sex offenders

The adolescent sex offender is a person between puberty and the age of legal maturity, who commits any sexual activity with a person of any age against the victim's will, in an aggressive, abusive or threatening way. In training for professionals, it is important to define the empirical indicators, theoretical grounds and clinical characteristics of adolescent sex offenders. Their typology shows that they vary according to: motivation; severity of the act: pattern of the act and choice of the victim; psychological characteristics and personality features; family dynamics; and the level of family and peer support. Despite the fact that there are still mutually exclusive and vague answers to questions surrounding adolescent offenders, efficient treatment strategies for the victim and the underage perpetrator, including preventing recidivism and risk assessment, can be developed (Luca Mrđen, 2005; Chaffin, Bonner and Pierce, 2003a, 2003b; Buljan Flander and Jelić, 2010).

Professional competence and the acquisition of knowledge

As previously mentioned, our training sessions aimed to develop the competences, knowledge and skills that are needed by child professions in health care, education, judiciary, social care, police and NGOs to set up and implement better intervention and prevention measures. The key areas and topics included in our training sessions are presented below.

- *Sexual abuse:* this relates to understanding the phenomenon, prevalence, specificities of post-sex abuse trauma, short- and long-term consequences (Buljan Flander, 2003).

- *First contact with the sexually abused child – what happens when the child discloses?* This issue is important for those working with a wide variety of groups of children and not only for professionals working specifically with sexually abused children.

- *Forensic interviews* with children suspected of being abused and appropriate interview techniques for children of differing ages and characteristics are dealt with.

- *Supporting the sexually abused child and intervention after disclosure:* procedures must be put in place to ensure the child's safety, continuity and well-being. Once the child feels safe, professional help should be provided to alleviate the overwhelming emotional stress on both child and family (psychological first aid) and include them in the treatment.

- *Assessment and treatment (therapy) of the sexually abused child:* this is of primary interest to mental health professionals and those assessing the child's recovery after the trauma. This is focused on the diversity of symptoms in children. Assessments and treatments grounded in interventions which evidence has shown to be efficient are especially important in professional training.

- *Supporting the non-abusive parent of the sexually abused child:* this is based on indicators that non-abusive parents are exposed to serious stress during and after the child's disclosure of the experience. Parental values and support are significantly connected to how well the child recovers.

Training for child professionals must also address the professional and personal challenges that can arise in working with sexually abused children, including ethical dilemmas and the law. Besides dealing with occurrences of resistance, emotional and internal conflicts, a clear definition is needed for professional standards that include the concepts of "in good faith", "non-malevolence" and "reasonable doubt". One of the most frequent ethical dilemmas that child professionals encounter is the obligation to report abuse on the one hand and the principle of confidentiality on the other. Since child protection professionals are bound by law to report sexual abuse, they should benefit from support and discussion with other professionals when confronted with this type of dilemma.

Cross-institutional co-ordination

Organising cross-institutional co-operation in cases of sexual abuse is one of the most important aspects of a professional's training. Better mutual understanding, motivation, awareness, knowledge and the capacity to act can lead to improved co-operation and child protection. A multidisciplinary approach will facilitate several important steps: understanding the problem; risk assessment of the child; backing child support, including treatment and family support programmes; facilitating reporting of suspected abuse and neglect; raising awareness of the need to protect children; and facilitating crisis management (co-operation with the police, state attorney, health and social care, mental health care, school, kindergarten, home, family). Training for professionals must provide information about other services and about one's own role in co-operating with others – with all players focused on safeguarding the child's best interests. Co-operation with the judiciary, supporting the child during the court trial and implementing child protection measures when needed are very important.

Professionals at the Child Protection Centre in Zagreb have developed their own model for team work, and this has been incorporated into training for other professionals. It is based on respect for the specialised knowledge and skills of each professional; multidisciplinarity; team work and co-operation with other services; direct and indirect interventions by the team members; and the personal involvement of professionals.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed the experiences of the Child Protection Centre in Zagreb in designing and conducting training for child professionals, training that is directed towards giving them the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to work responsibly with sexually abused children.

The professional training courses we have developed are based on the multidisciplinary approach used at the centre. This approach includes appropriate intervention that is compliant with professional principles and takes into account the specialised knowledge of each relevant profession. It is able to set up measures that protect children from further sexual abuse and provide help for the family. It can treat and stop the development of symptoms and disorders related to abuse, and finally it can relieve the tension created by a horrible secret, and re-establish a child's feeling of safety, which has been so grossly undermined.

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12.
Teaching children to protect themselves from sexual abuse

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We must let go of our unrealistic wish to protect our children from life's hardships and cruelty and focus instead on strengthening their resilience. Children develop resilience by being encouraged to recognise their abilities and inner resources. They need help to acquire skills to cope, recover from hardships and to prepare for future challenges.

Why teach children about preventing sexual abuse?

Learning about sexual abuse prevention is necessary, but it is not enough to ensure children's safety. Prevention of this type of abuse and teaching about it are the responsibility of adults.

Children by nature are particularly vulnerable to all types of abuse because of their temporary helplessness and dependence on adults and their lack of knowledge about danger and self-protection.

Researchers point out that statistics on sexual abuse reveal only the tip of the iceberg. Feelings of guilt, helplessness and shame, combined with a fear of how those closest to them will react and of the perpetrator's threats are the most common reasons why children, and often adults important to them who are aware of the abuse, do not report the abuse and seek help. If the abuse is reported, it is often months or years afterwards, especially if the abuser is a person close to a child.

In at least 80% of cases, sexual perpetrators are known to children. They may be parents or step-parents, relatives, family friends or caregivers. Perpetrators go to great lengths to gain access to children, and often choose jobs that provide them with a legitimate, unrestricted and unsupervised approach to children. They carefully choose obedient, submissive and emotionally needy children with low self-esteem, who know little about human sexuality and are passive and fearful. Such children are the least likely to withstand victimisation. Contrary to a common misconception, perpetrators do not look like monsters: they are seemingly normal, pleasant and polite people. They use grooming techniques on a targeted child and often on the child's parents, so as to win their confidence, affection and acceptance.

They use many methods to keep children silent: bribes, threats, emotional blackmail and physical abuse. The majority of perpetrators are heterosexual males. Not many have a criminal history (around 5%). People who abuse children outside their families most frequently abuse children inside their families as well. Studies show that female perpetrators account for 20% and 5% of abuse of boys and girls respectively. In around 30% of sexual abuse cases, the perpetrators are adolescents under 17 years of age. Many of them are victims of sexual abuse themselves (Sanderson, 2004.)

To teach children effectively, parents and teachers should be well informed about the complex impact of sexual abuse on children and other key facts. Whatever advice or instructions are given to children, they must be grounded in honest explanation and a good knowledge of the facts. It is thus extremely important that parents and teachers distinguish facts from misconceptions. Sex offenders count on misconceptions and turn them into an advantage. Parents and teachers should also know that some of our frequent messages to children may actually contribute to their victimisation (Adults are always right! A policeman will take you away if you don't behave! Give your uncle a kiss!). Finkelhor (2007:643) writes: "There is broad agreement that the burden of preventing victimisation should not lie exclusively

in the hands of children. However, if there are potentially effective things that children can do, it would also be morally reprehensible not to equip them with such skills."

Developing a supportive environment to ensure children's safety

Distrust and lack of safety have become topical issues. There is a growing trend to perceive cordiality and kindness, especially between children and adults, with suspicion and scepticism, making the development of a safe environment for children a challenging issue.

Having good communication with children is of key importance. It implies openness, determination, straightforwardness and a friendly, non-intimidating atmosphere. It can facilitate giving children clear guidelines to ensure their safety and teaching them how to recognise potential dangers. This is the only way for adults to pave the way for children to speak openly about their concerns and doubts, or disclose sexual abuse.

Discussions with children about the prevention of sexual abuse should follow the same logic as other safety messages – focus on safe behaviour and skills rather than on the risks. A supportive environment facilitates the sexual education of children. This includes teaching them the interpersonal skills that are indispensable for safe and satisfactory relationships. Yet some societies are unwilling to introduce it. This is particularly depriving for children from families that ignore the subject or maintain a negative discourse about human sexuality. Sexually naïve children are more prone to victimisation and readily fall into an offender's trap of secrecy.

Once sexual abuse has been revealed, re-establishing a safe environment is the key to a child's recovery. Children are very often distrustful, especially if the perpetrator is a family member. An inappropriate reaction from the adult to whom the child has revealed the abuse may cause more psychological damage than abuse itself. It is crucial to listen carefully to a child, ask questions to obtain more

information, take measures to protect the child victim and report the incident to police and social services. Children must understand that they are not being blamed for abuse and that they have done the right thing by speaking up. This is important because perpetrators often throw responsibility for abuse onto the victim.

A safer children's environment can be ensured by attentive adults in the community who, upon discovering or suspecting abuse, do their best to stop it and to support victims. Adults must be aware of their responsibility to protect children and report abuse, because judicial proceedings and the sentencing of perpetrators also contribute to increasing safety for children and the community.

Teaching children to protect themselves and disclose abuse – key concepts

Nowadays there is an abundance of literature and websites on how to teach children to protect themselves from sexual abuse. During the past three decades, many educational preventive programmes have been developed and implemented in kindergartens and schools. The majority of the programmes also include information for parents and school staff. Irrespective of the many methodological limitations in assessing the effectiveness of the programmes, it is clear that they have contributed to increasing children's awareness of sexual abuse and to teaching them skills with which to protect themselves (Finkelhor, 2007; Barron and Topping, 2009).

Efforts focused on empowering children to prevent sexual abuse can be channelled into the following:

- preparing for everyday life;

- identifying and responding to potentially dangerous situations;

- identifying, preventing and stopping sexual abuse;

- seeking help.

Preparing children for everyday life

Promoting children's physical, social and emotional health by boosting their powers is the key to preparing them for everyday life. Building up healthy self-esteem and encouraging children to respect and have empathy for others are essential, and parents are important role models.

Healthy self-esteem can be developed in many ways and includes:

- *Respect for individuality.* Help children to take pride in their own individuality. Teach them the importance of respecting others as individuals and to recognise diversity as something that makes everyone special.

- *Self-assertiveness and expressing needs and feelings.* Teach children to recognise and accept their feelings, to speak out about their needs and to reject unjustified and inappropriate proposals.

- *Problem-solving and decision-making skills.* Encourage using these skills in everyday life when confronted with a challenging situation. Avoid doing things for children or telling them what to do.

- *Self-respect and respect from others.* Encourage children to respect themselves and to expect respect from others. Help them to set clear boundaries for unacceptable behaviour; talk about what to do if someone crosses these boundaries.

- *Respect and empathy for others.* Teaching children to respect and empathise with others is an important part of becoming responsible individuals. Clear rules should be set with regard to acceptable behaviour towards others both at home and at school, with clear limits and boundaries. When rules are broken and children have not paid attention to the consequences of their behaviour, adults should be consistent in their reactions. Children should be active participants in setting up the rules and defining the consequences when broken.

- *Positive communication about sex.* Sexuality, genitals or a child's interest in their own body should not be cast in a negative light. An open discussion about sexual abuse should be encouraged.

Sexual offenders rarely choose self-confident children because they know that they are less prone to victimisation, and will more readily stop abuse attempts and report them.

Determining an effective response to potentially dangerous situations

The last thing that children need is to have unnecessary boundaries and limits imposed on them. These risk stifling their joyous and adventurous spirit. Intimidation leads to fear and isolation, which only increases the risk of victimisation.

To empower children to recognise and react effectively to potentially dangerous situations, the key concept is that everyone has the right to safety. Once children recognise this, the more readily they will understand the need to respond. Having the right to be safe with other people implies being responsible and caring for oneself, and knowing how to react when threatened. The right to safety also encompasses respect for other people's right to safety and encourages children to help others as well.

Children are entitled to a simple but blunt explanation of the situations that could jeopardise this right. It is particularly important to give them examples of inappropriate adult behaviour and teach them how to respond when they feel threatened or uncomfortable. Children should also be taught to pay attention to their body's early warning signs of feeling threatened (butterflies in the stomach, increased heartbeat, weak knees, etc.). A key reaction to potential danger should be to seek help from a trusted adult. Children must realise that they are not "snitching" and that seeking help is their right.

Parents and teachers can significantly contribute to children's ability to respond in time by going over every action they can take if caught in a dangerous situation.

Identifying, preventing and stopping sexual abuse

There are many safety messages that can help children to more easily identify, prevent and stop abuse. Parents and teachers must pass these on according to the child's cognitive capacity. Rather than frighten children, this will increase their ability to identify risk, model proper strategies and boost their courage to take action.

- *"Your body is your own"*. Teach children that their body is their own and that no one can touch it without permission. Establishing open and direct communication at a very early age about sexuality and "private body parts", using the correct names for genitals and other parts of the body, will help children understand what is and what is not allowed for adults in contact with them. This will also help them recognise embarrassing or abusive behaviour.

- *Safe and unsafe touching*. Teach children the difference between safe/appropriate and unsafe/inappropriate touching. Tell children it is not okay if someone looks at or touches their private parts or asks them to look at or touch someone's private parts, and that inappropriate touches are wrong and against the law. If they are not sure whether someone else's behaviour towards them is acceptable, make sure they know to ask a trusted adult for help.

- *"No! Go! Tell!" strategy*. Children should be taught and trained to instantly and firmly say "No" to inappropriate physical contacts, to get away from unsafe situations and to tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. It is particularly important to stress that they should continue telling trusted adults until they are listened to and believed, and until measures are taken to restore their safety.

- *A bad secret and a good secret.* Teach children the difference between a bad secret and a good one (a surprise). Secrecy is a main tactic of sexual abusers. They ensure it in many ways, from bribes to serious threats. Given that children are taught not to betray an adult's confidence in them and that they should not "sneak" or air dirty linen, they often get confused. Therefore, they should be taught to differentiate between "bad secrets" and "good secrets". Every secret that makes them anxious, uncomfortable, fearful or depressed is not good and should not be kept but reported to a trustworthy adult.

- *The offender is a known person.* For children, especially younger ones, it is hard to understand that someone who knows them could abuse them. Parents must keep in mind the grooming process that offenders usually employ to win both their and their children's trust. Informing regularly about someone who gives gifts, asks children to keep a secret or tries to spend time alone with them must be a set rule in the home.

- *The offender is a stranger.* Although this is a less common situation, children must be warned of the risk of attack or kidnapping by a stranger. They should know that such persons look and behave normally, may be friendly and caring and that they can be females as well. Teach children safety rules: instruct them never to get into a car with anyone they do not know, nor to accept gifts or invitations to someone's home without their parent's permission. If a stranger proposes any of these, they must instantly get away and tell parents or a trusting adult. Self-defence skills and screaming are proven, useful tools that will discourage many ambivalent perpetrators or those in fear of being caught (Finkelhor, 2007). Children must be told that not all strangers, not even the majority of them, are dangerous. They should know that in dangerous situations they can also get help from strangers (policemen, sales assistants or any parent with children). It is a good idea to establish a family plan in case a child gets lost

in a public place – define a meeting point and a person to ask for help. Children should also be made aware of tricks that kidnappers frequently use, such as telling a child that their parents have had an accident and that they will take them to the hospital. Children should know to first check this information with a trusted person.

- *Seeking help*. Children should be taught how to obtain help from trusted adults and other resources in the local community. This will encourage disclosure of sexual abuse. Disclosure can only improve a child's situation by ending or shortening abuse, mobilising assistance and reducing isolation (Finkelhor, 2007:643).

- Having open communication with children builds relationships that are based on mutual confidence and increases the likelihood of disclosure. Trusted adults, including a family member, a teacher or other person can give advice and help children address the problem and find relief. Having such a person to turn to increases children's confidence that solutions can be found to their problems.

- *Safety network*. Children need to be instructed about adults who can be part of their safety network. They should be encouraged to select adults whom they trust, are available and ready to listen and help when needed. Only one member of the safety network should live with a child; the others should be outside the immediate family circle in case the problem is home-related. Children should know how to seek help from a network member. If children are clear about how to do this, it is probable that they will do so if necessary. It should be a rule to seek help until the problem has been resolved and the child's safety re-established.

- *Helping others*. Encouraging empathy, friendship and caring relations among children facilitates their pro-social behaviour and understanding that their peers can also be a source of help.

Conclusion

Empowering children to protect themselves and disclose abuse are the priority tasks of responsible adults, and there are no alternatives to these tasks. Understanding the risks that children face; empowering parents and teachers to identify them; knowing how to respond to them; improving social and community services that can be mobilised to provide specialist support; and ensuring ongoing monitoring and vigilance are all essential to the protection of children from sexual abuse (Daphne Booklets, 2007).

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13.
Sexuality education and the prevention of sexual violence

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The need for sexuality education

Far too few children and young people receive anything approaching adequate preparation for a safe and satisfying adult sexual life. Open discussion of sexual matters with trusted adults is usually absent at the very time when it is most needed. This, in turn, is compounded by the pervasive, confusing and conflicting (and predominantly negative) messages received by children about sexuality and gender. In turn, these may contribute to creating and sustaining vulnerability to coercion, abuse and exploitation. Effective sexuality education is therefore essential in order to redress this balance.

According to Unesco (2009), the primary goal of sexuality education is to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships in a world affected by HIV. In addition to learning about the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), children and young people also need to learn about the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse in order to recognise these when they occur, to protect themselves as far as possible and to identify and access available sources of support. Sensitising children, parents, teachers, police and local communities to the nature and extent of sexual violence, and giving permission to discuss it, are essential steps in tackling it. Sexuality education can provide an appropriate framework and context for educating students about sexual abuse.

For example, distinguishing between "good" and "bad" touch, learning how to express feelings, to resist pressure and to seek help are all key aspects of sexuality education that are also highly pertinent to sexual abuse.

School-based sexuality education

Unesco (2009) argues that sexuality education has a number of mutually reinforcing objectives:

- increase knowledge and understanding (such as about sex and the law, the nature of sexual abuse and what to do about it);

- explore and clarify feelings, values and attitudes (developing self-esteem and feeling proud of one's body);

- develop or reinforce skills (saying "no", resisting pressure);

- promote and sustain risk-reducing behaviour (seeking help).

Potentially, schools provide a suitable, replicable and sustainable vehicle for the delivery of such education. Given their number and proximity to students, teachers can be best placed to deliver this education. Suitably trained and supervised peer educators can also provide useful support (Unesco, 2007), as can health and other professionals who come into professional contact with children. With increasing numbers of children attending primary school, it is sensible to introduce sexuality education at this level rather than waiting until secondary school, by which time many will have dropped out.

Successful introduction of school-based sexuality education requires commitment on the part of school authorities, for example to create room within an already crowded school curriculum, to ensure that suitable teachers are selected and supported to deliver sexuality education (with appropriate training and supervision) and that they are provided with suitable resources with which to do so.

Barriers to effective implementation of sexuality education include inadequate resources, lack of political commitment, community

opposition and reliance upon authoritarian and didactic approaches to teaching on the part of educators. It is also essential to acknowledge that in some places attending school may, in itself, constitute risk behaviour, particularly, but not only, for girls who may be especially vulnerable to harassment, exploitation and abuse (including by teachers) both on the way to and at school. Addressing this kind of vulnerability demands commitment and resources that go beyond the scope of what is usually possible within classroom-based sexuality education programmes. Nonetheless, interesting innovations have been undertaken and are described below.

As well as having to compete in an already full curriculum, sexuality education does not have the same status as other academic subjects, either for students or teachers. In part, this is because it is usually non-examinable. This lower status of sexuality education in schools is also a consequence of the potentially sensitive nature of its content (despite its importance to students' well-being). This is reflected in a lack of advanced training or associated career development for sexuality educators that may exist for teachers of other subjects. In the worst scenarios, teachers are simply expected to deliver sexuality education despite lack of training, experience or personal aptitude.

Goals and approaches to sexuality education

In understanding the goals of sexuality education, it is useful to consider a continuum with the goals of risk elimination at one end and vulnerability reduction at the other. Risk reduction falls in the middle. "Abstinence only" demonstrates what is meant by risk elimination. These programmes seek to remove risk entirely by promoting sexual abstinence until marriage, often within an explicit framework of religious or ideological values and beliefs. Risk reduction focuses upon reducing specific risks, such as pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and can have demonstrable impact, while vulnerability reduction shifts the focus from the level of the individual to that of the group, community or institution (see

below). Both risk elimination and risk reduction draw heavily from psychological and social learning theories.

There are two main weaknesses associated with these approaches. First, they tend to reflect an often unstated assumption that individuals are in control of their lives and behaviour. The reality of sexual abuse indicates how little control some children actually have over their bodies and lives. Second, they reflect the individualistic psychological orientation of western societies, underestimating the existence (in all societies) of multiple and of competing discourses and belief systems about sexuality and gender. Vulnerability reduction draws from theories of social action and explicitly seeks to address sexuality-related power differentials. However, these approaches are complex to implement and sustain, as well as being difficult to evaluate.

These different goals are associated, in turn, with two broad approaches to sexuality education which can be described respectively as "public health" and "rights-based". The first is time-limited, focused and behaviourally oriented. There is a growing body of evidence (see all publications for Kirby in references below) that this approach, properly implemented, can have positive, measurable impact upon specific risk-related behaviours.

The focus of "rights-based" approaches to sexuality education is both broader and deeper. It includes explicit consideration within the curriculum of social and cultural dimensions of sexuality, such as gender, equity, power and discrimination. Measuring the impact of "rights-based" approaches is less well developed and more challenging. The goals of this approach are typically broader than the behavioural orientation of "public health" interventions. So, within a "rights-based" approach, increasing understanding of one's body and entitlements to rights (including to give or withhold consent), improving self-esteem and acquisition of skills, are *all* perceived to be desirable outcomes in, and of, themselves, rather than as means to a narrow behavioural end.

Implementing sexuality education

Experience from around the world demonstrates that it is possible to introduce sexuality education even in culturally conservative settings. For those wishing to do so a wealth of resource material already exists. This includes training materials for educators, curriculum development guides, curricula and resources materials.

The Unesco (2009) publication *International technical guidance on sexuality education* includes a comprehensive bibliography of existing, high quality sexuality education curricula, curriculum guides and teacher training manuals from around the world.[27] The publication is the result of an extensive process of research, review and consultation. The first volume considers the rationale for sexuality education and offers technical advice on the characteristics of effective programmes. The second volume, drawing from available evidence, practical experience and good educational practice, presents a "basic minimum package" of topics, concepts and learning objectives for a sexuality education programme intended for children and young people aged from 5 to 18 and over. The package is intended to be developmental, with each stage reinforcing and building upon previous learning.

