



**Ensuring Meaningful
Child and Youth Participation**
in the fight against Commercial
Sexual Exploitation of Children:
The ECPAT Experience



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written by: Junita Upadhyay,

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ECPAT International

(End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of
Children for Sexual Purposes)
328/1 Phayathai Road, Ratchathewi
Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel: +66 2 215 3388, + 66 2 611 0972

Fax: +66 2 215 8272

Email: info@ecpat.net, media@ecpat.net

Website: www.ecpat.net

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PREFACE

The meaningful participation of children and young people (CYP) in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is an integral part of ECPAT's work. As a network of child rights organisations, it not only ensures that we are fulfilling a basic right of children to be able to express their views in decisions concerning them (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) but we see clearly how it strengthens our programming and advocacy work and makes us more accountable to the children we work for.

As this report illustrates, the participation of children and young people occurs at many different levels within our global network: from the design, development, management and monitoring of programmes at the grassroots level to policy influencing and advocacy at national, regional and international levels. The extent of child and youth participation within our organisational structures has also been a key factor in creating an enabling environment for learning

and decision making while helping to ensure that appropriate organisational policies and frameworks are in place to protect and support the children that are working with us.

The participation of CSEC survivors and young people and children at risk deserves special mention as ECPAT considers them priority stakeholders. Creating opportunities for these children to take on leadership roles within their communities or organisations helps build their sense of resilience and empowerment while at the same time, promoting social mobilisation to fight against sexual violence and exploitation. However, these experiences of child and youth participation (CYP) have reinforced some of ECPAT's key lessons learned surrounding the safety and protection of these young people: the need for robust child protection policies and procedures and a clear responsibility to address the consequences, follow up and obligations that such participation entails.

This report illustrates a number of

children's initiatives against commercial sexual exploitation from around the world. Strengthening ECPAT's child and youth participation has been a process of exploration and innovation which is still at its early stages of refinement and development. As children and youth have been mobilised for social action, the resource needs (both in human

resources and financially) have become more apparent. However, if we recognise children's participation as a fundamental part of the strategy to achieve children's protection from sexual exploitation, then we are also recognising our own responsibility to uphold children's fundamental rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Capaldi'.

Mark Capaldi
Deputy Director

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*, which came into force in 1990, specifically lists the child's right to participation as one of its key components. This particular emphasis on Article 12 (children's right to express their views in decisions concerning them/right to be heard ..., etc.) has been instrumental in the promotion of children's participation as a right of every single child and not the privilege of a selected few.¹ Over the years, the increased involvement of children and youth has led to higher recognition of the value of their contributions and capacities to input in matters of social change and development. Children are no longer being perceived as helpless victims, but as survivors; their participation promotes their development and resilience.² Impact assessments and lessons learned show that the participation process empowers children to be agents of their change and of those around them; and allows them to strengthen their capacities to better protect themselves and to access opportunities and alternatives for improving their lives.³

ECPAT International promotes and actively

supports the participation of children and youth in their work against commercial sexual exploitation. The practical experience of working with children against CSEC has reinforced ECPAT's belief in the importance of children's participation and the significant impact it can have in facilitating their active role in protecting other children from abuse and exploitation as well as to accelerate their recovery and sense of empowerment as social actors.

The history of child and youth participation within ECPAT International has been progressive and self-reflective. Though only a few children participated in the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, in Stockholm, Sweden, it was a significant step as it was the first time children were invited to participate in this type of a meeting with governments, UN agencies and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This set a precedent for others in promoting children's participation in consultations concerning them. As a follow-up to this, the International Young People's Project (IYPP) was initiated

in collaboration with ECPAT Philippines to implement the children's recommendations. The Second World Congress held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2001, saw greater regional preparation and planning for children's participation, resulting in an increased number of children attending, including for the first time, participation of experiential youth in a global meeting. Children's voices came out very strongly and the meeting concluded with youth coming up with their own declaration and the Yokohama Youth Appeal.

These successful initiatives led to the formation of the ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC) and a youth representative elected to the Board in 2001. Since then a Child and Youth Participation Officer has been recruited at the Secretariat, to ensure increased focus and commitment in promoting child and youth participation within the work of ECPAT International. Special consideration has also been given in creating mechanisms for promoting the participation of experiential children and youth through the Youth Partnerships Project (YPP), initially in South Africa, and currently in three countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Nepal).

There has also been a focus on using examples from the grassroots level for effective advocacy with the highest decision making bodies at national, regional and international levels. Member organisations continue to ensure young people's inputs into the development of national plans of action, setting up National Children's Commissions and even providing inputs in the drafting of the new Constitution in countries like Nepal, through their work. Similarly, experiential children and youth have participated in the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion and advocated for the development of structures and mechanisms at local level to facilitate participation of children who face greater discrimination and marginalisation.

For greater clarity on organisational philosophy and guidelines, the Child and Youth Participation Policy was developed, along with the Child Protection Policy (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). These contribute towards making participation beneficial and safe to all children and youth who choose to join the ECPAT movement in the fight against CSEC.

CYP SURVEY RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

With the development of ECPAT International's Child and Youth Participation Policy and the strong focus being given to this area of work in ECPAT's Strategic Directions 2005 – 2009, the Secretariat conducted a survey to learn more about the current and future work on child and youth participation initiatives within the ECPAT network. The main objectives of this survey were to:

- Gather information on the nature and scope of current work being conducted on child and youth participation within the ECPAT network;
- Assess the strengths and challenges in involving children and youth in the work against CSEC;
- Identify the capacity building needs of the network members for promoting and integrating child and youth participation in their work; and
- Contribute the outcomes of the survey to the 2006 ECPAT Global Monitoring Reports on the Status of Action against CSEC. The Agenda for Action report was published to mark the 10th anniversary since the First World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children.

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire (see Appendix 3) which was coordinated with the assistance of a former EICYAC member.

REGIONAL OVERVIEWS ON CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

This section provides:

- 1) A general overview of the child and youth participation initiatives for each region; and
- 2) Examples of key activities undertaken with the participation of children drawn from the survey results of ECPAT groups.

ASIA: EAST ASIA PACIFIC AND SOUTH ASIA

East Asia and the Pacific

The socio-economic and political context of a particular region or country profoundly influences the application of child rights, including the right to participation. Among the factors that play a key role are: the economic situation of a country; the political system; social relationships (including gender relations and attitudes towards children); and the policy structure and the delivery of social services, including education, health and the protection system.⁴ Some of these factors support and encourage the participation of children while others create resistance and barriers. In Asia, attitudes towards children are among the major obstacles in promoting children's participation - especially when many traditional views of children perceive them as being dependent on adults and lacking competence in making decisions related to their lives.⁵ Similarly, disadvantaged and marginalised children, such as victims of commercial sexual exploitation, come from social groups that often face greater levels of discrimination and exploitation within communities, and lack the necessary support within their families and in their societies to be able to participate actively to claim their

rights to education, health, recreational and social services and to contribute to matters that affect their lives.

The ratification of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* by all countries within the region has mobilised action for children, including efforts to promote their participation at all levels. Nevertheless, children's participation in the region has mainly focused on children attending one-off meetings and consultations and being involved in projects and programmes initiated by child rights organisations. A study concluded that although children are seen and heard at conferences, they need to be more involved in substantive decision making processes and their views and recommendations need to be followed through.⁶ With a few exceptions, children and youth were rarely consulted during the development of policies and programmes, even when these were directly related to them. Children themselves expressed concern that there has been little or slow progress by governments in creating structures and formal channels to support their effective and sustained participation, especially on the

issues that concern them, including CSEC.⁷

There are fewer efforts to mainstream children's participation beyond the realms of child rights which must be noted. In the Philippines, Cambodia, Mongolia, Indonesia and Thailand, examples exist of child and youth mobilisation resulting in numerous children's clubs within schools, shelters and children's organisations, including of working children, such as the Child Domestic Workers in the Philippines and Child Labour Club in Thailand; and children's parliaments, which advocate for issues ranging from improving working conditions to involvement in policy advocacy. Equally encouraging are the specific examples of governments collaborating with NGOs and young people in setting up systems and structures for children's participation, such as through the *National Framework for Children's Participation* in the Philippines;⁸ involving children in the drafting of the National Plan of Action against CSEC in Cambodia; and extensive participation of children in various provinces to develop the *Mongolian National Programme of Action for the Development and Protection of Children* for 2002-2010.