Overarching topics, under which specific learning objectives are defined according to four age levels, are organised around the following key concepts:

• relationships;

• values, attitudes and skills;

• culture, society and human rights;

• human development;

• sexual behaviour;

• sexual and reproductive health.

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27. An updated version of this resource list is available online at the Unesco HIV and AIDS Education Clearinghouse website <http://hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org>.

Sexual abuse and violence are explicitly addressed in the curriculum, reflected in the following examples of learning objectives and associated key ideas to be explored in relation to "Gender-based violence, sexual abuse and harmful practices" (Unesco, 2009:86).

Gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and harmful practices

Learning Objectives for Level I (5-8 years)

Describe examples of positive and harmful practices
Define sexual abuse

Key Ideas:

- There are positive and harmful practices that affect health and well-being in society

- Human rights protect all people against sexual abuse and gender-based violence

- Inappropriate touching, unwanted and forced sex (rape) are forms of sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse is always wrong

Learning Objectives for Level II (9-12 years)

Explain how gender role stereotypes contribute to forced sexual activity and sexual abuse
Define and describe gender-based violence, including rape and its prevention
Demonstrate relevant communication skills (e.g. assertiveness, refusal) in resisting sexual abuse

Key Ideas:

- Traditional beliefs and practices can be a source of positive learning

- Honour killings, bride killings and crimes of passion are examples of harmful practices and gender inequality that violate human rights

- There are ways to seek help in the case of sexual abuse and rape

- Assertiveness and refusal skills can help to resist sexual abuse and gender-based violence, including rape

Learning Objectives for Level III (12-15 years)

Identify specific strategies for reducing gender-based violence, including rape and sexual abuse

Key Ideas:

- All forms of sexual abuse and gender-based violence by adults, young people and people in positions of authority are a violation of human rights

- Everyone has a responsibility to report sexual abuse and gender-based violence

- There are trusted adults who can refer you to services that support victims of sexual abuse and gender-based violence

Learning Objectives for Level IV (15-18 years)

Demonstrate ability to argue for the elimination of gender role stereotypes and inequality, harmful practices and gender-based violence

Key Idea:

- Everyone has a responsibility to advocate for gender equality and speak out against human rights violations such as sexual abuse, harmful practices and gender-based violence

It's all one (Haberland and Rogow, 2010) also provides structured guidance and activities for addressing the issue of sexual coercion within the context of sexuality education. For example, in the section entitled "The matter of consent" students explore the concept of sexual consent through case studies, short skits and discussion with the goals of helping them to understand and appreciate the importance of consent in sexual situations and to strengthen their abstract thinking skills (see below).

Addressing vulnerability to sexual abuse and violence through sexuality education

In recent years, efforts have been made, within sexuality education, to acknowledge and address vulnerability to sexual abuse and vio-

lence. This demands consideration of the sexual and social realities that exist beyond the classroom. It means, for example, giving consideration to contextual issues, such as the school institution itself and the power relations that exist within it, both among pupils, and between teachers and pupils, which constitutes a serious obstacle in some settings. Sexual vulnerability is also linked to other forms of risk and vulnerability, such as racism and homophobia, drug and alcohol use and to gender inequality and violence in the household.

It's all one is a resource for the development of a comprehensive curriculum on sexuality, gender, HIV and human rights. The resource is designed specifically to enable educators and policymakers (in all regions of the world) to address both individual and social determinants of sexual and reproductive health. The resource promotes the development of critical thinking skills and learning, and reflection about the ways in which gender, rights and other social factors, such as race, ethnicity and class, can affect sexual experience. In so doing, this approach seeks to promote active, informed participation in civil society by children and young people.

Other approaches to addressing vulnerability in school settings include the "Stepping stones" programme for HIV prevention that seeks to improve sexual health through the development of stronger, more gender-equitable relationships, achieved in part through improved communication between partners (Stepping stones, no date). The "Stepping stones" programme uses participatory learning approaches to increase knowledge of sexual health, awareness of risks and the consequences of risk taking. The approach focuses on communication skills, and provides facilitated opportunities for individual, small group and community self-reflection. "Stepping Stones" was first developed in Uganda and has since been used in more than 40 countries and translated into several languages. Key features of the approach are its focus on community action, intensive nature (13 three-hour sessions), use of highly participatory learning approaches (critical reflection, role play and drama) and facilitation by skilled leaders. "Stepping stones" explicitly considers the power-

based nature of sexual relationships and is thus relevant to creating social norms that recognise and promote the rights of children and the unacceptability of sexual coercion and abuse.

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education, International HIV/AIDS Alliance and the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia (PPAZ) collaborated with teachers and students (grades 4-9) to explore why some schools were high-risk locations for HIV transmission and unintended pregnancy, and to identify what could be done to address this. Teachers were engaged in a participatory process designed to explore their own experiences and concerns about HIV, reproduction, gender, sexuality, pleasure and harm. They considered their personal role in creating sexual risk, together with possibilities for prevention within the school setting. Teachers received training to help them explore their own attitudes and values before going on to develop relevant learning skills and materials. Teachers acknowledged the problem of sexual abuse and made plans to address it through a facilitated participatory assessment with students. This generated a wealth of material that revealed high levels of sexual activity and sexual abuse and led, in turn, to the development of a set of lessons designed to promote a safe environment for learning about sexuality and relationships. Further materials were developed and included a curriculum, manuals for teacher training and books for students.[28]

The successful development of these kinds of approaches to tackling vulnerability requires long-term planning and the development of suitable evaluation methodologies, together with considerable investment in human resources and materials.

Conclusion

Parents, schools and communities need to understand why sexuality education matters. Properly designed and implemented, sexuality education can provide children and young people with the under-

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28. Materials available online at <http://www.aidsalliance.org/Publicationsdetails.aspx?Id=293>.

standing, awareness and skills they will need to navigate adult sexual life. Programmes should include sexual abuse and violence, explaining what these are and what to do about them, including how to access support.

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14.
Gathering data on sexual violence against children

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Introduction

The need to perfect systems for gathering data on childhood questions is a crucial issue which has long commanded the attention of states in the context of an international debate. This activity stems from an explicit request by the United Nations Human Rights Committee. It is unanimously held to be a sound method for implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ill-treatment of children must be known in minute detail. The lack of transparency regarding dissemination of the data gathered at national level is akin to a violation of the rights of children and young people, as Paulo Sergio Pinheiro stated in his 2006 report to the United Nations.

The absence of statistics on events affecting children's living conditions results in complete ignorance of the facts. One of the recommendations made to the UN member states concerns development of the national systems for monitoring the various aspects and manifestations of the phenomenon. It is preferable, notably, that states optimise data collection and information systems to identify vulnerable groups, bring policies and planning up to date at all levels, and monitor the progress made with prevention of violence against children. Pinheiro also points out that "States should use national indicators based on internationally agreed standards, and ensure that data are

compiled, analysed and disseminated to monitor progress over time"
(United Nations, 2006).

With specific reference to the phenomenon of ill-treatment and sex-
ual exploitation of children, numerous international warnings have
been issued to states to embark on more systematic and coherent
data collection. Specific reference has also been made to the decla-
rations and action plans adopted at the conclusion of the world con-
gresses against sexual exploitation of children, from the one held in
Stockholm in 1996 up to the most recent Rio de Janeiro congress in
November 2008.

The optimisation of statistical tools at national level thus undeniably
hinges on long-term objectives. It is actually a matter of censuring a
country's situation in the light of the observed phenomena. The aim
is to demarcate a zone of functional identification, devise targeted
policies to forestall the phenomenon and protect possible victims.

Nowadays, states should not confine themselves to funding indi-
vidual research projects on specific aspects. They should carry out
systematic monitoring of the activity: unlike straightforward data
gathering by means of ad hoc research or analysis of data collected
for administrative purposes, monitoring is an ongoing activity based
on data collected continuously. It provides no useful basis for ad hoc
purposes, but can pinpoint tendencies and inconsistencies in a given
phenomenon, particularly as regards conditions and events.

In general, each state has different types of data on violence, most of
it derived from judicial investigations. This is information collected
for administrative purposes and which is independently managed by
each public entity. The challenge for states, then, is to start from
these existing data, to file and organise them in a systematic, coher-
ent and exhaustive framework.

Existing databases are often focused on offenders, for they meet the
need to co-ordinate penal and judicial action. The database register-
ing sexual assaults against children must be designed as an instru-
ment centred on the child victim, retracing the child's path from the

reporting of the crime to the conclusion of the entire judicial proceedings, as well as recording the actions performed to secure the child's interests and full exercise of rights.

Structural framework

Considering how important it is to establish this type of instrument, and the extreme sensitivity of the question, states should maintain an ongoing commitment to its application and constant updating. To guarantee sustainability, the database needs to be governed by an institutional and political undertaking by the country expected to set it up. Consequently, the database should come under ordinary law, giving it a national dimension.

To allow an effective exchange of data between administrations and use of the information throughout the national territory, the database should be under the management of an authority recognised by the various players in order to guarantee impartial scientific surveillance *super partes*. Ideally, the solution would thus be to institute an independent authority commissioned to deal with specific cases in the field of protection of minors. A sort of observatory could be set up within this agency to act as a technical body attending to this activity. It would have a right of control and the requisite rights of access to the database in order to manage, enhance and develop the facility, and disseminate the results via ad hoc research and publications.

Methodological dimension

The deployment of the database should be the subject of a targeted prior feasibility study to define in detail the structure, the organisational and methodological aspects and the data gathering and processing procedure. This preparatory work is useful for building a viable project, but also for studying what is already in existence and suitable for inclusion.

A most important preliminary choice, strongly influencing the capacity of the database required to be set up, is the one concerning

identification of the unit of analysis. Indeed, it has to be determined whether correlative data, or case by case data items, are to be gathered.

An item of aggregate data is a combination of elementary data. It sums up the attributes of a population conforming to a set of indicators defined beforehand. As a general rule, the level of aggregate data is the one subsequently used in research reports, usually in tabular form. An advantage of this choice is chiefly the simplicity of the method: the quantity of data to be managed is smaller than it would be if the individual cases were to be acquired and the research conducted on aggregate data is quicker and less expensive. An obvious limitation in the use of aggregate data, however, is that they cannot be manipulated or reprocessed to answer the questions that occur at a further stage. In practice, it is no longer possible to go down to lower levels of aggregation. It is thus a rigid, economical system, inexpensive in terms of data processing.

Data gathering for isolated cases is also a more complex methodology, expensive in terms of data processing time, quantity of data to be processed and investment in software for handling exploitable statistics. It is a matter of gathering certain information based on a specific group of variables for each individual in a given sample. The level of detail which can be attained with this type of analysis is nevertheless distinctly higher than with surveys using aggregate data. In addition, the breakdown of the data allows efficient verification of the data item, yielding an optimised result. Access to separate cases allows numerous problems of data quality to be rectified.

Admittedly the recording of isolated cases makes for much more effective exploration of the data. Besides, as elementary data are always available, they represent a basis on which to found a great deal of sociological research and to be in a position to test many theories and hypotheses. Recording individual cases can also provide a check on the information sought, even in the most elementary statistics. Of course this does not happen when dealing with a piece of aggregate data in which the basic statistics are already calculated.

Making a methodological choice founded on analysis of individual cases is certainly a most valuable option in the field of research into sexual violence against children, above all if the intention is to construct a child-centred tool which recreates a complete picture of the system's response to each criminal event of a sexual nature involving a minor, including protective measures for child victims and punitive measures for the offender.

One of the first questions to be answered when building a database on sex crimes against children is the choice of the information to be obtained. Here the first step is to select the types of crime to be monitored. As in many instances of criminal behaviour, including sex crimes committed against minors, this wrongdoing is often perpetrated in conjunction with other crimes such as exploitation, abduction and trafficking of children for purposes of sexual exploitation (activities whose upshot is often the murder of the child). The specific case should therefore be clearly distinguished and information on any concomitant crimes fed into the core database.

As to the types of sex crimes against children being surveyed, those identified in the authoritative international treaties must be the benchmark. Today the international instrument considered the most advanced in this field is the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse which identifies the following types of crime:

- sexual abuse of children;
- child prostitution;
- pornography involving children;
- participation of a child in pornographic performances;
- corruption of children;
- solicitation of children for sexual purposes.

Within this classification, of course, the convention identifies several patterns of conduct of varying types and gravity, to be further specified in the database.

Once the offences are proven, the court will ascertain the social context in which the crime was or crimes were committed. Considering that most sex crimes against children are committed in the home, it is essential to envisage the variables linked with the victim's family antecedents, with the inclusion of data on the type of family (single-parent, extended, and so forth), presence of other underage children, parents' conditions of employment and child's educational standard, as these are sources of indications on the general circumstances of the child victim's life. This information can be very helpful in planning preventive actions, on the assumption that they may determine the susceptibility of the social conditions, especially where there are abuses in the family, which help bring about a situation of violence.

It is then necessary to define the context in which the violent abuse occurred (within or outside the family surveyed) and the characteristics of the offence (for example whether the protracted offence requires the inclusion of data on the duration and frequency of the violence, and the characteristics of the offence).

The database should also include the child's socio-demographic particulars such as age, sex and all the facets of vulnerability (such as disability). The basic socio-demographic information should also be acquired for the offender.

Concerning the offence, it is necessary to contemplate a set of variables whereby the exact origin of the reporting of the offence can be reconstituted. Sexual abuse of a child may indeed be reported by numerous sources, such as social services, school, hospital, family doctor or a citizen, to name but a few. Given that sex crimes against children are a sparsely reported type of crime, and that the proportion of cases which have come to the attention of the police and justice is but the tip of the iceberg for a phenomenon that in most cases remains hidden, this data item provides valuable information on the receptiveness of the information channels that may be used to good effect for determining which channels require sensitising action in order to become effective yardsticks of the phenomenon's emergence.

Moreover, an imperative data item concerns the victim's relationship with the offender, which determines the degree of influence wielded by the adult over the child and whether the violent incidents have been made possible by a state of psychological subjection of the child victim or the existence of some kind of authority or control over the child.

Each case then needs to have a large amount of accompanying information about the judicial itinerary. As well as information on the outcome of the proceedings, the database should contain information on protection of victims to guard against renewed victimisation; indeed, the child is liable to undergo additional trauma caused by a judicial system insensitive to management of events and inattentive to the child's specific needs. The database should register, for instance, whether the trial was held in camera, whether steps were taken to ensure the examination of the child under sheltered conditions, whether special care was taken to make the experience the least traumatic possible, and whether anticipated procedures for taking evidence from the child victim were employed to obviate his/her attendance at the hearing and so forth.

Finally, the database should contain information on the steps taken to protect the child victim, such as placement in a sheltered facility where abuse occurs in the family, or appointing a custodian where the parents are violent and negligent, together with all measures for care of the victim, and therapy to get over the trauma and recover.

It is hard to find all this information in the justice statistics or the police records, because they are unrecorded sociological variables, not being relevant for purposes of prosecution and trial. The creation of the database should not be founded solely on the data already available, but also on data never yet filed. To obtain this information speedily and economically, it is necessary to use the source database and to amplify all its variables. This stage can be carried out thanks to a political choice to pool knowledge and sign special agreements between the representatives of the administrations controlling the source databases.

This statistical tool should contain confidential data, and the choice whether or not to include the personal data of the victim and of the offender is plainly crucial. Opting not to include their personal particulars in the database does not impair the quality and meaning of the result, provided that suitable tools are used to codify the data for positive identification of each specific case, keeping it distinct from the others.

The option of introducing personal data is influenced chiefly by the national legislation on processing of personal data and, where relevant, the decisions taken by the independent authorities dealing with the question.

Where figure-supported data are used, and even more so if the data are confidential, the database will need to be secured to guard against unauthorised access. The levels of accessibility must be adjusted according to the type of user wishing to consult the system. Access to individual data would be possible for a limited number of users, that is the professionals who take care of the system's commissioning and upkeep, and the researchers directly in charge of exploiting the data. Other users (judges, police, social workers, NGO operatives) should be able to view aggregate data solely in tabular form. This method would allow a tool to be produced and made available to all who need to obtain accurate data albeit with security restrictions.

The most effective weapon for combating violence against children is knowledge and pooling of information. The more states choose to invest in creating ad hoc statistical systems, the better will be the quality of the policies put in place at the national and international level.

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15.
Preventing sexual violence against children through citizenship and human rights education

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In the Europe of today, school is a place where almost everyone spends a significant part of their life. It is also a place where – to a great extent – our worldviews, attitudes and values are shaped. If schools were to place a high priority on promoting respect for human dignity, many of our social ills could be prevented – including sexual violence against children. For this to happen, there needs to be widespread awareness of just how urgent the problem is and a genuine commitment to make a difference.

As Professor Liz Kelly (2003:89) points it out in *Vision, innovation and professionalism in policing violence against women and children*,

> [P]eople used to think that child sexual abuse was rare, and mainly committed by strangers. In the 1980s there was a strong emphasis on abuse in the family, and then in the 1990s sexual exploitation of children through prostitution, trafficking, pornography and sex tourism were recognised.

However, while there is a growing awareness of the phenomenon of child sexual abuse, education professionals are not always well equipped to deal with this issue. They may not feel that it is up to them to address it or that school is the appropriate place to do so. They may have neither the time nor the motivation to become involved. The Council of Europe campaign to prevent sexual violence against children will provide a good occasion to draw the attention of

decision makers and education practitioners to child sex abuse and explore possible strategies to combat it.

This article will briefly explore how citizenship and human rights education can contribute to the prevention of sexual violence, and look at examples of existing good practice in the field. These examples were selected from the publication *Human rights education in the school systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A compendium of good practice"* (Human rights education, 2009). The aim here is not to cover the topic comprehensively, but rather to touch upon a selection of key issues.

Laws, guidelines and standards

Citizenship and human rights education are not just about providing knowledge of democratic institutions and human rights mechanisms. They are also about transforming the school culture to reflect the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, making it important that the relevant frameworks, including those for prevention of all kinds of degrading treatment, are integrated into educational institutions.

In Sweden, the Act Prohibiting Discrimination and other Degrading Treatment, a comprehensive law that came into force on 1 January 2009, incorporates a 2006 law prohibiting discrimination in school settings and related implementation guidelines. This Act provides, in particular, guidelines to help prevent discrimination, harassment and other degrading treatment, and for detecting, investigating and remedying such forms of behaviour. The Act also emphasises the importance of monitoring and provides follow-up measures to be taken. The publication of the Act was accompanied by a series of seminars and conferences organised by the Office of the Equality Ombudsman in co-operation with similar offices and public authorities in the field of education. The guidelines were widely disseminated and training sessions were organised.

Guidelines of this sort are extremely important: they provide a common reference, help create safe school environments and empower education professionals to take action against degrading treatment when it occurs. They also act to a certain extent as deterrents. It is clear that successfully applying the guidelines depends on appropriate training and long-term follow-up mechanisms.

Learning environment

Interactive methodology that requires active learners' involvement and participation is an essential element of citizenship and human rights education. Action for Justice and Peace (AGP) in Portugal developed the programme "School, a path to equality", which puts special emphasis on equal opportunities for women and men and the prevention of violence against women. The programme included such activities as "focus groups: imaginary theatre" (a form of Theatre of the Oppressed), equality laboratories (debate-based seminars) and "incubators of youth for equality" (youth projects that included school surveys, visual arts and theatre performances).

The experience showed that engaging learners in informal and creative ways made them more aware of discrimination issues and encouraged them to initiate activities addressing various topics of common concern. The skills that young people develop by participating in such activities boost their confidence and capacity for action, whether standing up for their own rights or for those of other people.

Teaching and learning tools for the classroom

Few would dispute that citizenship and human rights education is most effective when it uses real life examples. Human Rights Education Associates in the United States has published the *Educator's guide on "crimes of war" – What the public should know*, in co-operation with the "Crimes of war project" and the US Institute of Peace. Sexual violence is one of the eight topics dealt with in the manual. Each topic includes the following elements: an essential question, learning objectives, a methodology, thematic background informa-

tion, discussion questions, extension activities, ways for learners to take action and additional resources for classroom. The use of journalistic case studies appeals to students' compassion, and the historical background material will enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the issues in question. The underlying assumption of the guide is that if students and their teachers acquire in-depth knowledge of the horrors of war (including the sexual violence that it often entails), they would take a more active role in influencing decisions about wars and in preventing violence.

Guiding teachers

While both adults and children in our societies are increasingly exposed to sexually explicit and sometimes violent images and content, the question of sexuality in general and sexual violence specifically are rarely approached directly by adults working with children. Most teachers, for example, do not feel at ease when sex-related questions are raised and lack the competence to handle them appropriately.

"Different In more ways than one: Providing guidance for teenagers on their way to identity, sexuality and respect" is a manual developed by SchLau NRW in Germany. The manual contains background information, guidelines, tools and methods on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity, and aims to help adults working with young people provide safe and supportive environments, whether in the classroom or in counselling / health-care settings.

Evaluation and assessment

There are many misinterpretations surrounding the issue of sexual violence. Certain population groups might also have a sense of inferiority, much of which is due to stereotypes and gender bias. It is important to ensure that such attitudes are not condoned or reinforced through school textbooks. In Turkey, 190 school textbooks were examined in 2002-03 to assess how well they reflected human rights principles. One of the areas investigated was patriarchy and

gender bias. About 4 000 problematic situations were reported, resulting in recommendations and publication of a guide on textbook writing.

More needs to be done

The development of a school culture based on respect for human dignity, human rights, democracy and the rule of law is essential for the prevention of sexual violence against children. A lot of progress has been made in many countries, but more remains to be done – whether through legal frameworks, curricula, professional training, textbooks or evaluation. One of the main obstacles to progress in this respect is the lack of priority given to the "soft" issues. Social change is a lengthy process and the impact of education in this field is difficult to demonstrate, but then it is also difficult to calculate the price we are paying for non-action.

A wealth of useful guidelines and materials on citizenship and human rights education has been developed in many countries and by international institutions. Numerous initiatives aim to give such education higher priority. In 2010, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (CM/Rec(2010)7), and it is hoped that this text will further stimulate Council of Europe member states to step up their work in this field.

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Part three

Rehabilitation and social reintegration of child victims, including child perpetrators

16.
Recovery services for child victims of sexual violence and their families – What can be offered?

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Introduction

"I need to speak and explain the thing, just to have someone to talk with …"[29]

"Sexual violence" according to WHO covers a wide range of sexually violent acts including rape, sexual abuse, forced prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many different variations of sexual violence in-depth; therefore this paper, when discussing sexual violence, will focus primarily on child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation – specifically through prostitution and trafficking. In this paper "child sexual abuse" is understood as a situation where an adult or older adolescent abuses or attempts to abuse a child for sexual stimulation; "child sexual exploitation" is understood as a situation where a child is used sexually by an adult, and the adult pays for this with money, gifts or favours – such as giving alcohol, food or shelter; and "child trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation" is understood to relate to a situation where a child is moved from one place to another, within a country or across a border, for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

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29. Quote from an Italian child victim of sexual abuse interviewed in Baginsky, 2001:61.

Article 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines states' duty to promote the recovery and reintegration of children who have experienced neglect, exploitation or abuse. The subsequent Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking of Human Beings and the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse are welcomed as they go beyond the UNCRC in detailing and raising the standards of support for victims.[30]

The importance of assistance during the recovery phase has been highlighted in numerous global and European declarations and plans of action.[31] Nevertheless, there remains a lack of specialist or "targeted" support worldwide for children who have been sexually exploited and trafficked (Asquith and Turner, 2008) and scarce and unevenly scattered services for those affected by sexual abuse in many European countries (Allnock et al., 2009; Baginsky, 2001; Bunting et al., 2010). A key challenge in determining the level of need and overall service demand stems from the difficulties in obtaining accurate statistics on the prevalence of child sexual violence.[32] For example, a 2004 study, "Childoscope", highlighted that statistics on sexual exploitation of children are generally "unavailable" in the EU (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009). The lack of accurate data makes it very difficult to justify a substantial budget allocation and therefore plan effective, inclusive, accessible and available service provision for all. What complicates this problem further is that even with prevalence data, not all victims will require or wish to obtain formal assistance (Baginsky, 2001; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2007) and many may outwardly reject it.

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30. "Victim" is used throughout this paper due to the legal status of the child; however it is acknowledged that the term "survivor" may be a more beneficial and accurate term to apply in some contexts. The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in addition details support for the families.

31. For example, the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action, the Budapest Commitment and Plan of Action adopted by the participants from Europe and Central Asia, and most recently the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action which all highlight the importance of recovery and reintegration support for child victims of sexual exploitation.

32. Such data are notoriously hard to obtain due to the hidden nature of these crimes, the inability and failure to disclose abuse, the child's or parent's lack of faith in the system, the lack of standardised, joined up reporting mechanisms, and the taboo and stigma associated with these violations.

Despite the general shortcomings in statistics, it is estimated that between 10% and 20% of children are sexually assaulted during childhood in Europe (May-Chahal and Herczog, 2003). The high percentage of these figures is not only deeply concerning, but has a direct impact on the quantity of service provision that could be required if all affected children were to realise and claim their rights to support and assistance.

The lack of services is compounded by a dearth of an evidence base to inform effective policy and practice. Failures to systematically and rigorously monitor and evaluate current interventions and the lack of longitudinal outcome studies and absence of children's voices makes it challenging to assess the quality of services delivered and establish what works and for which children. This is significant, as although often lumped together and labelled as "child victims", the children affected by abuse and exploitation are not a homogenous group: they are boys and girls of different ages with varying experiences drawn from different environments. Their needs and the approach taken to address such needs may vary significantly with diverse perceptions of what constitutes a "success" story for different individuals. The field is also without commonly agreed and adopted standards of what constitutes "good practice", so there is some way to go before these can be confidently communicated across the continent and beyond.

In spite of the shortage of a solid evidence base on effective interventions, the sector has built up a good understanding of the range of problems and difficulties that some children may face. Based on such understandings, it becomes more evident what the needs may be and thus the range of services that should be available. In addition, many voluntary sector organisations have led the way in working with sexually exploited children in Europe and have built up a comprehensive picture of what they perceive are effective measures in working with this group. Such bodies are undertaking some promising and innovative practice in the field – which will be further explored in this paper. Many of these same groups are now attempting to develop a similarly solid understanding and knowledge base on issues of child

trafficking. There are also notable examples of organisations starting to quantitatively evaluate their support projects for affected children (Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Coren et al., 2010).

This chapter provides a starting point for further discussions on the types of services that should be offered and made available to children and their families. A brief overview of the impact of sexual violence is followed by a consideration of the specific needs that some children may have, and based on this the range of possible services that should be considered. The chapter concludes with a series of recommendations for the Council of Europe to reflect on.

The impact of sexual violence on children and their families

A child's experience of abuse or exploitation will differ depending on – amongst other factors – the age of the child, the relationship with the abuser, the type and length of abuse, the environment and the child's own resilience. Children will be affected in different ways. Some may show few signs of distress appearing relatively unscathed, while others may need access to standard universal services. A number of children will require targeted specialist support or professional psychological interventions. Individual responses not only differ, but difficulties and needs may arise at different stages of development.

The range of emotional, psychological and behavioural problems widely documented for children experiencing sexual abuse include sexualised behaviour, symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, low self-esteem, eating disorders and suicide and substance misuse (cited in Coren and Hutchfield, 2009). Similar problems have been highlighted for children involved in sexual exploitation and in trafficking cases.[33]

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33. "Research on women and girls who had been trafficked from European and non-European countries found a range of physical and psychological symptoms including depression, anxiety, PTSD and hostility (Zimmerman et al. 2006). The majority of research on the impact of childhood sexual violence appears to relate to sexual abuse; little, for example, is known about the consequences of child pornography or the role of new technologies in abuse and their impact on the child (Quayle, Loof and Palmer, 2008).

In a number of cases the abuse and suffering does not immediately end once the child is taken out of, or escapes the abusive or exploitative condition. In many situations a child often has to deal not only with internal struggles, but with an external hostile environment where they are judged, stigmatised and discriminated against. It is not clear what the long-term impacts for children are; however, to ensure that the same children, as adults, do not face further violence and social exclusion, early intervention and long-term support may be critical.

Whilst support is largely directed at the child, sexual violence can have a huge impact on the family as a whole. Research shows that contrary to popular belief the majority of perpetrators of child sexual abuse are relatives or step-parents (United Nations, 2006). In many cases the family is "groomed" alongside the child by the perpetrator. The non-abusing parent or carer, once the abuse comes to light, is likely to feel guilty for not protecting the child and be unable to fully comprehend the situation. If the abuser is a family member and leaves, particularly if the main breadwinner, this will have a huge impact on the family. In cases of sexual exploitation, the behaviour and struggles between carer and child often result in family conflict affecting the whole family. For those children who have been trafficked little is known about the impact on the family unit.

Needs and support services

The social and economic contexts across Europe differ dramatically and although the needs may be similar for the child and family, the responses, resources, structures and systems in place will look very different. Despite these variations it is important to ensure that there are common quality standards across all services for affected children. In Europe there have been many positive moves in this regard including the development of the Unicef *Guidelines on the protection of child victims of trafficking*. The guidelines have been translated into most of the relevant languages in the region and

informal monitoring of their implementation has begun (Dottridge, 2010; Cazenave, 2010).

There is not a "one-size-fits all" package of care for children affected by sexual violence, and the nature and length of any assistance will depend on the individual. However, cases of sexual abuse, exploitation or trafficking are likely to lead to and require diverse initial interactions with children. This section begins by looking at "targeted" specialist services – those set up to provide a more holistic approach to working with particular "groups" of children –, before considering the generic or universal needs that sexual violence victims and their families may require.

Targeted specialist services

The dearth of evidence over whether specialist services provide better outcomes for children or whether generalists who have obtained additional knowledge and training can be as effective remains problematic (Asquith and Turner, 2008). However, those who provide specialist services, those who receive them and those who work in partnership with them are passionate about the need for such services (Scott and Skidmore, 2006). Targeted services offer specialised, sensitive support and workers have a sound understanding and knowledge of the complexities of the different forms of sexual violence. In addition the role of these services in training other professionals and raising awareness is equally valuable.

Specialist services for children affected by sexual abuse may include one-to-one support, group therapy, organised peer activities, family support, and therapeutic treatments such as play or art therapy. Much targeted work in this area addresses fear, anxiety, low mood and sexually inappropriate behaviour (Action for Children, 2009).

Assistance for children involved in sexual exploitation can look very different. Children exploited through prostitution often do not recognise the coercive and exploitative nature of their

relationships and feel they are in control of their lives. This makes effectively engaging with them in the first place very challenging. Building up a relationship of trust is central so that, in time, the child can begin to recognise the abuse and in turn access support in escaping and recovering from the exploitation. Therefore many organisations working with exploited children concentrate on reducing the risk and building up the child's protective and resilience factors, with the end goal of totally breaking from the exploitation.

Barnardo's, a UK based organisation and pioneer in this field, embodies this approach and has developed and established the 4 A's model across their 21 services: *access* – services are open, honest, welcoming and accept self-referrals; *attention* – workers recognise that children need positive and consistent attention from a key worker; *assertive* outreach – workers are persistent in engaging with the child even if help is initially rejected; and *advocacy* for young people in need – workers help children get access to other services that they need and work with other professionals to increase their understanding of exploitation (Barnardo's, 2009).

Children who are trafficked into sexual exploitation, especially those who are internationally trafficked, are likely to require additional layers of support. This may include translation services; family tracing; risk and security assessments of the home and organising support in the country of origin; transport; and specialist legal support including acquiring essential legal documentation. Depending on the child's legal status, an increased level of advocacy may be required to gain access to generic services such as health and education.

Specialist services provide much of the intensive work and have a solid understanding of the complexities involved in abuse and exploitation. However, such services are not accessible to all, with the few services that are available generally being located in capital cities. It has also been noted that many specialist services are established to cater for the "typical" victim and are not always able to respond to

the diverse needs of all children equally.[34] In addition, there continue to be concerns over the sustainability of services which are often funded by the voluntary sector.

Case management

Whether there are specialist services available for child victims or not, not all needs will be met by one single service. Children and their families are likely to need access to a range of information and support from different organisations and agencies including social services, the police, the courts, medical practitioners and education and training providers. Keeping a multitude of appointments and negotiating the different systems can be daunting and therefore an appointed "key worker", "case manager" or "guardian"[35] from a voluntary or statutory organisation is fundamental. The case manager can advocate on the child's behalf, ensure any action taken is in the best interests of the child, co-ordinate the response and act as a consistent, trusted person for the child to engage with, as well as a single point of contact for those different agencies to communicate with. This has been recommended for those working with child victims of sexual exploitation, internal and international trafficking in many different contexts (GTZ, 2007; Terre des Hommes, 2009; Clawson and Dutch, 2008).

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34. Many specialist services have to employ strict criteria surrounding the "types" of clients that they will work with as well as the length of time they will be supported. Children who are without proper legal identification, are drug or alcohol dependent or affected by HIV and Aids may be unable to qualify for specialist support (ECPAT International, 2006b). It has been noted that there are few shelter places for very young children 0-12 and for male victims of trafficking in some European countries (Casenave, 2010). In the UK it has been highlighted that there is little understanding of the needs of girls involved in sexual exploitation from different ethnic backgrounds (Ward and Patel, 2006) and an overall lack of information regarding the needs of sexually exploited boys (Lillywhite and Skidmore, 2006). It has also been noted that different age groups may require different assistance (Asquith and Turner, 2008) and that children who do not speak the local language, have substance abuse problems, exhibit particularly violent behaviour or have complex medical conditions are all "harder to engage with" during recovery (Allnock et al., 2009). Children who live in rural areas may also be less able to access the necessary support.
35. The Unicef *Guidelines on the protection of child victims of trafficking* highlights the importance of a "guardian" noting that: "Individuals appointed as guardians must have relevant child protection experience, knowledge of child rights/human rights and an understanding of the specific needs of child victims, including those specific to gender. Guardians shall be given specialised training, professional support and appropriate assistance in the performance of their responsibilities" (Unicef, 2006:16).

Information

Accurate and honest information that children can understand is critical and simple and yet this is sometimes forgotten. Children should be aware of their rights, the legal process, different services they can access and be constantly kept up to date. Young people should not only be informed but involved in decision making – having choices and options no matter how small. Information should be provided to children in an accessible way both verbally and in writing so it can be referred to at a later date if necessary. Educational books for children can be useful in providing information in a child-friendly format. For example, the "Childhood without abuse" multi-partner project across central and eastern Europe developed the publication *I am going to court* which helps children get ready to testify and clearly explains the court procedures (Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje, 2008).

For children who speak other languages, particularly those who have been internationally trafficked, there may be the need to have trusted translators who are sensitive to the child's needs. An innovative practice by one European police force has been the use of iPods with pre-recorded information in different languages. The recordings are used to provide basic information during raids and investigations when translators are not immediately at hand (UN.GIFT Conference, cited in Rosenburg, 2008).

Helplines can be a useful source of free information, advice and support for children and their families. Helpline services can be a first step for children and adults who may be reluctant to approach more formal, statutory agencies and are accessible to those living in rural areas where there may be few appropriate drop-in services locally.

Basic material assistance

Children who leave home quickly may arrive at a service with very little and therefore may need some basic items such as clothes and toiletries. The lack of food and basic necessities is an issue that has been reported for some children accessing protection from sexual violence across Europe (ECPAT International, 2006c).

Housing

Children who have suffered from sexual violence may require emergency, crisis housing support as well as longer-term permanent placements. Every effort should be made to enable a child to remain with, or return to their parents or caregivers, but in some circumstances the child may be unable to stay at, or return to the family home. When it is not in the best interests of the child to remain with their family, alternative arrangements must be sought. This may involve placing the child with extended family, specialist foster carers, or for older children, in supportive semi-independent housing arrangements.

Young people involved in sexual exploitation across Europe have reported that having a safe and secure place to stay was important for them in escaping from exploitation and rebuilding relationships with their parents (Brown, 2004; Skidmore, 2004). This has been echoed by service providers working with these young people (Scott and Skidmore, 2006).

Crisis accommodation, if available, seldom has dedicated places reserved for children affected by the different forms of sexual violence, but is likely to serve other populations with different needs including adult women. For example, across the European Union only three member states have shelters specifically for child trafficking victims (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009).

Short-term emergency placements should not become long-term living solutions; the child should be moved out of temporary accommodation as soon as possible. A recent review in Albania, Kosovo and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" found that child victims of trafficking identified in these countries often stay in shelters for long periods of time – up to five years in one case (Casenave, 2010). It is not in the best interests of the child to be placed in a residential institution for any length of time; this is costly to the state and has long-term costs for the child in question as well.

Children who have been trafficked and those at risk of, or involved in, sexual exploitation, sometimes abscond or "disappear". A recent

study relating to unaccompanied foreign minors in Belgium, France, Spain and Switzerland noted that the disappearance of children from institutional care is not a trivial problem, but can affect up to 50% of a given population depending on the location (Terre des Hommes, 2010). This has also been highlighted as a problem in the UK with large numbers of suspected child trafficking victims missing from care (CEOP, 2009).

Research in Scotland found that children absconding and involved in sexual exploitation were at times referred to secure units. In some cases this seemed to be due to the lack of alternative services in the community that may have been better able to meet the children's needs (Creegan et al. 2005). Such units can feel punitive when children who are victims of abuse and exploitation are detained with others who have committed crimes. Shelters which are not technically "secure" can still feel like detention centres or prisons to some children (ECPAT International, 2006a).

Accommodation needs for some children will be critical, and as of yet, it is not entirely clear how to balance safety and security with protection and assistance. However, the *United Nations guidelines for the alternative care of children*, adopted on 24 February 2010, provide some helpful guidance on this issue.

Health care

Children who have been abused or exploited are likely to have a range of physical and psychological health needs. Health practitioners may be involved in collecting forensic evidence, taking a medical history, interviewing and conducting physical examinations. Such practitioners should have core skills, knowledge and training in handling such cases. Health workers must be able to communicate confidently and sensitively with the child to explain the process and children should be given the choice of whether they would prefer male or female practitioners.

All children affected by sexual violence should have access to general medical assessments to determine what actions are needed to protect

the child's health and well-being. Services may include sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, counselling and psychological therapy. Where there are issues of alcohol or drug dependency, specialist services should be available and immediately accessible to the young people that need them. Additionally, access to dentists and opticians who are sensitive to the child should also be made available.

In the case of trafficking victims, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has supported the development of guidelines for health practitioners in *Caring for trafficked persons: Guidance for health providers*, which has a special section on caring for children and adolescents who may have been trafficked. This helps practitioners to ensure that children's rights are respected and protected (IOM, UN.GIFT and LSHTM, 2009).

Professional psychological services

Not all children will require "psychological" support and there is still a great deal to learn about the resilience of children and the fact that some children have the capacity to draw on their own strengths during recovery (Asquith and Turner, 2008). However, professional psychological and mental health services should be available to both the child and family if required.[36] Although services may be available in some contexts, there are concerns here in terms of waiting times and locating appropriate therapists who can be sensitive to the cultural needs of some victims. A range of therapeutic interventions should be available as different approaches are likely to work for different individuals. It must be remembered that there is not one universal path to healing and that individuals cope with illness and trauma in very different ways. Not all children will want talking therapies and services should be supportive of alternative positive acts to enhance healing. The key is to not make choices based on

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36. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is often cited as the most effective treatment for children and their families affected by sexual abuse (Ramchandani and Jones, 2003). Alternative modes of therapy have been found to have positive effects on different aspects of sexual abuse, though often lack a rigorous evidence base (Coren and Hutchfield, 2009).

preconceived notions of what will work, but to listen to the child's needs and together find ways of overcoming the challenges, ensuring that any therapies "do no harm".

Education and training

Children who have been involved in exploitation or trafficked into exploitative conditions are likely to have missed significant time in the classroom and therefore may require support to re-engage with education. Children who have experienced abuse can suffer from cognitive, behavioural and social problems, which sometimes make attending a formal school setting challenging. Children should be offered extra support in these instances. This may include mentoring schemes, and distance and flexible learning. In some situations children may even have experienced sexual abuse in the classroom from teachers or their peers and consequently the challenge of going back to school will be even greater.

Older children may prefer to train for a vocation. Appropriate services therefore may include providing relevant training courses or support in the form of careers advice, CV clinics and organising work placements. Such training could be supplemented by development programmes that boost self-confidence and self-esteem, teach life skills, and sex and relationship education.

Self-esteem and confidence building programmes

It has been argued that support services for children who have been abused and exploited are too centred around crisis care and do not take into consideration the longer-term needs and development opportunities for these children. This is an area where targeted services play a key role. Several projects have demonstrated the positive effects for young people who have been involved in leadership and youth achievement and development programmes.

In the United States, a leading organisation for exploited youth, Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), has constructed an intensive leadership development programme for girls which has

shown positive outcomes for those involved. The work also helps young people reframe the exploitation and gain an understanding of who is at fault, which can help in recovery (Lloyd, 2010).[37]

Family support

When discussing "reintegration" it is important to consider the environment into which the child is being reintegrated. Although not all children will be able to return to the family home, for those that can family support interventions are critical to ensure the parents or carers are able to cope, welcome back and support the child through recovery. For non-abusing parents and carers it is important that they are offered counselling and access to ongoing support. Studies have shown that parental support is the strongest predictor determining good outcomes for sexually abused young children (Cohen and Mannarino, 1998 as cited in Ramchandani and Jones, 2003).

The Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP) is a UK based organisation which supports and works with families whose children are or have been involved in sexual exploitation and enables them to effectively support the child. CROP's parent support unit offers a unique service which includes providing confidential and non-judgmental advice on a one-to-one basis and acting as a mediator between the child and caregiver.[38] Such approaches are sustainable and keep the child in the family home. In cases where a child is integrated into a new setting, similar work with foster parents or other carers will be important.

Legal assistance and guidance

The successful prosecution of those responsible for sexual violence may be an important element of recovery. The legal process, however, can be a very complicated, painful and lengthy experience for all involved and therefore trusted, consistent support is essential.

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37. For more information on GEMS see <http://www.gems-girls.org>.
38. For more information on CROP see <http://www.cropuk.org.uk/conferences3.htm>.

A number of children may feel threatened or intimidated when reporting abuse and as a consequence may find it difficult to articulate what has happened to them. Special units within police stations that deal specifically with crimes against children, where officers are trained on child rights and child-friendly law enforcement, may be beneficial (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2009). One important element of this concerns the interviewing of children. Children are often required to make multiple statements to different agencies including the police, medical practitioners, social workers and courts, which can be traumatising.

One model that has been hailed as promising practice is the Barnahus or Children's House developed by the Government Agency for Child Protection in Iceland to support sexually abused children. The Children's House is a child-friendly centre where different professionals work under one roof in the investigation of child sexual abuse cases. The purpose is to prevent subjecting the child to multiple interviews by different bodies in a multitude of locations. Instead, the child is interviewed in a special room by a trained investigator, observed by a judge, social worker, police, lawyers and the child's advocate. The interview is videotaped and can be used in court (Guðbrandsson, no date).

In some cases, the child and family may receive threats and may be in need of witness protection. Even without such threats testifying can be extremely traumatic. Nobody's Children Foundation in Poland has a specific programme concerning the child as a witness. One initiative that is part of the programme is the "Coalition for child-friendly interviewing". The coalition aims to protect the rights of child victims who participate in legal procedures through promoting and implementing child-friendly interviewing, creating child-friendly interview rooms, and improving the competence of professionals involved in the process. [39]

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39. For more information on the Nobody's Children Foundation programme on child witnesses see <http://www.fdn.pl/strona.php?p=24>.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the range of services that may be necessary in the recovery of children and families from sexual violence. However, it should also be remembered that practitioners working on these cases will require support as they play a pivotal role in the child's recovery. Resources to sustain ongoing training, supervision and exchange of experience and knowledge are critical in ultimately assisting affected individuals and families. Opportunities for sharing and "networking" are important in inspiring and motivating staff to try fresh, innovative approaches.[40]

There have been many positive examples of work in the field of child sexual violence by a range of actors and this good work should be examined and explored in more detail to see how it could be replicated or modified for different countries as well as for different individuals and groups.

The wide range of services and multitude of different actors involved in responding to sexual violence calls for high levels of co-operation along with clear guidelines and quality standards to ensure a consistent approach to all children – an area where the Council of Europe can play a critical role.

Key recommendations

- Ensure the child's voice and that of the family are heard and their needs documented and acted upon.

- Focus on long-term, sustainable support for children such as working with parents and caregivers to provide assistance at

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40. The "Childhood without abuse" project in central and eastern Europe is one such example supporting networking and training for practitioners. See <http://www.canee.net/oak/project_description>. A longer-term promising model for exchange and support is the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) in the UK which meets regularly offering support and advice and hosting regular practitioner seminars <http://www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk>.

all times. This should occur at all times and not just during crisis care.

- Encourage all services to monitor and evaluate their services in order to build up a picture of "what works" and "for whom" in terms of recovery and reintegration.