At regional level, children have been participating in the East Asia and the Pacific Ministerial Consultations; contributed to the

processes for the Regional Consultation on the UN Study on Violence against Children; and organised their own Mekong Children's Forum to provide inputs into the COMMIT process for better law enforcement and protection of victims of trafficking. There is also a regional Task Force on Children's Participation for local NGOs and child representatives – set up by Child Workers in Asia (CWA) – which holds annual meetings to report back on the action plan at national and regional levels. Similarly, there are several good examples of NGO, governmental and private sector collaboration that have provided capacity building and livelihood opportunities for at-risk children, such as the UNICEF and hotel industry's Youth Career Development Programme (YCPD) which provides employment training for the hotel and travel industry for at-risk girls from Northern Thailand;⁹ radio programmes for children, by children, in the Philippines and Thailand to raise awareness on CSEC; and young people inputting into the recent Child Wise Inter-Governmental Regional Task Force Meeting on Child Sex Tourism.¹⁰ ECPAT New Zealand already has a youth representative on their Board and is working towards establishing a youth council. ECPAT Taiwan organised a Regional Youth Summer Camp on CSEC in July 2006 and is currently developing a Regional Action Plan to combat

the issue through young people's participation in the region.

In addition to these child and youth participation initiatives, progress has been made in developing minimum standards to improve the quality of children's participation in the regional consultations through the work of the East Asia and the Pacific Inter-Agency Group.¹¹

CYP Survey Respondents: Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand

Strengths:

- All the organisations supported children's participation in the EAP Mid-Term Review in 2004;
- Four of the countries have a National Commission/Task Force on Children that actually has children/young people as members;
- Two of the organisations in the region have young people on their Board/Governance (ECPAT Cambodia and ECPAT New Zealand);
- All the organisations involve children and youth in their activities. Some have structured channels for their sustained participation, whereas others work with them on an occasional basis;
- Five organisations in the region have special programmes that work directly with experiential youth;
- Types of programmes include: awareness raising and campaigning; radio and other media programmes; peer to peer counselling; training in schools and shelters; make-IT-safe campaign; consultations/workshops/training and research, etc.;
- Several organisations involve children in policy advocacy, including in reporting to the CRC, work related to the NPAs, meeting with Parliaments, serving on child/youth commissions, etc.;
- Six organisations have budgets for CYP

Children participate in management decisions of shelter home: ECPAT Foundation

The Y.M.C.A, a local partner of the ECPAT Foundation, runs a shelter where a Youth Council has been set up to give children the opportunity to participate more directly in all areas of its operation. The Youth Council comprises youth representatives, who are each responsible for overseeing specific areas of work in the shelter such as security, welfare, logistics etc., and hold meetings to discuss processes and gaps in each of these issues. Together they come up with solutions and implement them. There is an in-house superintendent who oversees the shelter but the responsibility of managing the above issues lies with the Youth Council. This provides an excellent opportunity for young people to take responsibility, develop leadership skills, learn management and practical tools that enhance their life skills, which is often lacking in such settings.

work; five organisations have CYP policies; and four organisations have child protection policies;

- ECPAT International Secretariat's experience in the development of the Minimum Standards on Children's Participation was shared with the groups in the region; and
- The region has active EICYAC member representatives.

Youth-run volunteer organisation spearheads youth action against CSEC: ECPAT in Cambodia

ECPAT-Cambodia is a network of local organisations working to end child prostitution, sexual abuse and trafficking of young people. Child Assistance for Mobilisation and Participation (CAMP) is a youth-led volunteer organisation and one of the member organisations of the ECPAT-Cambodia network. CAMP members attend monthly meetings run by ECPAT - Cambodia on CSEC. CAMP works to promote children's rights and improve opportunities for marginalised children through participation. They mobilise children and youth by forming children's clubs and children's village networks; advocate with government at local and national levels; and work closely with communities to raise awareness on preventing and addressing CSEC and trafficking of young people. CAMP members have been elected as East Asia and Pacific youth representatives to EICYAC. This provides an excellent opportunity for CAMP to bring their grassroots experiences on children's participation against CSEC to regional and international levels. Ullute dolobore cons acipsumsan volor susci bla faccum et utatueri enis nissi tatet vel in utpatuer

Challenges:

- Child and youth participation is uneven among groups in the regions, as not all groups have strong child/youth groups or programmes within their organisations. Some involve children occasionally (based on need) in consultations, awareness raising activities or in research;
- Child protection is raised as the biggest concern while working with young people: all the organisations have started to develop and implement child protection policies;
- Technical assistance to develop child/youth groups and organisational strategy/policy on child and youth participation is one of the main capacity needs;
- None of the groups have participation of children/youth in the reporting process of the *Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution (OPSC)* though there is experience in the region of involving children in such processes;
- There are no databases on child and youth groups in countries where ECPAT members are based; and
- Although regional initiatives, such as youth summer camps to facilitate experience sharing among youth activists, are emerging, coordination and cooperation among youth groups in the region is still fragmented and ad hoc.

South Asia:

South Asia is vast and diverse in terms of population, cultures and social norms. However, the social exclusion of children from most decision making bodies within families and schools and from villages to national level government structures, is prevalent in all countries in the region. Adult attitudes towards children and the common perception that “children should do what they are told” is one of the biggest challenges in promoting children’s participation. Discrimination towards girls is a serious concern and has a direct impact on the roles girls play within families and communities, and on their ability to participate in accessing basic education, health, recreational and social services. Children suffer further levels of discrimination based on their age, caste, religion, language or economic and social status. Poverty and inequality is widespread and the region has the highest number of children working, according to estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO). Trafficking in children is a major issue and children are found working in factories and mines, as domestic workers, or are forced into commercial sexual exploitation, etc.¹² Victims of CSEC and other forms of exploitative labour face added levels of discrimination and stigmatisation

which further contributes to their isolation and marginalisation. Therefore, in terms of the participation of experiential children and youth, gaining access to them is a challenge, as is finding creative ways to promote their participation in a safe and empowering manner, that does not add to their further victimisation. Within this context, child rights organisations have focused on the collective mobilisation of these disadvantaged groups of children and having their voices represented in the form of working children’s organisations, networks, unions, children’s clubs, groups, etc. These processes have enabled children to challenge various forms of discrimination, inequality, abuse and exploitation and to provide powerful illustrations of their role as active citizens.¹³ These question the fundamental models of development and force decision makers to consult with children while reconsidering the socio-economic policies and their impact on the lives of children.¹⁴

Some early examples of children’s collective organising include working children’s unions in India, established in 1990; and it is estimated that there are over 5,000 children’s clubs in Nepal.¹⁵ The popularity of children’s clubs has helped to spread the benefit and practice

of the concept of child-to-child teaching and peer support programmes. Besides providing support to each other, they also involve raising awareness about social issues such as early marriage, equal access to education, raising awareness against child trafficking, promoting peace and addressing environmental issues. Bangladesh also has some good examples of children's organisations and groups/clubs that have peer support, projects and programmes for the capacity building and empowerment of street and working children and for victims of CSEC.

Children's participation in conferences and consultations is very popular in South Asia. The first Children's Parliament was held in Sri Lanka in 2001; children were part of the UN Study on Violence against Children at national and regional levels; and a regional level meeting of children's organisations was held in 2004 in India. Many children attended the Post-Yokohama Mid-Term Review against CSEC in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2004. However, a study reported that in general, the most influence that children have had so far in adult-organised meetings is at the agenda setting stage: follow-up with children rarely takes place.¹⁶ Although there is benefit in inviting children to these meetings, it needs to be recognised that these are highly selective processes providing limited spaces for participation. The need to move

away from these types of events and work on developing structures and mechanisms at local and national levels that allow the maximum number of children (especially those who are most disadvantaged and marginalised) to contribute to policies and decisions concerning them in a systematic and sustaining way is a key priority. Furthermore, ethical issues in children's participation in the region, especially in regard to their protection and participation, need to be given more thought by all stakeholders so that the participation process is democratic, voluntary and beneficial to the children involved.

Good examples of processes and models are emerging and the results of children's participation and contributions are being recognised by adults. In India, Pakistan and Nepal, children's groups contributed to the development of the *National Plan of Action* with support from their governments and NGOs. Similarly, in Bangladesh, children provided inputs to the *National Plan of Action against Trafficking* and to the formulation of the draft constitution in Nepal. ECPAT's Youth Partnership Project, in partnership with Aparajeyo Bangladesh, Sanlaap India and Maiti Nepal, is also a good practice promoting empowerment and protection of victims of CSEC through their participation. This project is currently implemented in Bangladesh, India and Nepal and has proved very effective in

developing the capacities of the victims of CSEC through peer support programmes, and is strongly recommended for replication in other countries/regions.

Fighting discrimination through participation: The Youth Partnership Project

The Youth Partnership Project for Child Victims of CSEC in South Asia is a unique initiative that endeavours to have a positive psychosocial impact and thus improve the lives of affected children. Through participation, peer support programmes, community awareness campaigns and public advocacy, survivors and young people at-risk have joined forces to combat CSEC in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The project is being coordinated by the ECPAT International Secretariat, in collaboration with local organisations such as Aparajeyo-Bangladesh, Sanlaap India and Maiti Nepal. Regular communications and visits are organised to facilitate learning and sharing of good practices on CYP. There are also frequent discussions among the partner organisations and the children and young people of the YPP on cross border issues. Lessons learned have shown that through the peer support programmes and leadership development trainings, the experiential youth are overcoming discrimination and personal challenges and taking a lead in better protecting themselves and accessing opportunities for alternative livelihoods.

CYP Survey Respondents: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

Strengths:

- Strong and systematic focus on promoting participation of experiential youth through YPP with ECPAT members in Bangladesh, India and Nepal;

- Strong child and youth participation movement (almost all the groups in South Asia have their own child/youth groups/clubs, organisations, etc.).
- Programmes include projects; research; evaluations; awareness raising; media activity; peer-to-peer support; youth facilitators; children/youth clubs; training in schools/communities, etc.;
- Many organisations involve children in policy advocacy, such as providing inputs to the CRC, active participation in the formulation and implementation of NPAs, inputting into the National Constitution in Nepal, etc.;
- All organisations supported children's participation in the Mid-Term Review in 2004;
- Organisations also facilitated the participation of selected children to the 2nd World Congress in Yokohama in 2001;
- All the groups that responded have child protection policies within their organisations. Many are also formulating child participation policies; and
- Active EICYAC members are present in the region.

Challenges:

- Though all organisations have child protection policies there is still demand from members in the region for capacity building opportunities to improve care

and protection procedures within their organisations/programmes;

- The initiatives on child and youth participation need to be more strategic, with long-term goals, rather than being ad hoc and with short-term, project-based involvement of children;
- Lessons learned and good practices from the YPP need to be widely shared within the network;
- Though selected members do have budget allocations for CYP programmes within their organisations, lack of resources are cited as one of the main barriers to children's participation;
- There is a need to promote awareness

and adherence to minimum standards on children's participation in consultations and programmes in order to improve the quality standards of participation in the region;

- No groups have participation of children/youth in the reporting process of the Optional Protocol, though there is experience of involving children in such processes.
- There is no database of child/youth groups in South Asia ECPAT groups.

AFRICA

The issue of child and youth participation has gained growing support over the last 15 years in Africa. The HIV/AIDs prevention work in the continent has a very strong focus on young people and contributed immensely to the mobilisation of children and youth in community and social action. In many cases, rather than being limited to a smaller project within NGOs, the practice of children's participation has mainstreamed into schools, community action, organisation governance and management, media programmes, policy advocacy and working in partnership with governmental bodies. One such example is the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY), a child-led and managed grassroots movement based in 57 towns in 18 African countries, with membership of over 20,000 working children and young people.¹⁷ This is an innovative and participatory initiative that carries out many activities at local, national and regional levels such as counselling, campaigns and managing partnerships with other organisations and groups. Recently they have also initiated a regional Anti-Trafficking Campaign led by young people.¹⁸

However, in the case of children and youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, participation has been slow and difficult due to the stigma attached to the nature of their victimisation. This is also due to the fact that these children require special protection measures; usually need greater emotional, physical and mental support and healing; and require special technical skills and longer-term commitment among field workers. Lack of resources, technical and financial, are the most common reasons for organisations' limited strategies in dealing with experiential youth. As a result, these children are particularly marginalised and isolated and face even greater challenges and barriers to participation compared with other children. These challenges come from their own experiences and the impact of the trauma and experiences of being abused; resistance from other children and parents; and refusal from their own families and communities to accept them back. For organisations already working with CSEC survivors, such as the ECPAT groups in Africa, many have come up with innovative and creative ways of working with the young people. Their active involvement is

helping children to strengthen their resilience and power and to overcome their emotional and physical scars. Some examples of their work include Kiwohede in Tanzania, which provides micro-loans to victims of CSEC to start a new business and help them integrate into their communities. In South Africa, the ECPAT affiliate has a partnership with the University of Johannesburg to provide counselling to victims of CSEC through their creative “Suitcase Project”. In this project, children draw and write poetry on their experiences, as a healing process, and lock them away in a suitcase to begin a new journey free from exploitation. ASSEJA in Cameroon works with children and youth to create awareness about CSEC through children/youth clubs and also through young parliaments, who supported the passing of a law against trafficking through effective and persistent advocacy efforts.

The Child Protection Alliance (CPA) in The Gambia is a good example of an organisation that has institutionalised child and youth participation where children are involved in all aspects of their programmes and management of the organisation. They are also doing advocacy and prevention work against CSEC with the media and the Government.

Mainstreaming child and youth participation: The experience of CPA, The Gambia

The Child Protection Alliance has a children’s advocacy group called “Voice of the Young”, which is consulted with and involved in all decision making processes within the organisation. The President of the Voice also represents other children on the Board of Directors of CPA.

The Voice is very active in social mobilisation and capacity building of children and youth in Gambia. Some of its programmes include training other young people on child rights and child protection issues; and improving presentation, facilitation and public speaking skills. They organise annual children’s summer camps and host talk shows on issues related to child protection, including CSEC, on national radio and TV stations. The group also organises “Bantaba”, a quarterly meeting of young people from diverse groups around the country to discuss issues of concern to children; a final declaration from this meeting is presented to the Government. Voice of the Young has also set up 24 ‘Young Clubs’ in rural schools in The Gambia, which are run in cooperation with teacher coordinators.

CYP Survey Respondents: Kenya, Namibia, The Gambia, Uganda, Zambia

Strengths:

- Strong child and youth participation, mainly due to numerous initiatives on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health;
- All but one ECPAT group in the region have child and youth programmes against CSEC;
- CPA Gambia is a good example of an organisation that has successfully mainstreamed and institutionalised child and youth participation within their structures and programmes;
- Numerous examples of innovative approaches to promoting participation

- of experiential youth with innovative programmes such as micro-finance, peer-to-peer support, awareness raising, prevention, protection and reintegration, media activities, research against CSEC, etc.;
- Strong interest from the youth in the make-IT-safe campaign; and
- Active EICYAC member based in the region

Challenges:

- Many organisations have identified the need for capacity building opportunities in improving child protection standards and procedures within their organisations;
- No child and youth participation strategy/ policy among many groups;
- No information on whether the organisations allocate budget to CYP annually;
- No database of child/youth groups of ECPAT members in Africa;
- Some groups seem to be very keen on policy advocacy with access to ministers and national task forces/commissions, but have limited experience in advocacy, and the impact of such participation is not well articulated;
- Groups do not have participation of children/youth in the reporting process of the *Optional Protocol* though they have experience in involving children in these processes;

- Good examples of child and youth participation do exist within ECPAT groups, but coordination and cooperation within the region among these groups is limited; and
- There is no documentation of good practices and lessons learned on the African experiences of promoting child and youth participation against CSEC.