- Introduce an objective consistent scoring system in the region to ascertain what is meant by "good practice" in the field.

- Create regional protocols and guidelines, and ensure quality standards in all services working with children and their families affected by sexual violence.

- Support the ongoing training and awareness-raising of staff from all sectors working with children affected by sexual violence including social workers, the police, lawyers, judiciary, health and educational practitioners in order to increase identification and effective responses.

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17.
Child and adolescent sexual abusers – For a rehabilitative approach driven by scientific evidence

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Summary

Over the past decade, child and adolescent sexual abusers have gained considerable attention at once in judicial, law enforcement and academic circles and, even more, in the media at large with its often sensationalistic coverage. In parallel, anxiety regarding this category of offences has noticeably heightened in the general public and, as a result, political discourse across most countries has been somewhat shrill. This chapter will sketch an objective picture of the emerging criminological phenomenon of child and adolescent sexual abusers, including indications on prevalence figures and recidivism rates. It will also dwell on the specificities of child and adolescent sexual abusers, as well as the dangers, both in phenomenological and conceptual terms, of lumping this category with adult sexual abusers. Rather clearly, a scientific consensus suggests that child and adolescent sexual abusers are typologically different from adult sexual abusers, at times in a surprisingly counterintuitive way, and that society's responses, in particular legal and medico-psychological, must be sharply refined to deal effectively with this specific group. Professional attitudes must be shaped by scientific data and lawyers, judges, social workers, psychologists, probation officers, indeed all professions and stakeholders involved, must meet the challenge of updating their modes of operation through innovative interdisciplinary methods of assessment, disposition, treatment and monitoring.

An emerging offence category characterised by heterogeneity

The interest in child and adolescent sexual abusers[41] has steadily grown, most significantly over the past two decades. Historically, sexual abuse carried out by children and adolescents was mostly considered for its nuisance value, as behavioural instances of experimentation or curiosity, somewhat innocent, reflecting a "boys-will-be-boys" attitude, or a by-product of the normal aggressiveness of sexually maturing adolescents (Knopp, 1985). Paradoxically, sexual development in children and adolescents remained an understudied field and perceptions of normal sexuality were long embedded in moral considerations that slowed research into normal as well as deviant sexual practices. Problematic sexual behaviour was mostly discounted in terms of the harm produced, and minimisation often occurred because the victim was frequently a family member. Barbaree, Hudson, and Seto (1993) identify three principal reasons that explain why the viewpoint held hostage to minimisation receded: an increased awareness of the numbers of juvenile sex offenders; the realisation that a substantial proportion of sexual offences could be attributed to adolescents; and the fact that professionals working with adult sex offenders took notice, confirmed by strong research data, that some adult offenders began their deviant careers during adolescence, sometimes even during childhood.

As the knowledge base has increased, the overall scientific consensus has evolved and currently considers that the phenomenon of child and adolescent sexual abuse presents an extraordinary degree of heterogeneity (such as Knight and Prentky, 1993; Bourke and Donahue, 1996; Smith et al., 2005). Indeed, child and adolescent abusers engage in a wide range of sexual behaviours. Finkelhor, Ormrod, and Chaffin (2009:3) refer to events "as diverse as sharing pornography with younger children, fondling a child over the clothes,

41. The expression "child and adolescent sexual abuser" refers descriptively to problematic behaviour, whereas, elsewhere in this chapter, the expression "juvenile sex offender" is used restrictively in relationship to a category of children and adolescents in conflict with the law.

grabbing peers in a sexual way at school, date rape, gang rape, or performing oral, vaginal, or anal sex on a much younger child". Add to this the fact that sexually abusive behaviour is carried out by children as young as 4 or 5, by child and adolescent boys as well as girls, and that the victims can be younger children and peers, but also adults of both sexes and of all ages.

Jacob (2001), referring to the consensus she perceives in the scientific literature, succinctly describes the characteristics of problematic sexual behaviour, those that:

- include an aggressive component in which the child uses force, coercion or threats to control his or her victim;
- get worse over time, becoming repetitive and/or compulsive;
- are too elaborate for the stage of development or the age of the child;
- do not stop despite adult intervention;
- take place between children with a significant age difference (more than three years);
- point to an overinvestment in sexuality to the detriment of other aspects of the child's life [editorial translation].

Child and adolescent sexual abuse events incorporate different degrees of manipulation and violence and, correspondingly, the impact on the victim varies significantly. Indeed, subtle interactions between the abuser and the victim, sometimes close in age, as well as the manner in which the abuse event unfolds, may challenge the determination of the legal threshold of what constitutes offensive criminal abuse versus problematic sexual behaviour. The relationships and the interpersonal dynamics of the sexual event must thus be diligently considered. Ryan (1997:4) proposes an enduring formula to assess the presence or absence of exploitation, the central notion of the abuse, by examining the factors of *equality*, *consent* and *coercion*. *Equality* considers "differentials of physical, cognitive, and emotional development, passivity and assertiveness, power and control, and authority". *Consent*, as defined by the

National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending (1993, cited by Ryan, 1997:5), is an:

> Agreement including all of the following: (1) understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, developmental level, functioning, and experience; (2) knowledge of societal standards for what is being proposed; (3) awareness of potential consequences and alternatives; (4) assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally; (5) voluntary decision; [and] (6) mental competence.

Finally, *coercion* relates to the many different ways of denying the victim free choice, including the use of threats and physical violence.

The numerous parameters that make up the heterogeneity of child and adolescent sexual behaviour suggest that, except for its most deviant forms, careful consideration must be given before labelling it offensive, abusive or even reprehensible from a legal standpoint. Rather than to minimise or to exaggerate the significance of any given behaviour, as a matter of routine, a thorough assessment of the situation and its protagonists should be carried out in order to orient them to the services that best fit their needs and to adapt the stringency of the necessary public safety measures. This assessment should rely, *inter alia*, on up-to-date scientific data regarding the typologies of child and adolescent sexual abuses and to risk factors for ongoing problematic behaviour.

Prevalence – Just how many juvenile sexual offenders are there?

Determining the prevalence of child and adolescent sexual abuse is a complicated matter. The same holds true for juvenile sex offenders. Laws defining sexual abuse vary across jurisdictions, reporting procedures have changed over time, and different research methodologies used to count and estimate sex offenders produce different results. For example, police statistics or more general crime indices are historically viewed as particularly poor, not least because it is well known that numerous victims of sexual abuse do not report or

lodge complaints about the abuse suffered and, hence, the criminal offence often goes undetected. This obviously has a direct impact on the ensuing rate of judicial conviction, which, de facto, does not serve as an adequate reading of the frequency of sexual abuse by juvenile offenders in a given society. Other sources, such as surveys of victims, offenders and male college students, while very helpful, for example in raising society's awareness of the issue, have provided estimates that also present reliability issues, either under- or over-estimating the rates of sexual abuse committed by children and adolescents. Nonetheless, despite their intrinsic weaknesses, over time, research studies have pointed to some worrisome numbers with considerable consistency.

Citing overall estimates from a variety of sources in the US, Barbaree and Marshall (2006:3) suggest that "approximately 20% of all rapes and between 30% and 50% of child molestations are perpetrated by adolescent males".

Jacob (2000) reports that, in the Province of Québec (Canada), adolescents make up 17% of the total number of persons accused of sexual aggression. For Canada as a whole, about 20% of rapes and 30% to 40% of child sexual abuse are committed by adolescents. In Australia, recent police data suggests that between 9% and 16% of all sexual agressions are committed by juveniles (Boyd, 2006). For the year 1996 in Sweden, Långström (2001:8) reports that 11% of persons convicted of sex offences were under 20 years old. He adds, however, that "most estimates of the extent of sexual crime among young persons are probably underestimates; because the disposition to report sexual offences to the police is very low and is probably lower still in the case of abuse committed by young persons".

For the year 2003 in Germany, Heiliger (2005) reports that over a quarter of suspects of child sexual abuse were children and adolescents. In Switzerland, Bessler (2010) puts forward that child and adolescent sexual abusers represent, year-over-year, between 16% and 18% of suspects known to law enforcement agencies. In the United States, Finkelhor, Ormrod and Chaffin (2009), relying on the

National Incident-Based Reporting System (in 2004, 14 000 crime incidents involving an identified sex offender), report that juvenile sex offenders comprise more than one quarter (25.8%) of all sex offenders and more than one third (35.6%) of sex offenders against juvenile victims. These numbers represent 3.1% of all juvenile offenders and 7.4% of all violent juvenile offenders.

Another set of alarming estimates is provided by self-report surveys. In an extensive prevalence study concerning child abuse rates in the general population of adolescents in Geneva, Switzerland, Halpérin et al. (1996) find that approximately 25% to 30% of victims report having been sexually abused by someone under the age of 18. A survey of known adult offenders suggests that as many as half report having carried out sexually deviant behaviour in adolescence (Groth and Loredo, 1981; Barbaree, Hudson and Seto, 1993), and that they commit great damage to vast numbers of children and adolescents as they continue their careers into adulthood (Abel, Osborn and Twigg, 1993). And self-reports by college students are also disquieting. In a large survey of sexual perpetration, Koss and Dinero (1988, cited by Weinrott, 1996) surveyed 3 000 randomly-selected students from 32 different colleges, many of whom were in their early 20s at the time of the survey. Asked whether they had engaged in any form of sexual aggression since age 14, one fourth responded affirmatively. Of these, 4.6% disclosed an act of rape and another 3.2% an attempted rape. The remainder initiated coercive sexual behaviour not involving intercourse. One sample of college freshmen yielded an endorsement percentage of 25.6% when students were asked about sexual aggression since age 14 (Humphrey and White, 1992, cited by Weinrott, 1996). Rape and attempted rape accounted for about one third of the exploitive acts.

Types of offenders, risk and protective factors, recidivism

A matter of consensus is the fact that the overwhelming majority of child and adolescent sexual abusers are male, up to 90% and

beyond.[42] Also, early on as the phenomenon was emerging, it was apparent that juvenile sex offenders could not be described or, even less, understood by analogy with adult sex offenders (Letourneau and Miner, 2005). Finally, contrary to popular belief, the research consistently shows that sexual recidivism rates for juvenile sex offenders are very low (Nisbet, Wilson and Smallbone, 2004; Reitzel and Carbonell, 2006; Caldwell, 2007). In fact, juvenile sex offenders are more likely to have prior non-sexual convictions than they are to have prior sexual offence convictions. They are also more likely to reoffend in non-sexual ways. This suggests that for a large portion of juvenile sex offenders, the problematic sexual behaviour may have more to do with a tendency towards general delinquency than with deviant sexuality per se or, as Christodoulides et al. (2005:38) tersely state: "One of the most significant predictors of juvenile sexual offence recidivism is delinquency".

Beyond these clear findings, the search for specific profiles of juvenile sex offenders, with set identifiable parameters, remains elusive. In fact, research data is complex, often ambiguous, if not contradictory. Rasmussen (2005) applies a sensible approach, emphasising various subtypes of juvenile sex offenders, both clinically and empirically derived, and argues for a multidimensional framework. Given the vast amount of research data available, only the more tangible elements (or those having historical weight) that emerge from scholarly research and specialised literature are succinctly reviewed hereafter.

One of the earliest and most enduring classifications divides juvenile sex offenders, just like adult sexual offenders, between child molesters

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42. Sexual abuse carried out by female children and adolescents, indeed women as a whole, has recently commanded more scientific attention (e.g., Kubik, 2002; Bumby and Bumby, 2004; Giguere and Bumby, 2007). Tardif (2001) provides an analysis of what she coins the "ultimate taboo" and the reasons for the comparatively modest attention it has received. For Hunter and Mathews (1997, cited by Giguere and Bumby, 2007:3): "[T]he lack of public and professional cognisance of female sexual offending and its detrimental effects serves to deprive both the victims and the females who perpetrate against them of needed and professional support and intervention".

and rapists, thus emphasising an interest in younger victims as opposed to same age or older victims (Knight and Prentky, 1993). This simple dichotomy is still apparent in recent publications, such as Hart-Kerkhoffs et al. (2009) or even Finkelhor, Ormrod and Chaffin (2009). The latter authors report that juvenile sex offenders, especially younger than 13-14 years old, are much more likely than adult sex offenders to target young children as their victims. Adult sex offenders are more attracted to pubescent victims age 13 or older, as are youth 15 and over. Both of these age categories tend to carry out the more severe aggressions. Compared to adults, juvenile sex offenders as a whole, but even more so for the children under the age of 12, target proportionally more male victims (in absolute numbers female victims remain a clear majority). Among the younger juvenile sex offenders, there is also a higher proportion of females. Finally, 5% of the juvenile sex offenders are younger than 9 years and 16% are younger than 12 years.

The families of juvenile sex offenders have been scrutenised in an attempt to detect factors that explain their offsprings' offensive behaviour. One of the most studied aspects of sexual agression is its possible association with the perpetrator's own history of child sexual abuse, the so-called victim-to-offender cycle. And, indeed, research suggests that juvenile sexual offenders, especially male, and in particular child molesters, present high victimisation rates by family members (and, less often, by extrafamilial predators). Many reports also point to the deleterious influence of physical violence and abuse. Ryan et al. (1996, cited by Borowsky, Hogan and Ireland, 1997), in a study of more than 1 600 juveniles in treatment programmes for sexual offences, found that 42% had been physically abused, 39% sexually abused and 63% had witnessed family violence. Children who grow up in abusive family environments are at risk for a multitude of reasons, including the modelling of the behaviours they witnessed, skewed interpersonal relationships, lower empathy and so forth, all of which can relate in negative ways to inappropriate sexual interactions. While not an unequivocal risk factor, traumatic childhood experiences certainly do not help young people attain

psychological and social adjustment. Righthand and Welch (2005) indicate that some samples of juvenile sex offenders have been found to come from families who present high prevalence rates of significant stress, dysfunction, instability, substance abuse, psychopathology and criminality.

Knight and Prentky (1993:50) note that a large proportion of their sample was defined by low social competence, social deficits being among "the most common characteristics attributed to adolescent sex offenders". Isolation from their peers, the inability to create and maintain close ties, shyness and other ingredients help explain why at-risk juveniles approach younger victims compared to whom they feel more skilled and apt to manipulate. Indeed, Smith et al. (2005:99) write that the:

> overall picture of the high-risk juvenile male offender that emerges … is of a shy, awkward adolescent boy who engages in a good deal of sexual fantasies of all kinds and a great deal more impersonal and sadomasochistic fantasies than other offenders and who has a problem controlling aggressive impulses. His family is less supportive and warm, and given his social disabilities, he may find himself more comfortable with younger children whom he can dominate and with whom he can feel more comfortable – consistent with the finding … that the offender is often older than his victim.

In fact, clinical experience and numerous *faits divers* bear witness to the notion that many adolescent sexual offenders are loners, spend major time periods just hanging out, detached from meaningful relationships and without an emotional support group they can lean on when experiencing distress. Both male and female students with the highest suicide risk behaviour are significantly more likely to perpetrate sexual violence. Conversely, Borowsky, Hogan and Ireland (1997) indicate that males who were emotionally healthy and connected with friends and other people are much less likely to perpetrate sexual violence. They examined protective effects, and, after controlling for other variables, emotional health and connectedness with friends and adults in the community, including school,

church and police personnel, emerge as significant protective factors against sexually aggressive behaviour among male adolescents. They note as well that previous studies of resilience in youth consistently identify a caring relationship with a competent adult[43] as a critical protective factor for children and adolescents, especially for those young people living in dangerous or non-nurturing homes and neighbourhoods.

While deviant sexual arousal is more clearly established as a motivator of adult sexual offending, particularly as it relates to paedophilia, a minority of sexually abusive youth manifest established paraphilic (deviant) sexual arousal and interest patterns (Hunter, 1999). These arousal and interest patterns are recurrent and intense, and relate directly to the nature of the sexual behaviour problem (such as sexual arousal to young children) (Righthand and Welch, 2005).

Among other significant characteristics of juvenile sexual offenders associated with increased risk of an adolescent committing a sexual offence, the specialised literature cites violence among family members, absence of a father or father figure in the household, criminal behaviour by members of the family, poor parenting techniques, emotional neglect, poor self-esteem, impulse control problems, substance abuse, high consumption of pornography,[44] problems at school and antisocial tendencies. Worling and Langstrom (2006, cited by Schladale, 2010) identify the following risk factors in the context of current research generated evidence:

- *empirically supported risk factors:* deviant sexual interest; prior criminal sanctions for sexual offending; sexual offending

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43. Cyrulnik (2002) has written eloquently about the notion of a *tuteur* (a French word borrowed from gardening vocabulary, but also referring to the pedagogical concept of *tutor*), meaning the (human) pole along which the plant can grow upwards.

44. Pornophagia (Guéniat, 2010) or the often observed voracious consumption of pornography, in particular via the Internet, has a dual effect on children and adolescents. On the one hand, it provides inappropriate models of gender relations and lowers the inhibition threshold to act out. On the other hand, children and adolescents spend considerable time alone without adult supervision, and become socially detached and maladroit.

against more than one victim; sexual offending against a stranger victim; social isolation; and uncompleted offence-specific treatment;

- *promising risk factors:* problematic parent-adolescent relationship; and attitudes supportive of sexual offending;

- *possible risk factors:* high-stress family environment; impulsivity; antisocial interpersonal orientation; interpersonal aggression; negative peer associations; sexual preoccupation; sexual offending against a male victim; sexual offending against a child; threats, violence or weapons used in sexual offence; environment supporting reoffending.

Trends in the treatment and management of juvenile sex offenders

In recent decades, there has been a marked shift in many countries towards dealing with juvenile sex offenders and even children and adolescents who present problematic sexual behaviour, in a more punitive fashion.[45] As Chaffin and Bonner (1998:315) insist, in the context of "emotionality and zeal surrounding sexual abuse and sex offenders as well as with the positions of power we assume in treating coerced patients under the auspices of official authority, [we should be alerted] to the potential for harming youthful patients by swatting flies with sledge hammers". While this evolution is in part driven by the need to find more optimal public safety responses to the issues posed by these children and adolescents, notably dangerousness and recidivism, it is also clear, along with Bumby (2006:1), that "… an exclusive reliance on punishment-oriented and surveillance-driven approaches has a limited impact on enhancing community safety. … When offender management strategies include a rehabilitative

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45. To a large extent, this evolution mirrors society's debate affecting adult sex offenders. For example, in 2004, Swiss voters approved a citizen's initiative calling for a constitutional amendment requiring lifelong institutional commitment for adult sex offenders considered, under extremely restrictive conditions, to be dangerous or not amenable to treatment.

focus, the outcome is much more promising". Progressively, a more balanced approach is currently emerging, one that integrates judicial monitoring and therapeutic intervention (Jaffé and Niveau, 1997), increasingly delivered through co-ordinated services in the community (Schladale et al., 2007).

While the overall objective is the interruption of the reprehensible sexual behaviour, the least restrictive and costly treatment settings (among various degrees of residential or community environments) must be retained and calibrated to fit the therapeutic needs of offenders while meeting public safety concerns. This can be achieved only if, in a given national or cross-national jurisdiction, the appropriate facilities and resources exist and are staffed by competent and highly specialised staff. In addition, these specialists must be capable of working with an interdisciplinary mindset, at the juncture of the judicial, social and psychotherapeutic fields (Zermatten, 2010).

As Miner et al. (2006) point out in their international standards of care for juvenile sex offenders, and as Bumby (2007) insists, assessment is a core task, central to the successful management of juvenile sex offenders. In specific terms, careful professional assessment helps to: *(1)* determine the child or adolescent's risk factor and the level of monitoring necessary in the community or the degree of residential security; *(2)* comprehensively identify the characteristics of the child or adolescent that require a psychotherapeutic focus, as well as its intensity; *(3)* gain an understanding of the person's overall strengths and weaknesses; and *(4)* provide a complete picture of the social and familial support systems that will support the therapeutic gains and transform the treatment interventions into stable lifelong prosocial behaviour patterns.

Two intertwined challenges confront treatment providers working with juvenile sexual offenders. Firstly, treatment, at least in its initial stages, is usually provided on an involuntary basis. Indeed, very few sex offenders enter the therapeutic universe without strong judicial injunctions. Secondly, the negative attributions applied to juvenile sex offenders are such that many treatment providers focus

almost exclusively on the problematic characteristics of the offenders' behaviour and do not sufficiently take into account and harness their qualities and strengths. These are also the very reasons why the management of sexual offenders shows greater promise in community settings, instead of in residential settings where they are labelled and stigmatised for their sexual behaviour, and not recognised as persons in highly delicate developmental projects seeking to regain a solid footing in society.

Carefully designed treatment interventions are gaining considerable traction, especially since research is demonstrating its effectiveness at significantly reducing recidivism (see for example the meta-analysis by Reitzel and Carbonell, 2006). Nisbet, Rombouts and Smallbone (2005) refer to Ryan's (1999) sense of "evolving consensus" among treatment providers who use the "sexual abuse cycle"[46] as a framework for conceptualising the abusive pattern and the need to address the offending by targeting the pattern of fantasy, planning, victim selection, grooming, access and opportunity, sexual arousal and reinforcement, distortions and rationalisations, decision making, secrecy and denial.

Probably the most promising approach for community intervention in terms of results, measured by lower recidivism rates, is multisystemic treatment or MST. Developed by Borduin and Schaeffer (2001), MST is an intensive family- and community-based treatment that addresses the multiple factors of serious antisocial behaviour in juvenile sex abusers. Treatment can involve any combination of the individual, family and extra familial factors. MST promotes behaviour change in the young person's natural environment, using the strengths of family, peers, school and neighbourhood to facilitate change.

Current specialised treatment interventions, both in the community and in residential settings, are overwhelmingly inspired by cognitive-behavioural, social-learning and relapse-prevention models.

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46. Developed by Lane (1991).

According to Bumby (2006:3), the primary goals of sex offender treatment are for individuals to:

> take responsibility for their behaviours, develop the necessary skills and techniques that will prevent them from engaging in sexually abusive and other harmful behaviours in the future … [Gain an understanding of] the inter-relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, their impact on one's conduct, and then developing more healthy thinking patterns and appropriate ways of managing emotions. And within the relapse prevention framework … identify the risk factors or triggers that are associated with an individual's sexually abusive behaviours and subsequently develop healthy coping skills to address those risk factors.