Youth take the lead against cyberspace violence in Kenya: The make-IT-safe campaign

The make-IT-safe campaign was coordinated by EICYAC's Africa representative in collaboration with other young people. The campaign, which aims to protect children from child pornography, began with a petition-signing day in December 2006. Computers were set up in various cybercafés to encourage the public to sign the online petition; hard copies of the petitions were also available for signing. T-shirts and stickers were also distributed to raise awareness about violence in cyberspace. There was a lot of interest from the public to learn more about the issue and in setting up systems to encourage cybercafé owners to monitor the content accessed by children or to ban pornography viewing in their premises. The campaign also attracted the attention of police and government representatives to crimes against children in information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The make-IT-safe campaign has successfully raised awareness about the dangers of violence in cyberspace between adults and children, especially crucial when local citizens usually disregard the problem, thinking that it only happens in other countries. However, this initiative is seen as just the beginning. There is a lot of interest and commitment among young people to address the concerns in a more sustainable way by carrying out the campaign in other parts of the city and country, working with cybercafé owners in setting up monitoring systems and raising awareness about the safe use of the Internet in schools and universities.

AMERICAS: NORTH AMERICA, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

North America

North America in general has a strong youth movement and exerts considerable influence over issues concerning young people. Young people initiate and lead youth groups and are also represented on the Boards of numerous organisations, etc. In terms of children and youth participation against CSEC, there is increasing interest and a growing youth leadership movement in the United States. Placing youth survivors in positions of leadership has been an integral part of the mission of several anti-CSEC organisations in the country, especially Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS) and SAGE, both run by CSEC survivors. There have also been many policy advocacy initiatives with the Congress in Washington, D.C. In 2003, a group of 30 young survivors from across the country convened in Washington for a week of connection and empowerment workshops that resulted in the Agenda for Action, written entirely by the youth. A global summit was held in Canada in 1998 on sexually exploited youth. The first National Summit of Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth was

held in 2003 by GEMS in New York City. There have been many other initiatives in the region to promote young people's participation against CSEC though not all information was available at the time of writing. There are also broader challenges of coordination and collaboration to address this multi-faceted problem in this vast region; there needs to be greater communication and links with the youth movement in the USA and with the EICYAC representative in the region.

The ECPAT member in Canada, Beyond Borders, has a youth representative to their Board, who is also the youth representative to the region for EICYAC. Beyond Borders works with young people in universities and schools to raise awareness about commercial sexual exploitation of children. At the invitation of the Canadian Government, the current EICYAC member is also involved in the Government's Committee to address the sexual exploitation of children. Plans are underway to develop a proposal to conduct research to learn more about this issue.

Latin America and The Caribbean

Youth represented in the Government Committee against CSEC: Beyond Borders, Canada

In order to respond to the general lack of awareness on CSEC issues in Canada and to encourage youth participation in social action, Beyond Borders is working to involve youth from colleges in Canada through various awareness raising activities and campaigns, such as poster presentations, discussions, publications of articles and so on. They successfully lobbied a popular guide book the "Lonely Planet Guide" to insert information against child sex tourism. Similarly, the youth representative to Beyond Borders was invited by the Committee against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth of the Canadian Government to provide a youth perspective on combating sexual exploitation among aboriginal children. Follow-up meetings and activities are planned for a longer term response to this issue.

Youth lobby at the Congress for anti-trafficking legislation: USA Experience

Recently, the Girls Education and Mentoring Services supported the participation of a youth to Albany, New York to testify and lobby for the passage of New York State anti-trafficking legislation. The organisation is supporting the youth to learn about the political processes and build capacity in effective lobbying for policy change related to CSEC.

In the Latin American and Caribbean region violence against children and commercial sexual exploitation of children is a major concern and has increased dramatically over the last decade. This is being increasingly recognised as a serious economic and social problem. Rapid urbanisation, persistent poverty and inequality, political violence, organised nature of crime and the emergence of illegal drug use and drug trafficking are often cited as root causes of the increase in violence and other related issues.¹⁹

In order to overcome the poverty, social exclusion and inequality in the region, multilateral institutions, governments, businesses and civil society organisations have launched numerous initiatives to deal with these issues, such as the World Social Forum - which encourages the expression of youth participation and leadership; and, in general, the emergence and growth of youth social movements and organisations. These mainly address the trans-nationalisation of youth and its consequences through forced migration; increased access of youth to new ICTs; and the multifaceted response to youth both as change makers on the positive side and the as agents of terrorism on the negative side.²⁰ There is

also a strong working children's movement in Latin America: the Child Protagonists, which advocates for children as agents of their own change. They have been helping working children organise themselves in unions, child-led organisations, etc., and collectively fight for better working conditions and payment, making employers accountable in providing them educational, health and recreational services.²¹

Partnering with youth requires putting them at the forefront of local development, where it is most effective and provides many innovative and potent entry points to the decision making processes. Through well organised partnerships, youth can become key actors with the capacity to organise, intervene and act at various levels, such as the family, the education system, peer groups, communities and the larger society. Youth, especially marginalised and disadvantaged groups, can be the beneficiaries of development programmes and policies, but above all, with their increased capacities and empowerment, they will be able to protect themselves better and also access better opportunities and services for improved livelihood options.²²

Within the ECPAT network, members in the Americas are using creative ways of involving children. One such member is ONG Raices, in Chile, which has been carrying out drama

workshops for experiential youth in order to create a space for games, creativity and self-expression to help the children heal from their traumatic experiences. In Mexico, EDIAC – a member of ECPAT Mexico – runs a programme for “young reporters”, where for the last five years, children participate in presenting plays; act as spokespersons to raise awareness in their communities; and produce a monthly bulletin. ECPAT Colombia recently organised a national youth meeting to develop the strategy and work plan for child and youth participation against CSEC.

Children's clubs take a stand against CSEC: ECPAT Mexico and 'Club Mechita'

EDIAC has been organising activities for children living and working in the market area of La Merced for nine years, through 'Club Mechita'. Children who are at high risk of exploitation attend this club and participate in various activities. They create and perform in plays; act as spokespersons to raise awareness in their communities; and engage in other educational activities, e.g computers. Children between 7 and 13 years of age also produce a monthly bulletin, 'Mechiboletin', which provides information to the community about the group's activities and raises awareness on issues related to child rights and the risks of sexual exploitation.

Strengths:

- The ECPAT groups that responded all have long-term and well structured programmes with children and youth against CSEC;

- There are many successful practices, such as young people producing monthly bulletins; children writing and staging plays; and acting as spokespersons to raise awareness in their communities;
- Three organisations in the region have special programmes with experiential youth involved in awareness raising, campaigning, media advocacy, peer-to-peer programmes, training in schools and shelters, participation in consultations and conferences, etc.;
- Guatemala has a National Commission on Children that has young people (between 15 and 17-years-old) as members;
- Two out of the five respondents have a Child and Youth Participation Policy and Child Protection Policies within their organisations; and
- Active EICYAC representatives are based in the region.
- Groups have requested technical assistance to develop strategies for the development of child and youth groups. They also need assistance with fundraising strategies in order to sustain their CYP programmes;
- There need to be more platforms and opportunities among groups in the region to share good practices and lessons learnt on CYP;
- Despite the country initiatives the child/youth groups do not communicate or collaborate at regional levels; and
- Groups have not promoted participation of children/youth in the reporting process of the *Optional Protocol* though there is experience in promoting participation of children in these processes. However, at the time of writing, Chile had expressed interest in involving children in the reporting processes.