In some rare well-equipped treatment centres, practically *à la carte* psychotherapeutic programmes for individual profiles can include clinical interventions as diverse as confronting cognitive distortions, teaching the social skills necessary to engage in healthy interpersonal relationships, sparking and nurturing empathy towards victims and so forth. Yet, across most countries, there is a dearth of resources, know-how and trained professionals.[47]

Regardless of the quality of the resources available, managing and treating juvenile sex offenders, especially in community settings, is a delicate affair which requires strong collaboration between different agencies and stakeholders, including the judicial system, child protection services, victim advocates, law enforcement officials, probation services, school authorities and many more (Carter and Morris, 2007).

Some final thoughts

In Western societies, adult sex offenders who victimise children have achieved a status similar to that of demons in the Dark Ages of our

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47. As a source of best practice for francophone professionals and policy makers, a major information database, still in its early stages, is being set up. It will provide up-to-date research and clinical data regarding treatment of juvenile sex offenders: see <http://www.disno.ch>.

civilisation. Child and adolescent sex offenders have been teetering on the edge of this primitive classification for some time, mostly because little was known about them and their numbers turned out to be greater than suspected. As with adult sex offenders, punishment and incapacitation were, and often still are, invoked in the name of public safety, with short shrift afforded to even reasonable rehabilitative projects.

In recent years, a more accurate and scientific picture has emerged from a large body of research on the phenomenon of child and adolescent sexual abusers and there is cause for optimism. Indeed, the very notion that juvenile sex offenders will with certainty become adult sex offenders has been laid to rest. Moreover, effective evidence-based cognitive-behavioural, social-learning and relapse-prevention treatment programmes are now being proposed, many of which have proved to be significantly effective with juvenile sex offenders. In addition, these programmes operate with very low levels of risk within the community. While punishment and incarceration remain the favoured social and political options, there are some indications that we are slowly moving away from a simple risk-management stance towards a more holistic rehabilitative one that, while maintaining public safety, seeks to build on the resilience, potential, strengths and positive qualities of children and adolescents engaged in complex developmental tasks.

Several major challenges still lie ahead. First, the interdisciplinary and multi-agency frameworks need vast improvement in order to better co-ordinate and thus maximise the distinct yet complimentary contributions made by the judicial/law enforcement and therapeutic / social services professional spheres. Unfortunately, the social and political will to achieve this is lacking in many national jurisdictions, even though some frontline specialised professionals, recognising the gains for society and juvenile sex offenders alike, are pressing ahead as best they can.

The second challenge relates to the social prism through which juvenile sex offenders are observed. Despite the undeniable damage that

child and adolescent sexual abusers cause their victims, there is considerable hypocrisy surrounding this issue. Juvenile sex offenders themselves are a clearly identifiable category of victims. This is borne out by the high prevalence of sexual abuse within their ranks and by their many developmental difficulties linked to inadequate parenting. While there should be no hierarchy of victims, when it comes to choosing between funding the creation and training of specialised staff to manage and treat juvenile sex offenders, or funding measures to deal with child abuse victims, the latter often takes precedence. However, both groups should be priorities. Policy makers should also be reminded that, although recidivism rates are rather low, better programmes for juvenile sexual offenders will reduce the number of future victims.

Finally, civil society must challenge its own prejudices and recognise fully that children's rights apply to all children without distinction, including juvenile sex offenders. Society as a whole should be doing its best to rehabilitate them.

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18.
Children and young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour – what have we learned and what do we need to know to propose effective intervention?

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Introduction

Protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation must be seen as imperative for all governments, regions and local communities if they are to create a society that nurtures, protects and cares for all its children. It is therefore important that child protection agencies work together with civil society to make protective adults aware of the dynamics behind this complex social problem. By educating the general population on this issue and introducing a "public health approach" to protecting children, society will be better equipped to protect them from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. This holistic form of safeguarding children should also incorporate appropriate assessment and therapeutic services for those who sexually harm children and for those individuals who are motivated to seek help before they sexually abuse a child.

Child protection professionals maintain that stereotypical views about people who sexually harm children still exist. There is still reluctance to move away from the "stranger danger" concept of child protection, which can distort research findings on the issue. Research has clearly shown that the vast majority of people who sexually abuse children know their victim. Over 80% of sexually abused children will have some form of relationship with their abuser. This person might be a member of the family or a known member of their

local community (Stop it Now UK and Ireland, 2003). Some people who sexually harm children hold responsible positions in society and are considered as being above all suspicion. To safeguard children from sexual abuse and exploitation, society needs to acknowledge that abusers are a heterogeneous group, a situation that needs to be reflected in comprehensive child protection policies. Florin and Jones (2001:18) write:

> Child sexual exploitation and abuse is unlikely to be efficiently prevented unless the diversity of the people who sexually exploit children is fully taken into account. Both men and women, some children themselves, exploit children sexually in different ways, for many different reasons and in various contexts.

Children and adolescents who sexually harm other children

The fact that some children and adolescents sexually harm other children can be extremely difficult for many child care professionals and members of the public to comprehend. The emergence of what has been perceived of as a "new social problem" has been met with denial, confusion and a lack of appropriate intervention in most European countries. Yet we have become increasingly aware that children and young people under the age of 18 can sexually harm other children, with statistics stating that between 25% and 35% of sexually abusive acts are perpetrated by persons under 18 (Masson and Erooga, 2006). These figures have been quoted for many years by professionals working in this area, but appropriate service provision does not appear to have matched the growing awareness of the problem. Although assessment and treatment facilities for these children now exist in some countries, service provision based upon a coordinated national strategy and a cohesive governmental response has been extremely slow to develop (Hackett and Masson, 2004).

This chapter will give an overview of how the international community has responded to the challenge of working effectively with children and adolescents who have exhibited sexually harmful behaviour. It is essential that this group receive appropriate assessment

and intervention to help them understand and to change. It is hoped that this chapter will also enable child care professionals to better recognise the need to address this phenomenon without labelling an individual child as a "sex offender". "Sexually harmful behaviour" is the more appropriate term from the perspective of child's rights and child protection.

Historical perspectives

To understand current practice in the field, it is helpful to look at how intervention has developed internationally within a historical and socio-political context. This is of particular relevance in relation to children and adolescents who have exhibited sexual harmful behaviour, as societal denial appears to have been difficult to overcome. Europe has been slow to acknowledge this phenomenon as a serious social problem, an attitude responsible for delays in offering effective assessment and treatment services to these children.

The United States was the first country to address this "new social problem". Professionals there implemented assessment and treatment programmes for what were called "juvenile sex offenders". This was later followed by work with younger children labelled as having "sexual behaviour problems".

Adolescents responsible for committing "sexual offences" against other children was documented by the psychiatrist Dr Lewis Doshay, who worked with courts of justice and clinics in New York City during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1928 he began a six-year outcome study which followed 256 juveniles brought before the courts in various boroughs of New York in so-called "sexual delinquency cases" (Doshay, 1943). The study findings are interesting as they documented low levels of recidivism in relation to "sexual offending" by adolescents, but recorded high rates of other "non-sexual offending behaviour". These findings have been replicated in recent outcome studies, which suggest that most adolescents convicted for sexually harming other children will not be re-convicted of further sexual offences as adults.

But it is important to consider the small subgroup that *will* go on to commit further sexual offences and it is these children that we should be targeting for long-term intervention. The Doshay report led to other studies in the United States just after the Second World War (Atcheson and Williams, 1954), but treatment programmes were not established on a significant national basis until the early 1980s, when there was a greater recognition of all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

The massive growth in treatment facilities in the United States has triggered criticism from professionals concerned that some adolescents are being unnecessarily admitted to residential treatment facilities. This is based on the premise that some adolescents are being forced to undergo treatment even though they might not benefit from it. It is important that therapeutic intervention be based upon a comprehensive assessment which reflects the risk posed by the child and also looks at the needs of the individual child or adolescent. Although risk assessment is important, therapeutic intervention should be implemented as a means of helping the young person move forward and not be used as a form of punishment or retribution.

European developments

The slow development of service provision in Europe as compared to that in North America can probably be attributed to the close cultural, social and historical ties between the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. This may also explain why the latter appears to have been the first European country to begin working on the issue.

From a comparative socio-political perspective, research indicates that there is a correlation between social welfare models and recognising and reacting to complex social problems: countries which have adopted the Anglo-Saxon model tend to react more quickly than countries with a northern European or corporatist conservative model of social welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990, Harder and Pringle, 1999, Pringle 1998). This appears to have been the case concern-

ing treatment development for children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour.

The UK began to assess the development of service provision for these children in 1992 with the publication of "The report of the Committee of Enquiry into children and young people who sexually abuse other children" (NCH, 1992). The committee was responding to the Survey of Treatment Facilities for Young Sexual Abusers (NCH, 1991) "which painted a gloomy picture of our understanding of these areas" (Calder, 1997:1). One of the main criticisms of the report centred on the fact that treatment was based on work with adult sex offenders and ignored the developmental status of children and adolescents.

In 2003, Hackett and Mason published the results of a two-year investigation into the then current state of provision for this group of young people across the UK and Ireland. Their research found that there are nearly 200 services or projects offering intervention to sexually harming young people, but that many of these are generic rather than specialist. Although the report stated that there was a much more sophisticated and professional approach to the work in the UK, it also described service provision as being "patchy" and "unco-ordinated" (Hackett and Masson, 2003). Further to this the UK Children's Commissioner reported to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that:

> There is also a severe lack of service provision, including assessment, support and treatment programmes for children and young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour. At present there is an inconsistent response to this group at the local level, with different systems and policies operating in different areas and little development of the specialist services required to meet their specific needs. (UK Children's Commissioners Report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2008)

Problems in developing service provision in other European countries appear to have been similar to the situation in the UK, but as

stated above, with even greater levels of societal denial in some countries. The attitude of northern European countries during the late 1980s and mid-1990s is a good example of initial denial. Although services are now developing rapidly in northern Europe there was significant reluctance to see this as a social problem in the 1990s.

In 1996, the author of this chapter undertook a comparative analysis of treatment facilities in Denmark and the UK. The report concluded that societal denial of the problem was much greater in Denmark, based upon the fact that there were no official treatment facilities in Denmark in 1996 (Jones, 1996, unpublished). The first Danish treatment facility did not open until 2003 thanks to efforts from NGOs and professionals who had gained knowledge in this area by attending international conferences.

European professionals working on this issue began to form networks, giving rise to the so-called Harreveld Group, which began to meet twice a year in the Netherlands to discuss "working with sexually abusive children in a European context". In 1999, the European Society for Working with Sexually Abusive Youth (Essay) was formed to establish best practice and compare socio-demographic data. In putting the historical developments in relation to assessment and treatment in Europe into some kind of perspective, it is interesting to look back at the remarks that Ruud Bullens, co-founder of Essay made in his keynote speech at their first conference (Amsterdam, May 2003):

> It must be stated here that we were greatly amazed to see how professionally the treatment of these sexually abusive youth was organised in Great Britain and what amount of scientific research was done in this particular field. Compared with the Dutch situation – which to the best of my knowledge is completely comparable with the situation in the other European countries – Great Britain offers a lot of therapeutic programmes for a lot of juvenile sex offenders.

If we compare the above-mentioned remarks with those made about service provision in the UK by the Children's Commissioner in 2008,

then it could be suggested that there is still an urgent need for further research and international co-operation between European countries on this issue. It is important to acknowledge that this behaviour is harmful to other children and in need of correction through appropriate assessment and therapeutic intervention. Measures also need to be implemented to assess the impact of treatment. The work of the Essay network has enabled practitioners in Europe to use standardised measures to evaluate their input across Europe using the Adolescent Sex Offender Assessment Pack (ASOAP) developed by psychologist Richard Beckett. This underscores the need for treatment and its evaluation to be carried out by qualified professionals, working within a child's rights and child protection framework, with a focus on helping the child.

After initial denial of the problem, some countries over-reacted to it with judicial responses that were not always in the best interest of children's rights. Research has shown that these children and adolescents have a myriad of social and psychological needs that were not met due to possible neglect or abuse in their early childhood. This needs to be addressed within a child protection and therapeutic context.

If we take the United Kingdom as an example, the societal denial that existed at the start of the 1980s meant that very few children were being offered appropriate assessment and treatment. This period was followed by a period of recognition and the introduction of a "risk management approach" when it seemed that all cases were assessed as being "high risk", with children being put on treatment programmes based on work with adult sex offenders. This was then followed by a more holistic and well-thought out response that provided children and adolescents with more age-appropriate and individual treatment programmes based upon a comprehensive assessment of their needs. This is a very simplistic view of developments in the UK, but it does give a basic analysis of how intervention has developed. There is a need to look critically at developments in the UK and the rest of Europe so we can learn from their past mistakes and pass our knowledge on across borders.

Hacket (2007:1) writes:

> About a quarter to a third of all cases of sexual abuse coming to the attention of professionals concern situations where children and young people are the alleged perpetrators of the abuse.
> Almost all reports on this topic state this same, well worn statistic, and I am sick of it.
> Important as professional awareness of this phenomenon is, developing correct responses to children with harmful sexual behaviour is what matters here. It's time we moved from the statistic to action ... We also need to ensure a balanced and less hysterical approach. Most young people presenting with such behaviour are both risky and vulnerable. It is right that we deal with the risk, but all too often the professional system conspires to increase the vulnerability. The move to resilience-enhancing models of intervention that seek to harness strengths and foster abilities is urgently overdue in the sexual aggression field, where risk management discourses still dominate. We also need to look carefully at the broader social context. In the current landscape of societal anxiety and highly restrictive legislative measures towards adult sex offenders, children and young people are being caught up in a maelstrom of intolerance and fear.

In some countries the response to working with children exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour has been criticised for labelling children as "sex offenders" and not considering children as persons with specific rights. Some children under the age of 18 have even had their personal details put on a sex offender register. It is important to challenge children's harmful sexual behaviour, but it is equally important not to equate it to that of adult sex offenders. Unlike adults, children are developmentally not capable of the same kind of intellectual capacity for reasoning, planning and understanding the implications of their actions (Crooks et al., 2005).

Age of criminal responsibility

A major problem at international level in dealing with the judicial implications of this behaviour is the age of criminal consent, which

varies greatly in countries across the world. In England and Wales the age of criminal responsibility is 10, but in Sweden and Norway it is 15. This makes it difficult to compare cases at international level because their outcomes will differ due to a lack of harmonisation of European legal systems.

The judicial sanctions that some children receive will have serious lifelong consequences in terms of education and future employment. This could be seen as being in conflict with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 40 on the administration of youth justice states that:

> States Parties recognise the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognised as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society….

Defining the problem

Proposing effective therapeutic services to these children and adolescents entails defining the multifaceted and complex nature of this issue, taking into account its different perspectives. First and foremost, a distinction needs to be made between adolescents and younger children, in terms of their emotional, cognitive and social development, making it imperative that assessment and therapy take into account the needs of each individual child and are not based on a "one fits all philosophy".

Many adolescents will be above the age of criminal responsibility and therefore subject to judicial consequence for their actions. Children below the age of criminal responsibility will probably enter the child welfare systems in most countries and not be subject to judicial proceedings. Although there are no formal rules distinguishing children and adolescents according to age, 13 is generally seen as the

beginning of adolescence in terms of child protection and judicial intervention.

Terminology

Working towards a definition of what constitutes sexually harmful behaviour requires us to be more circumspect in relation to the terminology which is used in relation to children and adolescents. Some of the terms that are used do not reflect a child's rights or a child protection perspective and it is important not to use language extracted from therapeutic work undertaken with adult sex offenders. There should always be a professional understanding that we are referring to children and adolescents who are in a developmental stage in their lives. Public policies, assessment procedures and most treatment protocols developed for adult sex offenders are inappropriate for children and should not be used as a means of intervention. Therefore it is important not to label children and adolescents as "sex offenders".

According to the Association for Treatment of Abuses (ATSA, 1996:24):

> Adults should take every precaution against policies that label children as deviant, perverted, as sex offenders, or destined to persist in sexual harm. Professionals increasingly use the term *children with sexual behaviour problems* because it labels the behaviour and not the identity of the child (Chaffin and Bonner, 1998; Chaffin et al., 2002). Given that childhood SBP (Sexual Behaviour Problems) may foretell little about a child's future behaviour, and that labelling risks creating a self-fulfilling prophecy and social burdens, applying labels such as "sex offender," "predator", "perpetrator" or variants of these terms are injudicious, especially when that label is likely to outlive any utility or relevance.

The impact of interactive technologies on sexually harmful behaviour

Although there is very little research on interactive technologies as a possible pathway into sexually harmful behaviour, it is worth reviewing what we do know about this new area. Children and adolescents

have almost unlimited access to the Internet via personal computers and mobile phones. It is not known how many of them engage in sexual behaviour online or if there is a causal link between deviant use of the interactive technologies and sexually harmful behaviour. Case study analyses indicate a disinhibition effect of pornography on adolescent sexual behaviour (Cooper, Boies and Osborne, 2004), and there is also evidence that viewing highly deviant or violent images increases the risk at least for some adolescents (Quayle and Taylor, 2005).

There is concern that accessing pictures and text with a sexual content may have an adverse impact on current or future sexual and emotional development. A further concern is that looking at online deviant sexual material may act as a catalyst to engage in a sexually problematic way with another child or children, or that it may put a young person at risk of sexual exploitation by others, particularly adults. Another "harm-to-others" scenario relates to children and adolescents victimising other young people by accessing images of child abuse through interactive technologies, or sexually soliciting others in chat rooms or on social network sites.

Adolescents engaging with interactive technologies can be made vulnerable as they are exposed to incorrect information about human sexual behaviour and enhancements of deviant sexual fantasies. The latter are usually further reinforced by masturbation triggered by downloaded material. In 2003 the British NGO Barnardos identified 83 children as being involved in Internet and mobile phone abusive activities and of these, 22 children were identified as having downloaded sexually abusive images of other children. This indicates a need to develop services in this area and undertake more research.

Understanding sexual development

To gain an understanding of difference between "normal" sexual development and sexual behaviour that is harmful let us look briefly at what the literature says about healthy sexual development and problematic sexual behaviour. Normal childhood sexual play and exploration is behaviour that occurs spontaneously, intermittently, is

mutual and non-coercive when it involves other children, and causes no emotional distress. "Normal childhood sexual play and exploration is not a preoccupation and usually does not involve advanced sexual behaviours such as intercourse or oral sex" (ATSA, 2006:3).

With regard to executing sexually harmful behaviour, young children are far less able than adults to engage in complex cognitive processes such as planning, grooming or rationalising. Children have shorter attention spans and more limited impulse control. Children with sexually harmful behaviour problems are more likely to be impulsive rather than compulsive in their actions towards other children and again this is a vital factor in differentiating their actions from those of adolescents and adults. The assessment and treatment of younger children has lagged behind work carried out with adolescents, but now appears to be attracting more attention and resources after an initial failure of recognising the need to work with this group of children.

Assessment issues

Assessments should establish the facts of what has happened and make decisions about potential risks with regard to other children in contact with the child and the child who has sexually harmed others. It must be determined if the child is likely to commit further harm, even though research suggests that the vast majority of younger children will not develop further harmful behaviour, especially if appropriate intervention is offered to the child and to the family. The assessment should include information about the child's family background as it is important to work with the family and involve parents and siblings if possible. Further assessment and management may be needed if the harmful behaviour was directed against a sibling. Clinical assessments are primarily useful for informing intervention and treatment planning and should not be confused with official investigations, for which they may not be relevant.

All intervention measures should take into account that young children do not yet posses the cognitive maturity or the ability to regulate

their emotions that would allow them to use self-understanding as a means of improving emotional and behavioural self-control. Young children's cognitive abilities are better suited to understanding simple rules about behaviour. Agency intervention should always be supported by interagency co-operation when undertaking this work and a multi-agency assessment should be carried out before any management or treatment plans are made. This work should be co-ordinated by an experienced social worker and good practice suggests that two professionals should be involved in the comprehensive assessment. Psychologists should also be involved in relation to any psychometric tests that are deemed necessary within the assessment process.

Sexually harmful behaviour by children and young people creates victims, but most of these children are themselves victims. Research indicates that the vast majority of children who sexually harm other children have been subjected to multiple forms of abuse and neglect within their own families and that this could contribute to the onset of sexually harmful behaviour. According to Hawkes (2009:1): "Research into sexually harmful behaviour (SHB) in children has evolved towards a general recognition that neglect and maltreatment in early childhood, including sexual abuse, may predispose the onset of sexually harmful behaviour." This underlines all the more the need to assess the family history. Many of the families in question will have already had contact with the social services for reasons other than an incident of sexually harmful behaviour.

As mentioned above, it is generally accepted that two professionals should be assigned to this kind of assessment work as there are many complex issues to consider, in particular because this includes working with families. According to the practice guidelines from the British NGO, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, 2008:7), all assessments should include family information gathered from the parents where appropriate and cover:

- the family history – including its chronology and health matters;
- family relationships;
- previous offending/inappropriate sexual behaviour;

- domestic violence;
- attachment / emotional availability;
- boundaries and family attitudes towards sexuality;
- attitudes towards sexually harmful behaviour and towards the victim;
- methods of discipline.

It is also important to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of families and be able to offer support. Many parents whose children display sexually harmful behaviour may feel lonely and isolated when contact is made with social services. They often face stigma, rejection and hostility from the local community in reaction to their child's behaviour. Research outcomes strongly suggest that involving parents in the assessment is vital to the success of any intervention.

Treatment

Treatment should be based upon a comprehensive assessment and implemented by qualified professionals. Evidence suggests that cognitive behavioural treatment and psycho-educational approaches have both been successful in working with children exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour. These approaches can be used in group work or on an individual basis.

ATSA (1996) reports that:

> Two randomised trials have been conducted specifically focusing on children with Sexual Behaviour Problem (SBP). Bonner and colleagues (Bonner, Walker, and Berliner, 1999) randomly assigned children with SBP either to a 12-session, psycho-educational, cognitive-behavioural group treatment program (CBT) or a 12-session play therapy group. Short-term reductions in SBP and non-sexual behaviour problems were found among children in both treatment groups. At ten-year follow-up, sex offense arrest and child welfare sexual abuse perpetration report outcomes were significantly in favour of the CBT condition (Carpentier, Silovsky, and Chaffin, in press). Children randomised to CBT had sig-

nificantly lower rates of sex offense arrests or sex abuse perpetration reports (2%) than children randomised to play therapy (10%).

Play therapy can also be used with younger children to address difficult issues as some children may not be suitable for group dynamics work. This does not mean that group work should not be used, but each child should be assessed first as to their ability to work in a group and determine whether alternative methods should be used.