Challenges:

- These groups were not involved in the CYP processes for the Mid-Term Review held in Costa Rica in 2005;
- A majority of the organisations that responded to the survey do not have a budget for child and youth participation;
- Child protection was raised as a major concern while working with young people, although only a few organisations have child protection policies;

Youth-led national consultations against CSEC: The ECPAT Colombia Experience

A National Forum was organised by ECPAT Colombia's youth group comprising over 60 children and youth to raise awareness and mobilise young people from major cities in the country. The event was attended by over 200 participants representing schools, government, health institutions, police, youth organisations and NGOs. The Forum was also a platform for the development of an action plan for ECPAT Colombia's youth group for 2007, which includes recreational activities for at-risk and experiential youth, programmes and projects against CSEC to be implemented by young people and a recommendation and commitment to organise the event annually.

EUROPE: WESTERN AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS

Western Europe

This region has relatively higher economic growth, with corresponding levels of per capita income, better access to education and health services, and higher infant and life expectancy rates. In relation to youth in particular, there are major demographic changes taking place within the European Union, with the number of young people aged 15 to 24 set to fall by a quarter between 2005 and 2050 (from 12.6 per cent to 9.7 per cent) with a particular risk of poverty within this age group, at 19 per cent, compared to 12 per cent in the 25–64 age group.²³ Within this context, it is encouraging to note some good examples of governments' commitments to young people in the region. Following a resolution on children's participation and active citizenship in family and social life, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe²⁴ carried out a project entitled "Children, democracy and participation in society", which explores important issues and effective examples of children's participation projects in Europe.²⁵ The 2005 European Commission's Communication highlighted the importance of programmes to support young people to become active, involved citizens. These include

the European Social Fund (in relation to employment, training and social inclusion); the European Regional Development Fund (e.g. education and training, university research, entrepreneurship, health, culture); the Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme and the Youth in Action Programme (e.g. mobility, non-formal learning and active citizenship).²⁶ Similarly, the Norwegian Government's development of systems, including the appointment of an Ombudsman (which has been replicated in other countries) to promote the participation and influence of young people in schools, local democracy and through voluntary child and youth organisations, has proved to be effective.²⁷ The appointment of a Children's Commissioner in the United Kingdom is also significant in gathering the necessary focus towards institutionalisation of children's participation across sectors and organisations.

In relation to programmes and projects specific to CSEC, the youth statement of the Yokohama Mid-Term Review held in Ljubljana in 2005 called for greater government financial and technical

commitment and suggested the identification of a lead government in each European country to serve as a responsible and accountable focal point to coordinate all initiatives against CSEC and to encourage participation of young people and NGOs in the preparation of the national plans of action against CSEC. They also urged the governments to include information on CSEC in the national curricula to combat the prevailing stigma, silence and taboo associated with the issue.

The survey findings²⁸ revealed that young people are mainly involved in research and consultations; generally participate in awareness raising activities against CSEC (mainly child sex tourism, through exhibitions, poster presentations, awareness raising activities in schools and colleges); occasionally participate in capacity building events such as trainings and conferences against CSEC; and are quite effective in fundraising for the issue.²⁹ Though there is a strong focus on promoting children's participation from the governments of Western Europe, there is still a gap in creating systematic mechanisms for young people's inputs in issues concerning CSEC. It is also felt that CSEC is a very sensitive issue, which sometimes inhibits the participation of many young people, who do not always get much encouragement from their parents for their active involvement.

EICYAC's European youth representative and the youth representative to the Board, who is also based in the region, are focusing on strengthening young people's participation against CSEC through the implementation of their Regional Action Plans, in cooperation with the ECPAT groups. EICYAC members are also regularly invited to ECPAT meetings in the region.

Promoting partnership with young people: ECPAT Sweden

ECPAT Sweden has a youth group and a youth representative to the Board. Members of the youth group are involved in raising awareness, building capacities, fundraising and policy advocacy with Parliamentarians against CSEC. They receive training from ECPAT Sweden twice a year; give lectures and speeches at schools; design and conduct programmes; lead their own study programmes on CSEC; and raise funds for CSEC. During the 2004 tsunami, the youth group raised money for the ECPAT group in Sri Lanka, P.E.A.C.E. As part of a campaign against child sex tourism, youth also interviewed national parliamentarians to find out how much they knew about the issue and to highlight the Swedish Government's response in curbing this problem.

**CYP Survey Respondents: Austria,
Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy,
Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United
Kingdom**

Strengths:

- Greater focus on involving young people in the governance of organisations;
- Children's participation in many awareness

raising activities, especially on child sex tourism and CSEC;

- Involvement of young people in fundraising activities;
- Involvement of young people in research;
- Participation of children from the region at the 1st and 2nd World Congresses;
- Most groups supported children's participation at the Mid Term Review (MTR) in Ljubljana;
- Half of the organisations that responded have child protection policies and few others also have policies related to child participation;

Peer-led research on CSEC: ECPAT Netherlands

ECPAT Netherlands mobilised young people to conduct 'Peer Research' to investigate the trafficking of children - aimed to address major gaps in existing information on this issue. Peer research is a form of research whereby people or young people in this case, receive training to research the lives of their peers. This proved to be an effective methodology, especially while conducting research on CSEC, as the young people who were conducting the research were also survivors who had better understanding of and access to the young people who have suffered sexual exploitation. The peer researchers had experienced abuse themselves but had achieved some degree of distance from their experiences in order to discuss it with other victims. The outcome was a valuable set of first-hand information comprising enormous and varied experiences and stories; providing significant insight to the nature and extent of the problem; offering suggestions to improve the services to victims as well as concrete recommendations for setting up effective prevention and protection systems against trafficking.

- Three organisations indicated budget allocation for child and youth participation;
- Involvement of children/youth in research is popular in the region; and
- Active EICYAC representative and the youth representative to the Board based in the region.

Challenges:

- CSEC is a sensitive issue; therefore there is reluctance among young people and their families on their involvement in the issue;
- Busy schedules keep young people from becoming fully involved in the participation process;
- Many groups in Western Europe only have awareness raising programmes with children in schools and do not have any long term programmes for young people or special programmes for experiential youth;
- Lack of staff and resources also inhibit the capacities of the organisations to involve young people;
- Providing access for young people to decision making bodies at the government level is sometimes difficult;
- Only a few organisations have child protection policies or policies on CYP;
- Only a few organisations have a budget allocation for CYP; and
- Mobilisation of children and youth against CSEC at the national/regional level needs to be strengthened.

Eastern Europe and CIS

This region is still recovering from the impact of unresolved ethnic conflicts and the collapse of the former Soviet Union. A regional study highlighted the trends in economic growth with increasing economic and social polarisation; a disturbing number of children in public care; a rapidly escalating HIV/AIDS epidemic; the widespread trafficking of young women; and stagnating indicators of adolescent health related to alcohol, poor reproductive health and substance abuse.³⁰

The ‘Young Voices’ opinion poll of more than 15,000 children in 35 countries in Europe and Central Asia concluded that in order to provide better responses to the state of children and to support their active participation and development in the region, governments must redouble their efforts to implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in general, particularly Article 12, which enshrines the participation rights of children and sets the stage to improve consultations with them.³¹ The Poll also showed that in many countries in the region girls’ participation greatly outnumbered that of boys, which called for urgent strategy interventions to address the low self-esteem and psychosocial problems manifested by boys, who are at higher risk for contracting HIV/AIDS and of abusing substances.³²

At the same time, the strong civil society movement sweeping across the region has been very effective in mobilising public opinion and influencing governments. Within this context, young people’s participation is emerging as a key development strategy.³³ A recent evaluation of key strategies and approaches on children’s participation in the region demonstrated that with the right support and opportunities from NGOs, youth groups, UN agencies and the governments themselves, young people are increasingly influencing national and local policies and programmes directly, especially those related to HIV/AIDS, CSEC, the right to quality education, and access to better health services.³⁴ For example, in Albania, Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan, young people were involved in the development of the national plans of action.³⁵ In Moldova, local youth councils (LYCs) were set up in 198 communities to promote their civic participation, which have resulted in young people leading a campaign to clean up their communities such as by recycling, among other things.³⁶ A recent survey showed that there an impressive number of children and young people involved in the prevention, recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes against CSEC throughout the region.³⁷ In Russia, young people serve on

organisations' boards and on youth councils and work with NGOs and governments in establishing "School Healthcare Teams" to prevent CSEC and HIV/AIDS. Similarly, in Ukraine, young people are actively leading several campaigns and projects against CSEC, such as the "Let's Say NO! to Trafficking in Children" and "Young Men against Violence". In Serbia, as part of developing young people's capacities to input into the *National Plan of Action against CSEC*, many children have been trained as peer-to-peer educators. These initiatives need to be strengthened in scope and quality as well as move beyond the

realms of just child rights organisations; they also need to be institutionalised at local and national levels across schools, communities, health services and so on. The Youth Statement at the 2005 Ljubljana MTR called for greater commitment from governments in addressing the issue of CSEC and suggested working in close cooperation with NGOs and young people themselves in addressing the social taboos and stigma attached with the issue and in providing the necessary programmatic and psychosocial support to children who have been victims of CSEC.³⁸

Ecumenical Network for Youth Action provides a strategic approach against CSEC: Czech Republic

The Ecumenical Network for Youth Action (ENYA), an affiliate of the ECPAT network, is a growing partnership of churches, related associations and networks that began their work on CSEC in 1998. ENYA runs the "Out of Shadows-Into the Rainbow" programmes to address trafficking, forced prostitution and sexual abuse of children and youth in Eastern and Central Europe. The programme also includes interactive training seminars, prevention programmes and strategies for the establishment of independent "Lighthouse" youth homes which are co-managed with the participation of children living on the street, experiential youth and those who have just received independent status from institutional care. ENYA has also developed specialised peer-to-peer leadership programmes to promote the full inclusion of young people in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children. These have been successful in providing an opportunity for young people to get involved, take responsibility and seek alternative lifestyles and opportunities in improving their lives.

CYP Survey Respondents: Czech Republic, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine

Strengths:

- Strong mobilisation of children and youth against CSEC, numerous youth groups/clubs;
- Children and youth are actively involved in various programmes and projects such as advocacy; research, media campaigns; peer-to-peer activities;
- Creative methods are used as an effective strategy to promote participation, such as theatre, media, art, etc., with young people;
- Many groups have special programmes with experiential youth; there are several good examples of young people's participation in the development of

NPAs and other advocacy initiatives with governments;

- Two groups in the region have child protection and child participation policies;
- There is increasing focus on producing child-friendly materials on CSEC;
- Groups supported the participation of selected children from the region to the 1st and 2nd World Congresses and to the MTR in Ljubljana; and
- Active EICYAC members are based in the region.

Challenges:

- Child and youth participation should be integrated more in one-time projects rather than focusing on the institutionalisation of these processes;
- Legal advocacy is weak;
- Capacity building is needed for promoting participation in the reporting process of the OPSC and also for monitoring the implementation of the NPAs;
- More resources are needed for CYP work;
- Documentation of experiences and lessons learned in young people's participation against CSEC needs to be conducted;
- Implementation of the minimum standards and policies on children's participation is lacking;

- Lack of child protection policies although the organisations are concerned about protection issues with regard to children's participation;
- Although opportunities have been provided for capacity building at regional level forums, the cooperation and coordination among youth groups is still weak; and
- There is no database of child and youth groups working on CSEC in the region.

Interactive theatre raises awareness about trafficking: Ukraine

The School of Equal Opportunities, a member of the ECPAT affiliate network in Ukraine, has a programme for young people called the Gender Interactive Theatre which uses interactive theatre methods to raise awareness about social issues such as trafficking, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, violence prevention, etc., in various communities in Ukraine. The main principle of their work is peer education through creative arts. It encourages participation from diverse groups of young people as actors as well as the audience. The topics of a play, the presentation and costumes are all designed through active discussions on why a particular issue needs to be raised and how the message should be conveyed. Interactive theatre has become very popular with young people as it is a new and interesting form of training. In order to promote and replicate this successful model of child and youth participation against CSEC, a group of Belarusian youth travelled to Ukraine for training on advocating effectively and learning how to perform for the promotion of social issues. The Belarusian youth group have since collaborated with a local youth NGO "Children Not for Abuse" to design and implement their own street and theatre performances with other young people to raise awareness about trafficking and CSEC issues.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

CYP Survey: No responses were received from this region and there is no EICYAC representative from the region.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a sensitive issue in MENA. However, there are many youth groups in the region promoting human rights issues.

ECPAT must get in touch with these movements to explore opportunities to address CSEC agendas in their discussions and programmes. Similarly, capacity building opportunities for ECPAT groups in the region would help in strengthening child and youth participation.

CYP INVOLVEMENT WITHIN THE ECPAT INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

The results of the survey demonstrate that in various regions, organisations are at different levels of developing and integrating children's participation in their programmes and policies. There is no prescribed approach or process, but a demonstration that each region has developed their own tools and mechanisms to promote child and youth participation best suited to their socio-political contexts. Some organisations have occasional awareness raising activities with children, and others have longer-term projects and programmes involving children. Other organisations have moved beyond programming with children and youth and have involved them in the governance of the organisation, such as on the Board and advisory committees. There is increasing focus on learning from our experiences and good practices on working with experiential youth and applying these to other regions. The following section summarises the main areas of work on child/youth participation within the ECPAT network:

A. Establishing principles and policies concerning children and youth:

1. The principles of participation established as a central focus to CSEC counteractions in the Declaration and the Agenda for Action of the 1996 1st World Congress.
2. A Board decision to set up ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC) and include a youth representative to the ECPAT Executive Board in order to incorporate young people in the structure and governance of the ECPAT network.
3. ECPAT Child Participation Policy: Sets a clear policy framework to support implementation of meaningful participation of children throughout the network
4. ECPAT Child Protection Policy: Ensures a policy framework by making participation safe and beneficial to children within the network.
5. Setting ethical guidelines in conducting CSEC research with children to promote their meaningful participation; improve quality and minimise potential abuse and manipulation of children in these processes.

B. Practice and applications within the network with children and youth:

1. Design and implementation of the Youth Partnership Project to specifically promote the participation of the experiential youth in South Asia;
2. Promotion of children's participation in the reporting process of the Optional Protocol;
3. Use of grassroots experiences and building capacity of young people to lobby at the international levels, such as the Day of General Discussions, UN General Assembly, etc.;
4. Involvement and promotion of direct action by young people through implementation of the peer-to-peer support programmes;
5. Mobilisation of children and youth through children's clubs, youth councils and networks;
6. Building capacities of adults and children to work in partnership in the fight against CSEC;

7. Working with EICYAC to promote CYP in each region;
8. Establishment of staffing positions focusing on child and youth participation within the Secretariat; and
9. Allocation of a substantial budget for CYP programmes within the network.

C. Network practice in consultations and conferences with children and youth:

1. Participation at World Congresses and MTRs;
2. Attendance at ECPAT's Regional Network Resource Exchange (RNREs) workshops and other regional events/meetings;
3. Hosting of EICYAC annual meetings; and
4. Participation and representation at other global/regional/national level platforms and meetings.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR MEANINGFUL CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION: PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO INVOLVING EXPERIENTIAL YOUTH

Clarity on Objectives and Outcomes of Child/Youth Participation

Experiential youth are in the process of recovery from extreme forms of harm and are highly vulnerable to psychosocial pressures, thus the involvement of experiential youth needs extra preparation and consideration of their safety and protection. At the start of the planning stage it is important that both adults and children are clear about the parameters of their involvement, the purpose and the expected outcomes of their participation. It is important to help the children decide how they would prefer to provide their inputs, for example, through creative and child-friendly mediums or in surroundings that are familiar and safe to them, rather than at public meetings. Organisations need to give some consideration in coming up with innovative ideas to provide child-friendly channels and structures that will enable the majority of children to express their views and participate in decision making processes without having to physically participate at each event.

Respecting the Right to Say NO

Experiential youth have usually undergone situations of abuse and exploitation. Each of their experiences is unique and their personal capacities and willingness to speak of their (or others') experiences of CESC differs. Their participation should be always be voluntary; they should never be pressured into sharing their experiences. It is important that both children and adults understand that saying no is accepted and that their wish will be respected without any negative consequences.