Working with adolescents

As stated earlier, work with adolescents has been ongoing in some countries since the 1980s with assessment and therapeutic work being well established in many countries. Some adolescents represent a high risk to other children as the characteristics of sexually harmful behaviour committed by some adolescents can be similar to that perpetrated by adult sex offenders. They can engage in both contact (including penetrative acts) and non-contact behaviours and some adolescents do have the cognitive ability to "groom" their victims. There are documented cases of adolescents harming a variety of victims including much younger children as well as peers or adults (NSPCC, 2008).

As mentioned previously, however, research indicates that the vast majority will not go on to abuse children as adults, as was once thought. In a six-year follow up study of 148 adolescents, only 5% had reoffended by the end of the study (Worling and Curwen, 2000). It is important to take this issue seriously and implement appropriate risk assessment and therapeutic responses, but this intervention also needs to reflect the latest research results.

Assessment issues for adolescents

It is important for professionals to engage and communicate with adolescents throughout the assessment process. This can be a very difficult task as each individual will react differently to the worker and the assessment procedure. Professionals conducting the assessment

should be experienced in working with adolescents so they can react accordingly to defensive behaviour. This may include anger, denial and minimisation of the harmful sexual behaviour. Most adolescents react well to humour and it can be used as a method to involve young people in the process. It is important that the worker maintain boundaries and be aware of possible grooming behaviour.

Assessment should include the following:

- a social history including significant loss, trauma and disruption;
- prior experiences of victimisation;
- wider social functioning, relationships and interactions;
- other offending behaviour;
- family environment and parenting style;
- full sexual history, knowledge and attitudes;
- exploration of the alleged sexually harmful behaviour;
- victim awareness and empathy;
- treatment prognosis.

Assessment tools

In the United Kingdom, the assessment, intervention and moving on (AIM) assessment framework (Print et al., 2001) provides guidance for a wide range of practitioners and provides a common language and a shared approach to tackling sexually harmful behaviour. This can be adapted to other cultural contexts and environments and is seen as a valuable tool in the assessment process.

In the United States, the Juvenile Sex Offender Assessment Protocol – II (J-SOAP-II), developed by Robert Prentky and Sue Righthand, is a checklist whose purpose is to aid in the systematic review of risk factors that have been identified in the professional literature as associated with sexual and criminal offending. It is designed to be used with boys age 12 to 18. The J-SOAP II may be used to assess the risk of sexual reoffending for non-adjudicated youth with a history

of sexually coercive behaviour, as well as young people adjudicated for sexual offences. This manual describes the development of the J-SOAP-II and provides instructions for its use.

Hackett (2004:3) relates:

> Interventions broadly based on a cognitive behavioural framework, with a strong relapse prevention element, are supported in the literature for work with children, young people and their carers. However, intervention should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual child and family, rather than applied mechanistically to all. The emphasis should be on supportive and empathic interactions. Dogmatic inflexible or aggressive approaches are unhelpful.

Conclusions

There is now recognition that children and young people can sexually harm other children and that there is a need to develop appropriate service provision that meets the complex assessment and treatment needs of these troubled children. This work needs to be co-ordinated so good practice can be shared nationally and internationally with evidence based research and practice being shared across borders. This will allow for better service provision to be implemented on an international basis with allowances being made for cultural and socio-political differences.

It is clear that the vast majority of children and adolescents exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour have suffered neglect and maltreatment in their childhood. This appears to be a pathway into sexually harmful behaviour and indicates that society needs to be more proactive in identifying and working with children known to be at risk of abuse or neglect. There needs to be further research on this issue, with a focus on international co-operation in undertaking comparative studies and measures of what we already know. More research is also needed on interactive technologies and the impact of deviant and violent sexual images on children who have sexually harmed other children.

The vast majority of children with sexually harmful behaviours will not go on to perpetrate sexual abuse in adulthood. Those children that do present a higher risk of recidivism can be helped to reduce risk levels through appropriate intervention. Intervention with this group of children should be holistic, systemic and goal-specific (NOTA, 2008) and undertaken within a children's rights and child protection framework. These and other recommendations discussed in this paper are integrated into the basic recommendations listed below.

Children and young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour – recommendations

- Intervention should be holistic, and focus on children's needs across all aspects of their lives and development.

- Intervention should be systemic, involving families and parents in order to improve the children's social environments, attachments and relationships.

- Intervention should be goal-specific and designed to address concrete issues.

- Pan-European information campaigns should be run to inform the general public of signs that could help identify a child engaged in sexually harmful behaviour, and how they can get help.

- A public health approach should also be used to inform the general public about this issue. (See www.stopitnow.org.uk for more information.)

- Professionals should also receive appropriate training and advice on how to intervene in these cases.

- When identified, sexually harmful behaviour must be taken seriously by all relevant agencies, with care taken to distinguish between experimental behaviour and exploitative and harmful behaviour.

- Professionals must have the means to intervene early in cases of children with a history of maltreatment or trauma to prevent the development of abusive behaviour.

- Research on the conditions leading to sexually harmful behaviour, and appropriate therapeutic responses should be integrated into undergraduate curriculums for future social workers, psychologists and other professionals working for children.

- Based on the latest research evidence and practice, training protocols should be developed for qualified social workers and psychologists.

- Training on the developmental needs of children with respect to sentencing policies for adolescents should be developed for professionals working in the judicial field.

- A child's rights and child protection perspective should be maintained at all times.

- More research should be undertaken on the impact of interactive technologies on sexually harmful behaviour.

- Families should be involved in all professional interventions. This should be recognised as being as important as individual work with the child.

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Part four

Sexual violence on the Internet

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Introduction

According to an old English saying, there is "nothing new under the sun". The emergence of the Internet as a mass consumer product, beginning in many countries in the mid-1990s, has certainly challenged that idea.

It may strictly be true that the Internet has not created any completely original types of criminal behaviour, but it has most definitely had a dramatic impact both on the ways in which a number of old familiar crimes are carried out and on the scale of certain types of offending. Nowhere is this more apparent than in relation to sexual violence against children.

The legal framework in respect of violence against children

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that:

> States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Specifically in relation to sexual crimes against children Article 34 of the convention provides that:

> States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:
>
> (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
> (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
> (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

In addition Article 37 is also relevant in that it requires states parties to "ensure that no child shall be subjected to … inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment …"

In 2006, under the aegis of the CRC, UN special rapporteur Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro presented the General Assembly with his "Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children" (UN, 2006). The report notes that: "The Internet and other developments of communications technologies … appear to be associated with an increased risk of sexual exploitation of children as well as other forms of violence" (paragraph 77).

Pinheiro's report therefore established that sexual exploitation itself is a form of violence against children, a proposition that is now more or less universally recognised. The report also describes various classes of sexual and other violence against children that have emerged in the Internet's wake (paragraph 80).

Pinheiro's approach was broadly endorsed and developed in what is hitherto the largest ever multinational study conducted in this area, *EU kids online: Final report* (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009). The study was funded by the European Union's "Safer Internet" programme and looked at the contemporary reality of children and young people's use of the Internet in 20 EU member states and

Norway.[48] Livingstone and Haddon (p. 10) identified three principal sources of risk to children on the Internet, some or all of which can result in sexual violence of one kind or another. These have been categorised under the broad headings: content, contact and conduct.

Content

The "content" category relates to the way in which the child can become or be made the recipient of material which is either illegal, such as child abuse images[49] and certain racist or xenophobic materials, or material which is in some other way harmful to minors by portraying or promoting violent, gruesome or hateful scenes or materials which can have a detrimental effect on a child's psychological well-being or educational development.

Contact

The "contact" category relates to concerns about the way in which the Internet can expose children to sexually predatory behaviour on the part of others, either adults or other minors. Many of the most worrying cases have typically involved adult males who have used the Internet to "groom" a child, preparatory to committing acts of sexual violence against them. Such acts can either be perpetrated in the physical world or, alternatively or in addition, in the virtual world, by use of web cams or other technologies to encourage a child to engage remotely in illegal or harmful sexual or other acts.[50] Part of the grooming process can also involve the predator exposing a child to legal or illegal pornographic or other harmful content as part of a pre-planned strategy to lower inhibitions so as to entice the child into an illegal sexual relationship.

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48. In the next phase of the research, now underway, several non-EU, including non-European, countries will become part of the cohort.
49. The term "child abuse images" is used in preference to "child pornography" because the author feels it more accurately describes the nature of the content.
50. Videos or images captured or made in this way can, in turn, form part of the corpus of illegal content which circulates on the Internet, or can be used to blackmail the child into performing further illegal acts.

A recent and now notorious example of grooming came from the United Kingdom where in March 2010, a 33-year-old registered sex offender was convicted of the rape and murder of a 17-year-old girl. The murderer had used a fake photograph to present himself on Facebook as a handsome young teenager. He met his victim there and befriended her. An online romance developed and he then persuaded her to meet him in real life.

On the day of the arranged meeting, he sent the girl a text message saying that his father would pick her up in his car. Of course this was a lie. Her body was found in a field the next day. Incidents of this type are rare but they point to the catastrophic consequences that can emerge from grooming.

Conduct

In relation to "conduct", Livingstone and Haddon's study focused on children and young people themselves as perpetrators of or engaged in a range of criminal or harmful activity, either of their own volition or because they had been coerced or groomed into it by others. This can range from bullying or harassment of other children, some of which may have a pronounced sexually violent component to it, such as making another child take sexual images of themselves, which are then circulated at school or posted on a website for all to see. Alternatively, when young romance has ended, one of the partners, typically in a fit of unthinking rage, posts inappropriate pictures of their ex-partner on public or semi-public websites. In a small number of cases actions such as these have led to children and young people committing suicide or have caused considerable distress and anguish.

Outside of Europe, most notably in Japan and a number of other far eastern countries, Internet-enabled mobile phones have also been identified as mechanisms by which forms of child prostitution[51] have become more prevalent.

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51. Sometimes translated as "compensated dating".

Objects of policy

A core idea which underpins states' legal obligations towards children is tied up with the notion of the child's evolving capacity to assess risk and harm. The world's first major study on risks and harms to children on the Internet is *Safer children in a digital world,* conducted by a specialist in clinical child psychology and child development, Tanya Byron. Byron (2008:62) settled on "three strategic objectives for child Internet safety". She classified the online risks to children in key categories to be addressed, in the same way as Livingstone and Haddon (above). Byron set three objectives:

- *reduce the availability* of harmful and inappropriate *content*, the prevalence of harmful and inappropriate *contact* and the conduciveness of platforms to allow harmful and inappropriate *conduct*;

- *restrict access* by giving children and their parents the means to manage effectively access to harmful and inappropriate *content*, avoid incidences of harmful and inappropriate *contact* and reduce harmful and inappropriate *conduct*;

- *increase resilience* by giving children the means to deal with exposure to harmful and inappropriate *content* and *contact*, and enable parents to help their children deal with these and parent effectively with regard to incidences of harmful and inappropriate *conduct* by their children.

Byron's analysis and prescription is very much in line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe's consultations with experts in December 2009 on the prevention of sexual abuse of children, which in turn are linked to the comprehensive Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

Data on crimes of sexual violence against children

The preamble to the "Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents", adopted following the 3rd World Congress Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, sets out an extensive list and range of key international legal instruments which address the challenge of crimes of sexual violence against children (ECPAT, 2009). But in reviewing progress and challenges (item A) it also identifies more than 10 headings where insufficient action is being taken in many countries in all parts of the world, thus once more underscoring the need for greater efforts on the part of the international community.

Further evidence of the need for greater international efforts comes from the 2008 edition of "Child Pornography: model legislation and global review" (ICMEC, 2008) by the US-based International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC). The primary purpose of this series of research reports is to gain an understanding of existing legislation relating to child abuse images and to ascertain the importance given to the issue on the national political agendas of the respondent countries.

The ICMEC studies focus on a number of key areas. They look at whether or not states have legislation specific to child abuse images; laws that provide a definition of child abuse images; laws that criminalise possession, regardless of intent to distribute; laws that address computer facilitated crimes related to child abuse images; and reporting of child abuse images by Internet service providers. It is evident from the report that there are considerable and very important variations in the legislative and wider legal approaches taken by different countries. (A 6th edition in late 2010 is expected to show some progress.)

From the ICMEC report it is clear that many countries simply still do not have the basic laws in place which would allow them to act against child abuse images domestically or would allow them to participate in international police actions against child abuse images.

Of 184 Interpol member countries, only 29 had what the ICMEC considered to be "legislation sufficient to combat child pornography offences". A total of 93 countries had no legislation specifically addressing child pornography. Of those, 36 did not criminalise possession regardless of the intent to distribute and 24 did not have legislative provision to allow for computer-facilitated child pornography offences. In the 2006 edition of the same report, these figures were 27, 95, 41 and 27 respectively, indicating that progress is being made, but progress that is slow – painfully slow.

Child abuse images on the Internet

Sexual violence against children is considered shameful and is also illegal in almost every jurisdiction in the world. For these reasons it is very hard to claim to have any sort of precise knowledge about the true size of the problem, but there is enough direct and indirect evidence which makes clear that the scale is substantial. In relation to the Internet and the part it plays in the production and distribution of child abuse images, whilst similarly, precision may not be possible, it is nonetheless now beyond question that the development of the technology, in particular the emergence of the World Wide Web, has led to enormous growth in the production and distribution of child abuse images (Carr, 2004), some of which, unquestionably, were specifically made to be sold or distributed over the Internet. The obvious implication is that at some level or to some degree the growth of the Internet has also led to a growth in child abuse.[52]

Prior to the Internet, it was extremely difficult to get hold of child abuse images in most parts of the world. A person interested in acquiring any usually had to know another person who already had some; or else go to great trouble and take several risks. In a typical

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52. It is impossible to say what the overall or net effect of the Internet has been in this respect. Some of the abuse might have happened anyway; however it has been repeatedly established that some abuse was performed solely in order to sell or exchange images over the Internet. It is not uncommon for organised bands of paedophiles to require an applicant, as an "entrance fee" into the group, to secure and supply brand new images to add to the group's collections. This is intended to ensure the applicant is not an undercover police officer.

arrest an offender might be found with only a handful of images or, unusually, a few hundred or more. This led one distinguished expert on child protection to describe the exchange of child abuse images as being "a cottage industry" (Utting, 1997). Today it is a global industry that is worth many millions of dollars to those who engage with it for financial gain.[53]

A mouse click away

The arrival of the Internet has put child abuse images but a mouse click away. Taking 1995 as "year 0" (the last year before the Internet boom erupted in many countries), Interpol at that time knew of around 4 000 child abuse images in total. The British police say that in 1990 they were aware of 7 000 unique images (Home Office, 2010). The numbers of children depicted in these images could be counted in hundreds. Data recently supplied by Interpol and other data published in the UK (CEOP, 2010:8) and Italy[54] suggest that today the number of known images is around 1 million and the number of children abused to make them runs into the tens of thousands. There is a marked growth in images of younger children being subjected to ever more violent and depraved sexual acts.[55] It is anybody's guess how often the images and their duplicates are downloaded or exchanged online and off, but it is very likely to run into billions per annum.

Another indication of the change in the scale of modern offending comes from an examination of the numbers of images seized by the police when arresting suspects. Prior to the Internet, typically police officers would arrest individuals with only a handful of images in their possession, or in unusual cases maybe hundreds. In the whole of 1995 the police in Greater Manchester in the UK seized the grand total of 12[56] whereas a few years later the same force, covering broadly

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53. See http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2001/August/385ag.htm for a statement about a site that "grossed as much as $1.4 million" in one month.
54. Telefono Arcobaleno speak of 36 000 children of whom 42% are under 7 years of age and 77% are under the age of 12. See <http://www.telefonoarcobaleno.org/pdf/tredicmoreport_ta.pdf>.
55. Correspondence with the author.
56. Ibid.

the same population, arrested one man with approximately 1 million images in his possession. In June 2009 in a single action the police in Mexico arrested a man who possessed 4 million images.

The trend in convictions is another useful signifier. Taking 1995 once more as the baseline, 142 people in the UK were cautioned or proceeded against for child abuse image offences. In 2007 this figure was 1 402 (RDS, no date). Precise comparisons between 1995 and 2007 in terms of Internet usage are not very meaningful because broadband barely existed in 1995, while by 2007 it had become commonplace.[57] In 1995 fewer than 2 million UK households had (primarily dial-up) Internet access, whereas by 2007 the number of households with Internet access was up to 15.23 million, of which 84% had broadband (National Statistics, 2007). The inference is clear. There is a strong link between Internet crimes of this kind and the growth in the number of broadband Internet connections within a country. No nation appears to be exempt.

The scale of activity addressed

In 2006 the Danish police estimated that 238 000 users had attempted to reach known illegal child abuse sites over a period of five months. In Norway the introduction of website blocking technology was estimated to stop between 10 000 and 12 000 attempts per day. In Sweden this figure reached 20 000-30 000 attempts per day. In 2009, BT estimated that 40 000 attempts per day were being made to access known child abuse websites over their broadband network. Extrapolated across the whole UK broadband network, this suggests blocking is preventing up to 58 million attempts per year (The Register, 2009). These are substantial numbers.

It is difficult to be precise about the number of websites that are generating this volume of traffic. In 2009 one of the world's largest agencies engaged in this area of work took action against 1 316 specific

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57. Broadband access is important because it facilitates rapid and cheap access to large files. Typically child abuse images and videos will be large files.

websites, and identified what it described as being 450 "distinct criminal brands" that were responsible for the bulk of the sales of child abuse images. A total of 48% of all child sex abuse reports (commercial and non-commercial) were traced to networks in North America and 44% were traced to Europe (IWF, 2009).[58]

The rise of file sharing

For the foreseeable future, the World Wide Web will remain a key medium for the distribution of child abuse images, but file sharing networks such as Limewire and Gnutella are rapidly growing in importance.

Prime Time Investigates, an in-depth documentary broadcast on Irish TV on 31 May 2010, disclosed that in the previous six months an American technology company, TLO, had traced 1.2 million people in all parts of the world who had accessed child abuse images over a single peer-to-peer network. Ireland itself is a small country, with a population of around 4.25 million and about only 2.8 million Internet users (CIA, no date). Yet in a period of 30 days the same US company detected roughly 1 000 individuals in Ireland trading or downloading child abuse images.

In a small study carried out by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), between September 2008 and March 2010 a third of the offenders (37) had used file-sharing sites to distribute pictures of child sex abuse online.

The 100 cases in the NSPCC study involved 99 men and 1 woman. Between them the individuals were found to possess 2.25 million images. Nearly 50 000 of these images were classified as being of the most violent or depraved kind. One individual alone was found to have over 440 000 images. In some instances the individuals had

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58. Note these numbers relate only to websites and do not include other sources e.g. Peer2Peer networks or Usenet Newsgroups.

been collecting the images for over 10 years before the time of their arrest.[59]

There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that people who deliberately download and start collecting child abuse images have a higher likelihood of going on to commit further offences against children, either online or in the real world, or both.[60] In the NSPCC study, 16 of the offenders had concurrent or previous convictions for sexual assault on a child or for grooming a child for sex. A further 5 offenders were reported to have fantasised about abusing a real child in chat room conversations and 5 offenders had contacted or attempted to contact a child online. One of these had gone on to abuse the child he had made contact with. The study found that 24 offenders were in positions of trust within their communities. There were 7 teachers or school employees; 6 were doctors or nurses or hospital staff; 5 were clergy or church volunteers; 2 were police officers; 1 was a tennis coach; 1 a prison officer in a young offenders' institution; 1 was a social worker; and another worked in a children's residential care establishment.

Measures to combat the growth in child abuse images

Delays in getting child abuse images removed at source, sometimes substantial delays, seem to be unavoidable for the foreseeable future (Moore and Clayton, no date). For this reason the practice of "blocking" has started to emerge as a key child protection measure in a number of countries.[61] It can be extremely effective as a temporary means of denying access to the images. Blocking ensures that the images are removed from public view for large numbers of people

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59. In an arrest made by the police in Mexico in 2009 one man was found in possession of 4 million images.
60. See for example, "Self-Reported Contact Sexual Offenses by Participants in the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Sex Offender Treatment Program: Implications for Internet Sex Offenders", Hernandez, November 2000, presented at the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) in San Diego, California; also Kim, C. (2004). "From Fantasy to Reality: The Link Between Viewing Child Pornography and Molesting Children, based on data from the US Postal Inspection Service; and Wilson and Andrew (2004)." Internet traders of child pornography and other censorship offenders in New Zealand: Updated Statistics.
61. Blocking is now known to be in place in Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Malta, Finland, Iceland, South Korea, the US and Australia.

(but not necessarily everyone) as quickly as possible until the images can finally be removed at source.[62]

The use of blocking is contested by some within the civil liberties and free speech communities as being either disproportionate, ineffective or both. At the time of writing yet another heated debate is taking place around the subject as the Commission of the European Union published a draft "Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating the sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography" (EC, 2010). However it is suggested that from a child protection perspective, the arguments for the further development of blocking are clear and overwhelming. The many very strong reasons why swiftly denying access to the images is important are discussed below.

Impact on children

Child abuse images are a visual record of the abuse and victim humiliation. For a record of that abuse and the attendant humiliation to be captured and then published on the Internet potentially for the whole world to see, can add significantly to the psychological damage already inflicted on the child by the original abusive act.

The child in the image can never know or never be certain who might have seen or downloaded images of their abuse. Every casual glance or remark from a stranger may potentially be interpreted through the prism of the possibility, the anxious embarrassing worry that the other person knows about or has witnessed what has been done to them. This severely undermines the child's self-confidence and self-esteem.

As Sharon Cooper, a distinguished clinician in the field has put it[63]

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62. Until the images are finally removed from the host servers the images are still viewable by Internet users who are on systems where blocking has not been installed, or by users who have found a way to circumvent the blocking. Thus blocking helps make the number of viewers smaller.
63. Dr Sharon Cooper, MD FAAP, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Medicine, USA.

The distribution of child sex abuse images means there can be one vic-
tim and many offenders. The fact that these images are *spread and
downloaded by* others leads to heightened symptoms of post traumatic
stress disorder, depression and or anxiety, plus a diagnosis so far not
commonly seen in child sex abuse cases – paranoia. *(Correspondence
with the author)*

Violation of the child's right to privacy

In any and all proceedings concerning the abuse of a child, the courts
and the professional staff working with the child go to extraordinary
lengths to preserve the anonymity of the victims. That is rooted in
sound therapeutic principles. If nothing else, the production and dis-
tribution of the images amount to a gross violation of the child's right
to privacy.

The fact that a child knows or believes that images of their abuse
continue to be spread on the Internet leads to ever greater feelings
of helplessness and loss of control. Therapists and counsellors who
work with child abuse victims whose images have appeared on the
Internet[64] agree that they must feel they are believed about the abuse
suffered and must recognise that everything possible is being done
quickly to prevent more people looking at these images. This can
be of enormous help to abused children in regaining some sense of
control over their life and will immeasurably improve their chances
of starting down a path to some sort of recovery.

As clinician Bengt Söderström has put it: "If we as clinicians do not
convey to the child that we are doing everything in our power to
stop further distribution of the images, we send the wrong signals to
the child and may strengthen destructive patterns" (correspondence
with the author).[65]

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64. Tink Palmer, Marie Collins Foundation, UK, Julia von Weiler, Innocence in Danger e. V,
Germany.
65. Bengt Söderström, psychologist, Stockholm Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Removing the pictures from public view is not the "be all and end all" of the matter. As Söderström has further observed:

> On the other hand if we convey the sense that it is absolutely necessary to stop all further distribution for the child ever to feel OK about herself or himself again we end up in another corner and may disrupt the healing process. Working with accepting the consequences of a crime committed towards the child must always be connected with a clear message and a clear stand against the injustice committed against the child. And such a stand must also always be followed by actions. Thus I believe the disruption of distribution of the images to be a key factor in the recovery process but it is not the only or necessarily the main factor. *(correspondence with the author)*

Further or repeated publication of the images re-abuses and creates new abusers

Thus, for as long as the images remain on public view, the child is in a very real sense being "re-abused". It is also why those who deliberately engage in viewing or downloading these images are child abusers by proxy, not so very different from those who made or put the images on the Internet to start with. A survivor of abuse that was recorded in photographs put it like this: "Those who view the images of my abuse are no different from those who made them in the first place. It feels like they are in the room, encouraging my abuse. I know, technically, there is a difference but, for me, it's not a lot of difference".

Child abuse images can fuel downloaders' fantasies and spur them on to commit further illegal acts. That is the second major reason for wanting such images to be removed from public view as quickly as possible: it helps reduce the numbers of potential new online and offline child abusers.

Removing illegal images – challenges and solutions

Whilst it is common ground that the ideal solution is to delete and remove the images from the server where they are housed, it is well

known that this is simply not happening at the moment and it never has. But the Italian experience shows us it is possible to act against images at great speed. Under Italian law, Internet service providers, once notified by the police, have six hours to remove or block access to identified illegal material or addresses.

It has been acknowledged that persons with the right technical knowledge and determination can circumvent web blocking but if every country in the world were doing blocking there would be far fewer or no alternative addresses for people "to circumvent to". Moreover web blocking does not impact on other technologies used to distribute child abuse images. Most obviously peer-to-peer networks need to be addressed and Usenet Newsgroups are beginning to re-emerge as repositories for child abuse images. Tackling these requires separate and additional measures. It is not a choice between tackling them or tackling the web. Both are necessary.

It is vital to reduce the possibility of images reaching their intended markets. The people behind many of the commercial child abuse websites are not typically paedophiles in the ordinary sense. They systematically arrange for children to be raped solely in order to photograph them and then sell the pictures for profit. If these gangsters are blocked from reaching a large part of their market through the web or if they are unable to collect payments for the images because banks and credit card companies have locked them out, their trade will stop or at any rate its volume will be reduced as their trade is disrupted or closed down. There will be fewer new children abused, fewer abused children will be re-abused through images still available and fewer new people will find child abuse sites, thus reducing the risks of creating new child abusers.

Conclusion

The Council of Europe's plans to promote online safety even further in a wide ranging campaign on the sexual abuse of children is both timely and urgently needed. As broadband penetration continues to increase both in Europe and in parts of the developing world, the

Internet industry needs to be convinced to step up their efforts at a technical level to reduce some of the unintended and unwanted hazards to children ushered in by the Internet. In relation to child abuse images, for example, we have seen that in many countries companies have rolled out a series of technical measures shown to block access. The solutions being deployed work at scale, so the obvious question is "Why is this not happening everywhere? Why in Europe, for example, is it apparently necessary for the EU to legislate to make it compulsory?"

Educational and awareness measures are not a substitute for or an alternative to technical measures, but they are of at least equal importance. A key objective must be to develop approaches which successfully reach out to parents, older relatives, teachers and other members of the children's workforce, helping to bridge the digital divide between them and the children for whom they are responsible. But perhaps above all, in terms of educational and awareness measures, a high premium must be placed on those approaches which help children and young people to develop the knowledge and skills to protect themselves when they go online. Very often that will mean working with and through peer group initiatives and ensuring that children and young people have a decisive influence in shaping both the materials and the methods used.

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20.
Awareness raising to combat online sexual violence

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Insafe European network

The challenge

The online world of the Internet is a gigantic borderless dimension of everyday life for 58.4% of all Europeans and 27% of people across the world (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2010). In Europe, well over 90% of teens are online almost every day, conducting a broad range of activities from accessing or creating their own content to meeting and interacting with old and new "friends". Inevitably these widely varied activities, whilst opening the door to unprecedented opportunities, also give rise to certain risks including exposure to illegal and harmful content such as, but certainly not limited to, sexual violence.

The nature of sexual violence online has changed radically over the past decade. With well over half of the content online being user-generated, adults and children alike can produce professional-quality content in seconds and spread it across the world through online technology with no more than a mobile phone. Online sexual violence refers to a broad range of behaviours from child abuse images, human trafficking and grooming to the more recent trends of sexting (Wikipedia, no date), whereby a person purveys images of his/her own body as a result of social or peer pressure or for social or financial "gain". Besides being a dangerous but fairly widespread form of online behaviour that young people can inadvertently stumble into, it can lead to blackmail, prostitution, human trafficking or worse. A recent online survey in the United Kingdom shows that around 40% of 13-16-year-old respondents say they know friends who have been involved in sexting, and over a quarter (27%) of respondents think sexting is a common occurrence

happening "all of the time". Surprisingly enough, despite 30% of the respondents knowing someone who had been adversely affected by sexting, only a minority (27%) believe that young people need more support and advice related to the issue (South West Grid for Learning Trust, 2009).

Sexual violence online is hence a very complex problem, with the perpetrator often becoming the victim and, as in the case of grooming, often too guilt-ridden to reach out for help (Mitchell et al., 2007). Human rights are seriously trampled in the process. Very different types of awareness-raising and educational actions have to be implemented to tackle the very different issues involved in sexual violence online, as can be seen in the following diagram which attempts to schematise the spectrum of risks and some of the rights involved.
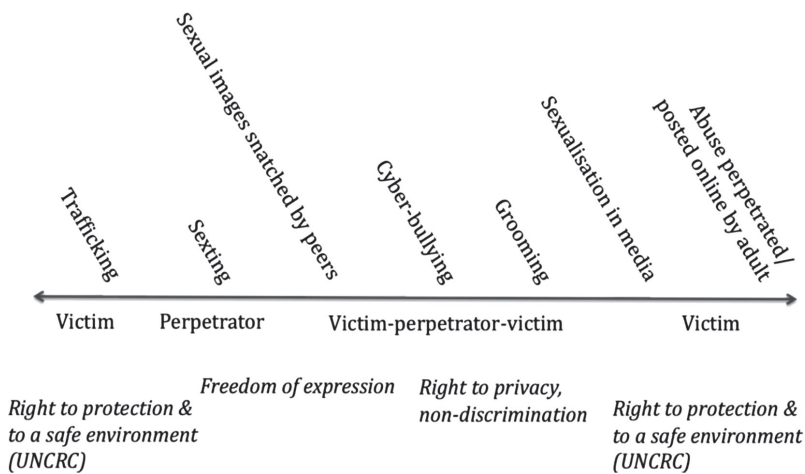
(UNCRC = United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Sexual violence can, in fact, be seen as a spiral rather than as a spectrum of different types of isolated acts. Self-perpetrated images, for example through sexting, which are picked up by adults seeking and ready to pay for pornographic material, can lead into prostitution and trafficking. This is the story too often recounted by perpetrators-become-victims who have publicly disclosed their experiences in the United States (Eichenwald, 2005). The way sexuality is portrayed in

the media, too, impacts on how easily young people will fall prey to grooming, and how readily they will upload sexual material to tease or bully friends. A child who is bullied is more prone to give way to social pressure, which can result in sexting. As the research from Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak (2007) suggests, children who are more likely to be victims of child sexual abuse from adults will generally also be more vulnerable to grooming and bullying. Underlying the whole spiral of sexual abuse is a deeper abuse of fundamental human rights.

Although awareness-raising actions in recent years have often focused on protecting children from grooming and cyber-bullying by peers and, to a lesser extent, other facets of online sexual violence, there has been surprisingly little attention focused on the increasingly debasing sexual portrayal of children and young people in the media. Certain on- and offline advertising campaigns and "Little Miss"-type competitions as well as online virtual worlds (particular those addressing young girls) and games for the tens and teens rapidly introduce young children into a world where the exhibition of sexuality is common fare.

Sexualisation in the media plays an impactful role in the sexual violence continuum as it normalises behaviour leading to sexting. Is it surprising that young people follow the models they grow up with and display explicit content and photos of themselves and their friends in the framework of their interaction online? It should also be pointed out that, to some degree, sexually-nuanced behaviour of teens is intended as no more than sexual experimentation that has moved from "behind the bike sheds" to the online world, one of the favourite "private places" where young people meet. However, they can be caught up in situations with much deeper implications when their private world becomes public.

The most successful awareness-raising actions focus on the positive aspects of online activity; they aim to empower young people in the online world and encourage them to affirm their fundamental human rights such as the right to privacy, non-discrimination (also including gender) and a safe environment. They aim at developing the capacity of young people to become active citizens in the online and offline

world of today's information society. As in most areas relating to citizenship, Europe has set up a network to lead actions in the field and reap the added value inherent to being part of a multicultural society. For this reason, the Insafe network, which leads the European Commission's Safer Internet awareness-raising programme across Europe, has its co-ordinating base firmly planted in the domain of education. It brings together stakeholders from broadly varying fields in order to tackle the array of issues, risks and challenges involved.

Insafe network – the European awareness-raising approach

Europe has, in fact, long focused on the positive aspects of the Internet and, in 1997, several ministers of education in Europe joined forces to create a public body today known as European Schoolnet. Their aim was to support teachers in harnessing the remarkable opportunities Internet offers for learning and becoming active citizens in today's information and knowledge society. As the Internet evolved towards greater interactivity and more user-generated content, it became rapidly evident that the major challenge both to young people and educators at all levels of society was a better understanding of potential risks and a deeper awareness of what it means to use online technology responsibly. In 2004, when the European Commission launched its awareness-raising network, co-ordination seemed a natural role for European Schoolnet. Not only did this facilitate reaching teachers and pupils across Europe and beyond, the dozen or so networks European Schoolnet runs have become valuable platforms to ensure that responsible use of the Internet is integrated right across the curriculum at all levels of schooling. Partnerships with industry, hardware and software providers and mobile operators are providing leverage to build a multi-stakeholder approach.

Insafe brings together awareness centres in all 27 EU countries as well as in Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation and shortly Serbia. Besides implementing awareness campaigns and measuring their impact, most centres also run a helpline to respond to the queries of young people about online safety, but also to questions from parents and teachers

seeking information and advice. Youth consultation plays an important role in the work of each centre. Since young people are usually the first to take-up new technology, often in entirely unexpected ways, they can also highlight the most pertinent perspectives to their peers and to adults. Insafe centres work hand-in-hand with the Inhope network of hotlines by raising public awareness to the need to report illegal content, ensuring a joined up approach to protecting young people online. By highlighting the positive side of the Internet, the two networks endeavour to spread a culture of accountability and raise public standards of acceptance in terms of quality of Internet content.

Content, contact and conduct – a framework for digital skills

Researchers over recent years have developed a "content, contact and conduct" topology in an attempt to classify the types of risk young users encounter online (Livingston, 2008). The border between the three categories is progressively blurring as activities online merge and interactivity grows. Sexual violence, moreover, is inherent in most risks as we can see from the figures drawn from research and surveys from across the whole of Europe in 2008 (Livingston, 2008). Such figures should nevertheless be handled with care since technology and online activities evolve rapidly bringing new risks and sometimes diminishing earlier ones.

Table: Online risks in the EU

Risky activities online	Approx.% of EU teens concerned
Disclosure of private information (greater possibility of grooming, dangerous contacts, etc.)	50%
Seeing pornography	40%
Seeing violent or hateful content	33%
Being bullied, harassed, stalked	17-20%
Receiving unwanted sexual comments	10%
Meeting an online contact offline, arguably the most dangerous risk in terms of physical harm	8%

Certain children are less able than others to cope with risk online. Insufficient research has been done to date to pinpoint the most vulnerable groups, but it is emerging that very frequently teen users with the very latest online technology tend to encounter far more risks than their counterparts and have often not developed the coping strategies to counteract them. Although online technology is a great leveller when it comes to opportunities, minority groups such as migrant populations are often at greater risk due to lack of appropriate information or poor language skills of parents. More research on online vulnerability would permit awareness campaigns to be refined to reach users most in need of support.

Developing Internet literacy in the fight against online sexual violence

Most researchers and educators involved in awareness raising will agree that the safety of young people online depends much more on their level of literacy than on the safety messages they receive (Council of Europe, 2009). Being truly literate in today's information and knowledge society goes far beyond developing traditional literacy (such as the 3 Rs) to include mastery of digital skills and a sound media education. All three facets play an important role in enabling users to recognise and hence circumvent danger situations through critical thinking, wise navigation and the use of technology as a shield against risks. These competencies will ensure that a user can choose appropriate sites, compare sites to check credibility (critical thinking), block unwanted contacts and spam and use new media in innovative ways to get messages across. Ofcom (2010) alarmingly reports, however, that a quarter of adult Internet users lack confidence in installing filtering software and security features, rather fundamental skills for parents and teachers if they are to contribute to the well-being and safety of young users through technological means.

Today's Web 2.0 (and the emerging Web 3.0) is a highly social arena. The number of Internet users interacting through social networks or blog sites increased by approximately 24% over the past year to April

2010 and now stands at 75% of global consumers (Owyang, 2010). Nielsen Ratings indicated in October 2009 that the world's most visited sites across all age groups were those of Google, MSN, Facebook, Yahoo, BBC, Ebay and Amazon. On such sites, social competency rather than digital skills will steer young users away from danger and enhance their interactions and learning. Parents and teachers play a fundamental role in the development of social literacy skills, building on their own life experience to act as a guide in helping their children to develop their own moral standards and reference points. Above all, their role is to regularly discuss with their children their online activities as an integral facet of their moral and social development.

Internet awareness raising – a slippery terrain

Recent surveys (Ofcom, 2009) suggest three trends that underline the importance of promoting safe, effective and responsible use of the Internet, and raise the curtain on some of the strategies that can be used to do this:

- *Children are online at an increasingly early age:* 75% of 5-7 year-olds in the UK use the Internet, 22% of 8-11 year-olds have a social networking profile and 2 in 3 children have a mobile phone by age 10. In many ways this is positive news, since parents tend to supervise young children more than they would teens, and young children are more ready to listen to what parents and teachers say. Moreover, physiologically early childhood is a period of intense synaptic pruning (Hoiland, 2002). By ensuring positive experiences and actions, parents can influence their child's future behaviour online. It also underlines the need to integrate relevant aspects of new technology into the socialisation process in a child's first years at school. European Schoolnet is publishing an activity book in 2010 to bring Internet and mobile phone-related topics into relevant curriculum themes.

- *More children and young people are using virtual worlds:* recent figures predict a 29% annual growth in the number of

5-9 year-olds using virtual worlds (Strategy Analytics, 2009). Virtual worlds, meeting places for people of all ages from all walks of life and for which no known age-verification mechanism has proven 100% reliable, foster contacts with unknown, unseen people that could lead to danger for the unaware.

- *Mobile phones, more particularly smart phones, are increasingly used to access the Internet:* it is predicted that by 2012 Internet access via mobile devices (iphone, iPad and so forth) will overtake access via computers. This raises several safety issues including reduced parental supervision as Internet can be accessed through a mobile phone anytime, anywhere, hence the need for education and empowerment rather than blocking and banning.

Moreover, when mobile phones are purchased, unbeknown to many parents, the phone is in the default mode and the GPS is usually switched on. In this mode, the user can be tracked via location based services (LBS), which could mean that they are inadvertently sharing their location. Mobile phones are also remarkably rapid tools for taking and uploading photos to the Internet, raising risks ranging from breach of privacy to sexting and somewhat more difficult for parents to supervise than the web cam and computer. Parents complain that the phone feels like a personal device and so is more difficult for them to actually "look at".

Worldwide reach in awareness raising

Effective awareness raising is therefore a multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder issue. It involves children and young people, their parents, their teachers, social and psychological welfare agents and all other parties who play a role in their social and intellectual development. It involves Internet service providers, mobile operators and other hardware and software providers who influence the behaviour of young people and the risks they are likely to encounter through the technology they provide. Strategies need to be carefully tailored to harness the power and reach of the media as a multiplier of awareness actions.

Successful awareness raising will incorporate a call for action from the target group(s) rather than providing a list of do's and don'ts. It will be embedded in a broad educational programme to ensure balanced development of social and technical competencies and an understanding of fundamental human rights (Council of Europe, 2010). Lastly, any awareness-raising action needs to be accompanied by assessment mechanisms to ensure reach to the groups most vulnerable to risks at the outset of the action and to evaluate the impact at its conclusion.

A most successful action in all these regards is Safer Internet Day, celebrated in the second week of February each year since 2004. In 2010, the event was celebrated in more than 64 countries across the world and focused on the theme "Think before you post in 2010" (Clouet, 2010). Every year, it focuses on a new theme and is embedded in a lead-up period of several months in a holistic approach promoted by children, parents, teachers, local and national authorities and industry and implemented within the curriculum in schools, at parent meetings and through media campaigns and public events. Not only does Safer Internet Day raise public attention to the remarkable opportunities online technology offers but also to the traps the Internet can hold for the unwary. The annual campaign reinforces the visibility and the work of the Insafe helplines and the Inhope network of hotlines too, reminding users of their responsibility to report illegal content, in particular sexual abuse images, and consequently contributing to ridding the Internet of such content.

Preparing for the future

The Internet is undoubtedly developing into a mobile, virtual space in which technologies converge and new applications constantly emerge. This raises a greater risk for users to come more easily into contact with sexual violence but at the same time opens multiple new opportunities. It places more responsibility on the shoulders of children and young people than in previous generations. It places at their disposal very powerful tools by means of which they can

disseminate texts and images across the world in seconds. It gives them the illusion of being anonymous, yet largely increases their moral accountability.

The most effective means of empowering all citizens to use the Internet positively, safely and effectively is at least triple-sided: development of Internet literacy at an early age, increased dialogue on Internet-related issues within the home and school environment and greater accountability from the industry and telecommunications sectors for the tools they provide.

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Part five

Public and private partnerships to eliminate sexual violence against children

21.
Engaging the travel and tourism sector in protecting children from sexual exploitation

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The sexual exploitation of children in tourism is commercial sexual exploitation characterised typically by exploiters who move from a place of origin to a destination, often a holiday resort where the exploitative act takes place. It is a gross violation of children's rights and, as such, contrary to the purpose of tourism as defined by the Manila Declaration of World Tourism, which describes it as an "activity essential to the life of nations because of its effects on the social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations" (World Tourism Organisation, 1995:1). The sexual exploitation of children is a crime punishable under most jurisdictions[66] around the world and the enmeshing of associated criminal activities within tourism services and infrastructures breaches tourism's fundamental intent. Mobilising industry to take an active part in countering these violations against children has taken root. The call has underscored that preventive action and deterrence are both a responsibility and in the long-term interests of tourism and travel businesses.

Due to the parallel efforts of child-rights NGOs since the early 1990s to raise awareness on the misuse of industry services and structures

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66. Of the 192 UN member states, only 54 failed as of June 2010 to sign or ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), a fundamental piece of international legislation prompting governments to enact national laws against sexual exploitation (ECPAT International statistics data).

for sexual exploitation of children, and to the tourism industry's rising concern that it is being used for such criminal purposes, governments and non-government counterparts have launched various initiatives. Recently, industry has become more involved in taking action to counter this phenomenon.[67] For example, the banking and financial sector and Internet and telecommunications companies are stepping up efforts to prevent their infrastructures from being used to facilitate crimes against children. To mention one example, the Financial Coalition against Child Pornography was launched in 2006 as an international alliance involving banking and financial companies that have joined efforts with public counterparts to prevent payments online for child pornography. In addition, Microsoft has designed an analysis tool called Child Exploitation Tracking System to help law enforcement across the world investigate child-sex offenders in the online environment.

Viewing industry as a key social partner with a role to play in protecting the rights of children, the Council of Europe recognised as early as 2001 the need to collaborate with "private industry". This recognition is reflected in the 2001 Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 125). Subsequently, the Council of Europe has continued to issue practical guidance to ensure that industry understands and complies with human rights standards, such as the "Human Rights guidelines for Internet service providers" (Council of Europe and EuroIspa, 2008). The 2007 Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse also underlines the importance of engaging private industry to protect children.

Unlike the Internet and communications industry, whose prevention and investigation tools are primarily focused on the virtual environment, the tourism industry must deal with the risks of criminal activities in the immediate physical world. Unknown to its personnel, its structures have often been used as venues for acts of child sexual

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67. This is welcomed in light of the linkages gradually uncovered in the use of different industry sectors by child-sex exploiters. One such example, revealing the (mis)use of the tourism industry and the communications sector, has been analysed in ECPAT International (2010).

exploitation. Tourism professionals themselves have sometimes been complicit in facilitating contacts and arrangements for their guests to have illicit sex with children.

It is therefore crucial that the tourism sector, owing to its central role in terms of structures, human resources and direct relations with customers, be fully sensitised and engaged towards more proactive initiatives for the prevention of child-sex tourism. Initiatives can have a range of purposes: to raise awareness of mainstream travellers and tourists; to deter offenders; and to inform and train tourism staff, especially those most likely to witness suspicious situations because of their frequent contact with customers.

The tourism industry is ideally placed to pass information on to travellers and thus inform them about child-sex tourism at a whole range of contact points: the booking stage at a travel agent's office or online, at various stages of the journey (airports, railway stations and harbours), and at accommodation at the chosen destination, primarily in hotels or other tourism-related accommodation.