Be Careful about Raising Expectations

Organisations/staff need to be careful about raising expectations, making false promises, and/or committing to do more than what is possible while working with experiential youth. These children already come from situations where betrayal, deception and deceit have prevailed and as a consequence have undergone physical and mental abuse. Therefore being sensitive to these concerns and

clearly stating the purpose and limitation of their participation helps to minimise raising unrealistic expectations and negative feelings

Don't Overburden Children and Recognise their other Dimensions of Participation

Child/youth participation initiatives need to be age and maturity appropriate. Unrealistic expectations of the children and what can they do put undue pressure on them to perform or say things which they are not comfortable with. The programmes and activities also need to be organised at their convenience, not of the adults – especially if the children have other commitments that they need to fulfil. While children may be deeply committed to having substantive participation in organisational activities and forums, they value opportunities for networking with each other, learning from each others' experiences and having time to enjoy and develop new friendships. It is essential that structures to facilitate these aspects are taken into consideration, together with the programme goals, while planning for these activities.

Being Clear about Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very crucial when working with experiential youth. Ground rules need to be established so that the sharing of

experiences and backgrounds, especially concerning their abuse and exploitation, remains confidential. It is also important to bear in mind that maintaining confidentiality could be dangerous or neglectful if a staff member is confided in or exposed to incidences of abuse and exploitation concerning a young person that may require an immediate response. Hence respecting confidentiality is crucial but it is equally important to understand the limitations of confidentiality in relation to child protection concerns while working with children who have been victims of or are at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Ensuring Safety and Protection

When involving children and young people, you have the responsibility of ensuring their safety and protection as they can often lack parental or legal guardian support. Due to their current or past experiences they are more vulnerable to stigmatisation, discrimination and even potential abuse by other children and adults. Emotionally abused children may at times speak and behave in ways which are not perceived as acceptable or safe; they may even reject routine work. It is not always the responsibility of the child participation staff member alone to manage participation risks but also that of sponsoring organisations,

which must ensure the availability of support systems for the maximum benefit of children who participate. The proper support of qualified staff with adequate child protection training and clear procedures needs to be put in place to be able to provide appropriate support to each participating child.

In the case of media interviews and events, special consideration and guidelines need to be developed concerning the child's participation so that their name, identity and experiences are not disclosed in ways that may bring them more harm and discrimination. Photographs or images of an identifiable child should never be used in any publication to illustrate any aspect of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. This prohibition should stand regardless of consent given by either the child, any adult legally responsible for their care, or any agency which may own the photograph.

Institutionalise Child Protection Policies and Procedures

Child protection policies are an absolute requirement for organisations working with children and youth in general but particularly for those working with vulnerable and experiential youth. Child protection policies guide and inform all activities within an organisation to ensure the highest

standards of professional and personal practice in the work with children, while child protection procedures or guidelines specify the implementation of these policies considering 'the best interest' of the child at all times. Organisations must ensure a shared understanding of the definitions of abuse and exploitation among all staff and that the staff are trained and supported in recognising situations of abuse and exploitation and in providing appropriate responses. All referrals and complaints need to be treated with equal importance and with dignity and respect, which also requires keeping personal information confidential and sharing it only on a 'need-to-know' basis. It is important for organisations to monitor and review their policies and procedures for further improvements. These practices not only protect children from potential abuse and exploitation but also serve as effective safeguards for organisations against potential allegations of abuse and misconduct by their own staff towards the children they are assigned to look after.

Obligation to Address the Consequences of Participation

Organisations/adults need to be well prepared to deal with the consequences resulting from the process or outcome of children's

participation. At times, while attending events outside their local contexts, children may find it difficult to adjust to new surroundings. Under these circumstances the children must be given enough time to adapt and feel comfortable before any demands/pressures are put on them to perform certain requirements. Similarly, the process of participation can result in sudden emotional outbursts or manifestations of disruptive or discouraging behaviour which needs to be addressed in an appropriate manner. After being exposed to a new life and all the attention, children may find it difficult to go back to the lives they are used to or on the other hand they may go back with a sense of superiority among their peers, having experienced “certain privileges and focused attention”. It is important that organisations ensure close supervision, mentoring and good role models to help children adjust to these changes in their lives.

Ensuring Follow Up and Feedback

Often, children and young people, especially those who are isolated and hard to reach, do not receive any feedback on the outcomes of a meeting or a project after it is completed. Their involvement is of paramount importance before and during the event, but once it is over, children often get left behind and forgotten. Organisations involving children

are accountable to provide feedback to all stakeholders, including children, so that they can see the outcomes from their participation and how their inputs have been used. It is important to establish follow-up mechanisms while planning any event or programme involving young people. For example, proper contact information of focal persons/ organisations/young people needs to be maintained, especially in the case of children without parental care, so that timely feedback and follow up can be conducted. Similarly, opportunities for regular participatory monitoring and evaluation needs to be created with young people so that both adults and children can reflect on the processes and outcomes of their participation and learn from these experiences.

Ensuring Equal Opportunity and Non-discrimination

Adequate planning and orientation need to be given to participating children and adults so that experiential youth are not excluded or discriminated against in situations that involve other children despite the good intentions. It is also important to bear in mind that children face many levels of discrimination based on their gender, age, caste, ethnicity, religion, language, socio-economic status and personal experiences. In terms of CSEC it is important

to recognise that both girls and boys can be victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, therefore gender sensitive planning helps to address specific needs and challenges. Similarly, attention needs to be paid in order to provide equal opportunity for participation to all children and not just the ones that are more articulate, confident and willing. Extra care and patience is necessary to facilitate participation of children who have been mentally and physically abused or exploited, and who may take longer to interact with others.

Respecting Boundaries

Children's participation does not mean letting the children always do what they want or agreeing to whatever they say. Children's participation is about the power balance between the adults and children; about negotiating and learning to work together. Within this context, both adults and children need to respect each other and be aware of the limitations and outcomes of their participation. Children need to be told when their demands are unrealistic or when they behave inappropriately and vice versa. Setting up ground rules for behaviour and expectations helps to maintain the attitudes, expectations and behaviour in advance and also provides a space for adults and children to remind each

other of the purpose of their participation.

Support with Adequate Resources

Child and youth participation requires technical and financial commitment. Organisations need to hire competent and skilled staff with adequate experience to work with experiential children and youth. It is also important to conduct police and reference checks of new staff to ensure the safety and protection of the children involved. In some organisations young people also interview the staff members that they will be working with. Aside from technical support, organisations need to allocate an annual budget for CYP programmes. Technical commitment is not enough without the financial backing. Similarly, inviting children to consultations and workshops at national and regional levels can be expensive, especially in ensuring that minimum standards are met in terms of providing each child with an appropriate chaperone, travel support, health insurance, interpretation services, safe accommodation, recreational activities and so on. Resource commitment is especially crucial in the case of experiential children/youth, who benefit from a longer-term process of participation for a positive impact on their lives rather than on one-time or ad hoc activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE ECPAT NETWORK

With all the benefits of involving children/youth in ECPAT's work, meaningful participation of young people has become *essential, not optional*, for greater accountability and credibility of our work. Increasingly, the international community and donors are requesting evidence of children's participation in the work of child rights organisations. Recommendations for the future direction of CYP within ECPAT:

Capacity Building on Child and Youth Participation

- Provide opportunities for sharing experiences and lessons learned on children's participation within the network;
- Create structures and mechanisms for children to participate in policy documents related to CSEC, such as the Optional Protocol, NPAs etc.;
- Ensure that child and youth participation is a priority across programmes and divisions within the network;
- Build the capacities of staff and member organisations, including young people, in understanding and promoting meaningful participation of children;
- Ensure the initiatives on child/youth participation move beyond short-term projects to longer term programming that focuses on making positive personal and organisational changes for direct impact on the lives of children affected by CSEC.