Over the past decade, several campaigns were launched, both in tourist-sending and destination countries, which made use of various printed materials, such as ticket slips, luggage tags, bookmarks, stickers, brochures, posters and banners.[68] This is by no means a comprehensive list of materials, creativity being the only limit to the range of objects that can be used – in this context – to convey the message that child-sex tourism should be eradicated.[69]

A multi-stakeholder version of this type of campaign, involving both the private sector and the tourism authorities in the ten

68. A comprehensive selection of materials of this type developed and produced by ECPAT-affiliated organisations until 2007 is still available from ECPAT International on CD-Rom (ECPAT International, 2007).
69. At the time of printing, ECPAT International and ECPAT Netherlands are producing sleeping masks and PVC transparent bags for carry-on liquids when travelling by air, both carrying marked with the message "Child-sex tourism is a crime".
70. ASEAN is a geopolitical and economic association that comprises 10 member countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The association's objectives include economic growth and social progress for the region, along with the promotion of peace and stability.

ASEAN[70] member countries, is the "Child wise tourism" programme that unfolded in the region between 1998 and 2008 under the co-ordination of Child Wise, an Australian NGO affiliated to the End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) network.[71] This programme involved both the tourism industry and tourism authorities in each of the partici-pating countries. The campaign made extensive use of classic tools, such as stickers, posters and banners, and it also included a train-ing component. Using the slogan "Don't turn away. Turn them in", along with eye-catching materials in highly visible colours, the cam-paign aimed primarily to empower tourists and local communities to report cases of child-sex tourism to the relevant authorities. Grey Worldwide, one of the world's largest ad agencies, worked *pro bono* on the campaign's concept and visual design at the drawing board stage, marking the special combination of synergies achieved by Child Wise in implementing this campaign. The "Child wise tourism" programme drew praise from both the World Tourism Organisation and the US Department of State (2006:34).

As mentioned above, the time tourists spend travelling from the country of origin to their destination presents an ideal opportunity for awareness raising on the part of the industry, especially consider-ing that travellers are a "captive audience" during this stage in their journey. This opportunity has been seized by some airlines over the past few years, the most notable example being Air France, which for over a decade has partnered with ECPAT France and produced short videos for screening during its intercontinental flights. The lat-est campaign, using new materials, was launched in April 2009 with the screening of two videos focusing on child-sex tourism and child pornography.[72] The two short films effectively expose the viewer to

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71. For more information see: http://www.childwise.net/downloads/Child_Wise_Tourism_ Information_S.pdf>, last accessed on 21 June 2010.
72. For more information see: http://corporate.airfrance.com/en/press/press-releases/article/ item/nouvelle-campagne-ecpat/back/61/browse/7/?tx_ttnews[swords]=af&cHash=83f1fe5 c2c, accessed 22 June 2010.

the complex chain of exploitation affecting child victims, the end exploiter being only one of the actors contributing to the child's misery. The films aim to show mainstream travellers how they themselves can help prevent the sexual exploitation of children by reporting suspicious cases.

The previous Air France-ECPAT campaign (2006-09), used on the other hand a deterrent approach by highlighting some of the severe sentences meted out to child-sex tourists around the world. Interestingly, the sentences listed at the end of the video included some passed by local courts in destination countries, along with others pronounced by courts based in offenders' home countries, making use of extra-territorial legislation, that is, laws applicable to a country's own citizens or residents when these have committed certain crimes abroad and not stood trial there (Beaulieu, 2008:103-21). Other airlines have recently screened in-flight videos portraying child-sex tourism more from the victims' perspective, such as Air Canada in collaboration with the Canadian NGO OneChild,[73] and Austrian Airlines in collaboration with ECPAT Austria. However, this proactive attitude by airlines is still limited to a few isolated cases. Most airlines still tend to view child-sex tourism as an uncomfortable issue that is not their responsibility.

Other companies, especially in the hotel business, have also undertaken various steps that signal their engagement – at different levels – to limit child-sex tourism. For example, the "Youth career initiative" is a programme that increases employability of disadvantaged young people through skill-building, thus impacting on the poverty that generates a supply of child victims to the tourist trade. Established in 1995 in Thailand, the programme has now extended to 10 countries, where participating hotels, in partnership with funding

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73. Since November 2005 OneChild has screened two videos. Overall, it is estimated that ca. 22 million passengers have been exposed to their message on Air Canada's most popular domestic and international routes.

agencies, provide vocational training in the hospitality sector with concrete job prospects at the end of the training course.[74]

The campaigns and programmes described above, as well as many more that have been implemented around the world, are initiatives that tackle the complex and multifaceted issue of child-sex tourism, but through specific responses that address only one or two of the problem's many dimensions. More actions are needed that will tackle the supply and demand side of the problem, and the role and potential of all the different stakeholders need to be examined and taken into account. Besides child-sex offenders and victims, these include:

- civil society, most often child rights NGOs operating on a number of fronts, such as awareness-raising, prevention, protection, rescuing and rehabilitating victims and so forth;

- governments, including law enforcement, who have a central role to play by passing targeted legislation and enforcing its measures;

- local communities as the social groups that host incoming tourists and benefit from their business, but also as the place of origin of very vulnerable children (except for victims trafficked from outside) with whose protection they have historically been entrusted;

- the tourism industry, a sector that has too often turned a blind eye towards its members that have knowingly profited from promoting child-sex tourism or, at best, when its structures were used for that purpose.

In light of the complex nature and range of actors impacting on the problem, it is clear that a more strategic approach is needed to deliver more effective actions. An initiative launched in 1998 as a joint project by ECPAT Sweden and a group of Nordic tour operators,

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74. The Youth Career Initiative is currently unfolding in the following countries, with the starting year in brackets alongside each country: Australia (2006), Brazil (2005), Costa Rica (2008), Ethiopia (2005), Jordan (2007), Mexico (2007), the Philippines (2000), Poland (2004), Romania (2004) and Thailand (1995). For further information, see<http://www.youthcareer-initiative.org>, last accessed on 22 June 2010.

the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism (the Child Protection Code) provides a more comprehensive approach. Its very genesis – as a collaborative effort between different stakeholders, with criteria for action addressing the many components of the child-sex tourism, and with clearly defined roles allotted to a number of actors – sets it aside from other tools. Its well-defined framework and pragmatic approach to action should definitely appeal to the private sector as a solution based on a more structured system – one able to tackle the issue from several fronts simultaneously. From this point of view, the Child Protection Code appears to be ideally placed to address the complexity of child-sex tourism. Through a simple set of criteria to be implemented by its member companies, the Child Protection Code attempts to span all of the facets of child-sex tourism with the following responses:

- to establish an ethical policy against commercial sexual exploitation of children;

- to train personnel in the country of origin and travel destination;

- to introduce clauses in contracts with suppliers, stating a common repudiation of sexual exploitation of children;

- to provide information to travellers through catalogues, brochures, in-flight films, ticket slips, homepages, etc.;

- to provide information to local "key persons" at destinations;

- to report annually (Child Protection Code, no date).

The lines of intervention that can be drawn from the above criteria focus essentially on:

- the adoption of a child-protection policy to be included in the documentation stating the corporate identity. In today's markedly growing trend towards corporate social responsibility, embracing this type of policy should not present businesses with major difficulties. On the contrary, the adoption of a

child-protection policy should be viewed as an element of added value for companies involved;

- sharing information regarding the company's stance towards child-sex tourism aimed at an extensive range of recipients, consisting of travellers, business partners, crucial contacts in destination countries (and, by extension, local communities), and the company staff themselves, who should receive specific training, in itself an additional, more in-depth form of information-sharing,

- submitting an annual report to the Child Protection Code Secretariat.

Operated as a project by ECPAT groups in Europe from 2000, the Child Protection Code was turned into a full-fledged organisation in 2004.[75] Alongside Unicef's recent support of the code and the ongoing backing of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the emphasis has always been on industry ownership of the whole initiative. For this purpose, the distribution of seats on its board of directors is structured to give the tourism private sector five seats for which representatives of various types of tourism businesses are eligible. By attributing this leading role to the private sector, the Child Protection Code is in compliance with the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, in particular Article 9, paragraph 2, which encourages the tourism industry to adopt self-regulatory measures to safeguard child protection in their operations, and Article 10, paragraph 3, which urges signatory states to promote multi-stakeholder co-operation in view of more effective protection of children from sexual exploitation.

While being a key player within the code initiative, the private sector is substantially supported by NGOs[76] and national tourism

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75. See press release at <http://www.unicef.org/media/media_20445.html>, accessed 23 June 2010.
76. Primarily ECPAT International and several ECPAT groups in various countries, where they have traditionally promoted the code by acquiring new members, as well as providing information and training.

authorities[77] in a partnership that has enabled it to address the issue of child-sex tourism through more diverse channels and concerted efforts. For example, this has happened by involving a whole range of players, from taxi drivers to travel and booking agents to ministry departments.

With a membership that has grown to almost a thousand signatories over a decade, the Child Protection Code aspires to become a globally recognised industry standard. The fact that some very big tourism and travel industry entities have acknowledged its value and officially adopted its principles[78] provides a sound base for the achievement of its goals. Several of these companies (and their subsidiaries) are tour operators that control large portions of the tourist-sending markets, and which have increasingly adopted sustainable and responsible tourism policies over the past few years. This has undoubtedly been the result of a combination of two things: a shift in corporate philosophies towards sustainable and responsible tourism approaches and customers' rising awareness of social and environmental issues, which has and will impact on the companies (mostly hotels) contracted in destination countries. Thus, whether by the power of example, such as follower companies realising a given policy is good and worth adopting, or the business influence wielded by significant players in tourism, the Child Protection Code has good prospects of increasing its membership further.

Challenges for the Child Protection Code nevertheless remain. Compliance by signatories must be ensured on a long-term basis, and the range of actions undertaken needs to be expanded. Nonetheless, participating in the code reflects the solid efforts of different stakeholders to address the complex nature of child-sex tourism. The Child Protection Code is by no means the only instrument existing today, as other systems are trying to tackle the issue with a more or less similar approach.[79] With the sexual exploitation of children in

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77. The case of Costa Rica is noteworthy in this respect as the government is gradually introducing the Child Protection Code as mainstream tourism policy in the country.
78. To mention but a few of these powerful players: Accor Hotels, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Kuoni, M-Travel (Hotelplan), Sol Meliá, TUI Travel.

travel and tourism still widespread in several destinations, the stake-holders' objective is still, in essence, to mainstream child-protection measures into responsible tourism policies and to increase involvement and commitment of the private sector in order to guarantee the best possible protection for children in travel and tourism.

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79. A recent example is the announcement of the introduction – by the Indian Government – of a Code of Conduct for Safe and Honourable Tourism with some principles very similar to those of the Child Protection Code (see <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-issues-code-of-conduct-for-safe-tourism/articleshow/5528592.cms>, accessed 23 June 2010).

22.
Stop sex trafficking of children and young people – a unique ECPAT and Body Shop campaign

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Introduction

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) and The Body Shop have created a unique partnership through the global "Stop sex trafficking of children and young people" campaign to strengthen the protection of children and young people from trafficking for sexual purposes. The Body Shop, which positions itself as the original natural and ethical beauty company, has an established record of campaigning on many important social and environmental issues. In order to fulfil the late Dame Anita Roddick's request to work against human trafficking, The Body Shop approached ECPAT in 2007 to initiate work on a possible campaign. Believing that working with the private sector and business is crucial to combat successfully such crimes against children, ECPAT International, a network of organisations in over 75 countries working specifically against the commercial sexual exploitation of children, committed to the partnership with The Body Shop in creating this campaign.

The "Stop sex trafficking of children and young people" campaign is a three-year global campaign (2009-2011), which aims to provide immediate relief to child victims and create long-term changes through public awareness raising and to lobby decision makers to strengthen concerted action against child trafficking for sexual purposes. The campaign has three main advocacy goals:

- community-based prevention programmes to stop child trafficking for at-risk populations;

- incorporating international legal standards for protecting children from trafficking into the national legal framework; and

- integrating specialised government services for child victims of trafficking into national policies.

The goals were selected in response to the various calls to action found in human rights instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and other relevant treaties and commitments, such as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the 2008 Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children.[80] Moreover, the campaign's advocacy goals are complimentary to both the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, as well as other regional and international standards. This paper will highlight how the campaign integrates these calls to action and legal and policy provisions, particularly those of the Council of Europe conventions, in addition to providing insight into the campaign progress. Although still in implementation, the campaign and partnership between The Body Shop and ECPAT can demonstrate how stakeholders, such as global businesses not directly linked to the issue and an international network of child protection non-governmental organisations (NGOs), can successfully collaborate and take meaningful action towards improving the lives of millions of children worldwide.

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80. The outcome document of the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents held in November 2008 in Brazil, where the partnership was presented publically for the first time.

Campaign awareness raising and reaching out

The "Stop sex trafficking of children and young people" campaign, through its awareness raising initiatives, aims to inspire people to take action towards creating sustainable positive outcomes in preventing child trafficking and the protection of children from such exploitation. The campaign takes advantage of ECPAT's worldwide country network and The Body Shop's ability to reach millions of customers through more than 2 500 stores in 64 countries.

In August 2009, the campaign was officially launched in Bangkok, Thailand, with over 100 media and representatives of NGOs, UN agencies and government partners in attendance. At the launch, the campaign base-line report, "Their protection is in our hands – the state of global child trafficking for sexual purpose" was released (ECPAT and The Body Shop, 2009). The report reiterates that the trafficking of children and young people for sexual purposes in many countries is increasing and governments need to do more to tackle this problem and protect them. The campaign report provides an overview of the trends and manifestations of child sex trafficking across the world's regions and the various combinations of factors putting children at risk. It also examines the types of interventions and good practices that are necessary to "prevent, protect and assist children" in the trafficking process that are in harmony with the major international and regional legal frameworks for child protection.

The campaign report concludes by identifying specific commitments and promises that states have made to uphold the rights of the child and to protect children from sex trafficking. It details how the campaign aims to promote and improve the application of relevant national, regional, international laws and commitments. For example, the report's recommendations are very much in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, as it focuses on the protection of child victims by safeguarding their rights as well as calling for specific prevention and protection efforts and prosecution of traffickers.

In addition, the report calls for strengthening efforts to identify child victims whilst also highlighting that the child should be able to access specialised government services, basic care standards and where necessary repatriation and reintegration that is in line with their best interests. The campaign goals also complement the legal provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. For example, the campaign specifically calls upon states to set up appropriately trained police units that can respond to crimes against children, including trafficking and sexual exploitation. Such units would investigate these crimes with a child-sensitive approach and ensure that child victims are provided with the type of protection that is in their best interests and are not re-traumatised by the criminal justice process.

After the global launch, there was a series of national launches in over 25 countries implementing the campaign. Promotion at The Body Shop stores included large, eye-catching visual displays, among which window posters and interior banners; there were also other displays and booklets containing background information on child sex trafficking. Some stores set up interactive corners, where customers could ask questions on the campaign while testing out the official campaign product.

Moreover, the campaign utilises different media platforms in local languages to reach out to the public, such as TV, advertising, print media and websites, including online social sites such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. During the first year of the campaign, many ECPAT groups reported an increase in inquiries for information on child trafficking and requests from the public to volunteer and to run news stories in the media. The campaign's efforts were acknowledged at the Fifth Annual Clinton Global Initiative meeting in 2009, when former US President Clinton singled out The Body Shop and ECPAT campaign as "an exemplary approach to addressing a specific global challenge".

Anti-child trafficking initiatives and the Soft Hands Kind Heart hand cream

The Soft Hands Kinds Heart hand cream is the official campaign fund raising product created by The Body Shop. It sold 500 000 units globally in the first year, which was 70% over the expected target sales. For each country, all sales profits made from the campaign product are donated to ECPAT groups providing immediate support to children affected by sex trafficking, and to prevention and awareness-raising programmes implemented by ECPAT worldwide.[81] Projects range from: conducting research on internal / domestic child trafficking; lobbying for international and regional legal standards on protecting children from trafficking to be incorporated in the national legal framework; specialised training of key stakeholders to identify child victims and implementation of child-friendly approaches; empowering child survivors and at-risk youths to conduct advocacy against child trafficking; and supporting shelters especially for child victims that offer specialised care services.

Holding governments accountable

An important advocacy component of the campaign is the country progress card system, which ECPAT and The Body Shop created to assess the progress of states' action on specific commitments and promises made internationally to uphold the rights of the child to protection from sex trafficking and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

"Monitoring state progress to protect children and young people from trafficking for sexual purposes" reports the findings of the initial assessment carried out during the first year of the campaign, based on progress cards for 41 countries (plus 1 regional progress card for the Middle East). The findings show that only 12% of the countries have made significant progress in combating child sex

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81. For latest updates on the campaign, including news on activities and anti-child trafficking projects, visit < http://www.ecpat.net/tbs/ecpat-tbs.html>.

trafficking. The assessment provides an in-depth examination of state action specifically targeting the three advocacy goals for the campaign: prevention, legal framework and care for child victims of sex trafficking. For example in the prevention field, data show that 41% of states assessed do not conduct awareness-raising campaigns on child trafficking.

In terms of legal framework, the country progress cards showed that 27% of all the countries reviewed have not yet fully adopted the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Two in three countries reviewed have adopted legislations that are only partially in line with the UN trafficking protocol, and consequently offer only partial protection for children. The country progress cards monitor the ratification of both the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Twenty-four European country progress cards show that approximately 54% have ratified the Council of Europe's trafficking convention, while only 12.5% have ratified the its convention on sexual exploitation and abuse.

With the assistance of the ECPAT groups, the campaign has identified targeted national calls to action around 12 specific policy-related indicators in each of the countries directly engaged in the campaign. The existence of these policies is considered to be a first fundamental step towards concrete action as well as a tool for the public to call for accountability. The Body Shop and ECPAT will closely monitor state progress on these frontline indicators that play a key role in stopping child sex trafficking.

The country progress cards support the "call to action" for the national campaign petitions which will be run in each country during this year's campaign activities (year 2). For year 3 (2011), plans have been made to increase the campaign's momentum and present the national campaign petition to governments in each country, as well as present a global campaign petition to the United Nations.

Conclusion – engaging the public and private sector in advocacy

Effectively combating global problems such as child trafficking requires successful collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. Many businesses have already taken positive steps by implementing corporate social responsibility policies, conducting philanthropy and assisting organisations on environmental and social issues. The private sector has the potential to become a highly effective partner in preventing human trafficking, protecting children and supporting care and rehabilitation of victims. Both The Body Shop and ECPAT are encouraging other private sector companies to join and take specific actions to combat human trafficking and the campaign partnership is expanding in many countries.

Currently, the "Stop sex trafficking of children and young people" campaign is still ongoing.[82] As noted earlier, the main goal for the first phase of the campaign involves empowering the public to understand what states have done to counter the issue via the country progress cards and to take action by signing national campaign petitions based on the various calls to action.

The Body Shop is committed to calling for change in important social issues such as child trafficking – a philosophy that is based on an understanding that successful advocacy can bring long lasting and wide reaching policy and practice changes. The long history of The Body Shop campaigns when combined with ECPAT's global experience of protecting children from sexual exploitation can result in a partnership that extends its reach through the public worldwide to decision makers and duty bearers at all levels.

This unique partnership ensures that the advocacy messages are targeted and specific to national and international contexts. The involvement of ECPAT groups at the national and community level is essential as they provide a critical insight to the issues and needs

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82. See the campaign website at: <http://www.thebodyshop.com> (click on values and campaigns).

to combat child sex trafficking based on their specific expertise and experience which informs the key advocacy messages. The Body Shop stores ensure that the messages reach and engage millions of customers. Thus, the collective voice of the people can be heard.

References

ECPAT and The Body Shop (2009). "Their protection is in our hands", report: Stop Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People campaign. Online at <http://www.ecpat.net/EI/Publications/Trafficking/Full_Report_Global_Child_Trafficking_for_Sexual_Purposes.pdf>

Appendix

Selected Council of Europe conventions and adopted texts

Council of Europe conventions

European Convention on the Adoption of Children (Revised) (2008)

Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007)

Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)

Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003)

Convention on Cybercrime (2001)

European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996)

Revised European Social Charter (1996)

European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987)

European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions concerning Custody of Children and on Restoration of Custody of Children (1980)

European Social Charter (1961)

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)

Committee of Ministers recommendations

Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)10 on integrated national strategies for the protection of children from violence

Recommendation Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment

Recommendation Rec(2005)5 on the rights of children living in residential institutions

Recommendation Rec(2001)16 on the protection of children against sexual exploitation

Recommendation No. R (2000) 11 on action against trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Recommendation No. R (93) 2 on the medico-social aspects of child abuse

Recommendation No. R (91) 11 concerning sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution of, and trafficking in, children and young adults

Parliamentary Assembly recommendations and resolutions

Recommendation 1882 (2009) on the promotion of Internet and online media services appropriate for minors

Recommendation 1864 (2009) on promoting the participation by children in decisions affecting them

Recommendation 1778 (2007) on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse

Resolution 1530 (2007) on child victims: stamping out all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse

Resolution 1307 (2002) on sexual exploitation of children: zero tolerance

Resolution 1099 (1996) on sexual exploitation of children

Council of Europe conventions may be consulted on the website of the Council of Europe Treaty Office at <http://www.coe.int/DefaultEN.asp>. Adopted texts from the Committee of Ministers and from the Parliamentary Assembly are easily accessed from the Council of Europe homepage at <http://www.coe.int>.

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Violence reduction in schools training pack (2009)

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Parenting in contemporary Europe – A positive approach (2007)

The Internet literacy handbook (2006)

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ISBN titles may be ordered from http://book.coe.int

Visit the "Building a Europe for and with children" website at <www.coe.int/children> to discover unpublished documents, booklets, leaflets and campaign material. Most of these exist in several languages and can be downloaded.

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Protecting children from sexual violence – A comprehensive approach is a collection of highly readable expert papers for both child professionals and the general public. It is divided into five parts, presenting a European overview and covering the existing legal frameworks; abuse prevention and reporting; rehabilitation and social reintegration of victims; sexual violence on the Internet; and public and private partnerships against abuse. It also sheds light on the little-known problem of children who are sexually abusing other children.

In addition to providing thorough information on the many facets of this complex subject, this publication also highlights new concepts, facts and recommendations. Foremost is the significant lack of data on the prevalence and nature of sexual violence in Europe, underscoring the need for co-ordinated pan-European research and information gathering, which are vital to effective policy making and programme design. It also sounds the alarm for urgent co-ordinated action in various fields to drastically improve child protection through awareness raising; targeted and specialised training, intervention and therapy programmes; sex education in schools; responsible family attitudes; and justice systems with tighter abuse laws and which take account of children's special needs as reliable witnesses.

Protecting children from sexual violence is published as part of the Council of Europe campaign to stop sexual violence against children. The hope is that this publication will inspire judges, the police, educators, governments, the media and legislatures to join the campaign and expose, demythify and take concerted action to combat sexual violence against children, a phenomenon that affects as many as 20% of children in Europe.

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