Mobilisation of Children and Youth

- Evaluate and strengthen the role of EIYCAC in making it more representative and effective in mobilising children and youth in each region;
- Provide membership to youth groups within the ECPAT network;
- Focus on strategies to mobilise children and youth at the organisational, national and regional levels for a collective response to CSEC;
- Encourage child and youth participation as an important component of all member organisations within the network;
- Increase the involvement of experiential youth, e.g. YPP and peer support type projects;
- Develop a database of child and youth organisations affiliated with ECPAT groups; and

- Develop a clear strategy for young people's participation in the processes leading up to the 3rd World Congress

Establishing Standards and Procedures on Child Protection and Child Participation

- Operationalise ECPAT's Child and Youth Policy;
- Adopt minimum standards and procedures for children's participation within the ECPAT network;
- Set up monitoring mechanisms and child protection policies and procedures in relation to children's participation; and
- Develop separate participation policies for children and youth in the future, recognising the differences in their capacities and protection needs.

Allocation of Resources to Child and Youth Participation

- Provide technical and financial support to strengthen CYP within the network;
- Increase micro-funds to child- and youth-led projects and programmes;
- Initiate the process in establishing a Global Fund for Young People's Participation against CSEC as per the Yokohama Youth Appeal recommendation; and
- Encourage member organisations to hire qualified staff members to support child and youth participation

CONCLUSION

ECPAT International has made significant progress over the past years in promoting child and youth participation against CSEC. The CYP Participation Survey highlighted the importance given to CYP in the network and the vast scope for young people's participation in the fight against CSEC. Some areas that they are involved in are: consultations and conferences, planning and programming, research and advocacy, fundraising and increasingly, in the governance structures of member organisations. There is also higher recognition that promoting child and youth participation against CSEC requires greater child protection considerations so that it does not cause further harm or risk to participating children. These challenges can be minimised through well-developed and systematic policies and procedures and careful planning and preparation. Longer term programming, rather than ad hoc activities and approaches are needed. There are also clear institutional commitments in each region by a wide ranging group of stakeholders towards establishing policies and procedures to ensure that the process of participation is safe and meaningful to children.

Within the ECPAT network, there is no pre-defined approach to participation of children and young people in the fight against CSEC; instead there are a multitude of examples of innovative methods that have been developed to maximise local opportunities that open avenues for child and youth participation and also overcome some of the cultural, political, socio-economic and geographic challenges that often hinder their participation. These good practices and lessons learned need to be documented and shared in order for “meaningful participation” of young people, especially experiential youth, is promoted as an effective tool against the discrimination and exploitation that they face in their everyday lives. Our experiences show that participation can be a powerful instrument in strengthening resiliency, empowerment and protection of experiential children and youth. Therefore, we must continue to support the capacity building needs of our members and promote CYP as an important rights based strategy for the protection of children against CSEC.

APPENDIX 1:

Child and Youth Participation Policy

Developing the participation of young people in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children is an integral part of ECPAT's work at national, regional and international levels. It strengthens our programming and advocacy and makes us more accountable to the children whom we serve. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child values the child as a citizen, entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms, capable of expressing opinions, participating in life and assuming responsibilities in the family and society. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) shall be the basis of our work while drawing inspiration from and referring to the Yokohama Youth Appeal and the Regional Mid-Term Reviews Youth Declarations at all times of youth participation and ECPAT youth work.

ECPAT International has already made significant progress in creating opportunities for child and youth participation. However, this policy seeks to extend and institutionalize those processes. As such, ECPAT International recognizes that this is an evolving process and one that is complex and

challenging.

ECPAT International sees the participation of children and young people working at a number of different levels in the fight against CSEC:

1. Involving children and young people as key stakeholders in influencing the development and implementation of research, projects, programmes, advocacy and policy
2. Exploring strategies for giving children and young people a greater role within the governance of our organizations by enabling children and young people to take more responsibility for decision making on aspects of our work that directly affect them
3. Creating opportunities for children and young people to access relevant information, provide meaningful opportunities for reflection and action and enhancing their skills and understanding
4. Assisting children and young people to develop and implement their own plans to encourage the participation of other young

people in developing, implementing and evaluating National Plans of Action

In order to ensure that children and young people's participation remains meaningful and ethical, we will make sure that:

- Children and their views will be taken seriously and treated with respect
- Appropriate policies and guidelines will be introduced to protect children and minimize any risks from their participation in our work
- We encourage the participation of experiential children and youth while taking into consideration additional protection that may be required to safeguard their participation
- Children and young people directly involved in our work benefit from the process
- Children and young people are not over-burdened by the responsibility of their involvement in their work and that it does not create difficulties for them either in the short or long term
- Participation is voluntary
- Identification processes for child and youth participation are fair and representative of the interests and needs of the children and young people they are working on behalf of.

- Where possible we will also work with children who are involved in initiatives, activities or child led organizations through which they are, in turn, in touch with other networks of children.
- We encourage youth organizations to apply for ECPAT membership
- A child and youth friendly environment is fostered to enable children and young people to understand policies, processes, projects etc. Where necessary, training, age-appropriate and accessible information will be provided the better to empower children and young people to plan an effective role in combating CSEC
- Those involved in the care and protection of children understand the rights of children as social participants. We will also endeavour to influence all agencies (local government, national governments, international institutions, public bodies, voluntary agencies etc.) in ways of listening to, responding to and involving children and young people
- We report back to children and young people on what has been achieved and how their views informed our work

ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC)

ECPAT International has established a Child and Youth Action Committee (EICYAC)

whose role is to form a strong network of children and young people against CSEC that can participate in ECPAT's work on a local, national, regional and international level. The EICYAC aims to ensure child and youth participation in the structures and activities of ECPAT International, by linking up with child and youth networks around the world in the fight against CSEC, providing opportunities for children and young people to contribute to implementing the Agenda for Action against CSEC, and by encouraging and facilitating the involvement of children and youth who have experienced CSEC as well as those at risk. An EICYAC representative is also elected as a full member of the ECPAT International Board. This young person represents the link between the ECPAT youth network, the EICYAC and the board of ECPAT.

Local Context

Each ECPAT member organization needs to be able to determine the level and approach to be adopted in integrating child and youth participation within their work. There is no pre-defined approach which can be applied

globally. The process must be informed by:

- The cultural and political environment including attitudes towards children, political stability, levels of conflict and the particular types of programmes being managed.
- Social, economic and geographic factors such as diversity within the population, size of country, resources available etc.
- Nature of the member's programme and any risks or dangers to children by being involved.
- An assessment of how the child and youth participation would contribute the work being done and how the children and young people participating would reciprocally benefit from their involvement.

APPENDIX 2:

Child Protection Policy

BACKGROUND

ECPAT International is a child rights organisation committed to combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT believes that every child has a right to a happy childhood that is free from exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect. It also believes that denial of the rights of children can never be acceptable and subject to justification.

ECPAT is fully committed to protect children's rights to be protected from all forms of exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect, both physically and emotionally as spelt out in international instruments and standards to protect children.

ECPAT International also recognises that it has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that children are protected from exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect from its staff members, Board members, partners, volunteers, interns, consultants and other representatives, within and outside the ECPAT programmes – directly or indirectly.

ECPAT International provides resources and support to groups working directly with young people, many of whom are from vulnerable or marginalized groups, live or have lived in difficult circumstances, and/or at risk.

ECPAT works to protect children from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation with its network members and partner organisations. Within or outside the domain of work, people associated with ECPAT International come in contact with children in different settings.

Children can be potentially subject to exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect in families, communities, institutions, organisations, private places, public places by various circumstances by variety of people, including people associated with ECPAT International. In order to address this issue, this Child Protection Policy has been developed.

OBJECTIVES

This Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional and personal practice

to do no harm to the children who come in contact with the people associated with the organisation, both inside and outside the work environment.

SCOPE

The ECPAT International Child Protection Policy is prepared to ensure that the ECPAT International staff members, Board members, partners, volunteers, interns, consultants – or anyone acting as a representative of ECPAT – will do no harm to children who come in their contact within or outside their work.

This Policy reiterates ECPAT International's commitment to protect children through its programme interventions as well as through its organisational policy to protect children with whom it comes into contact.

This Child Protection Policy is supported by clear guidelines on how it needs to be implemented within the different types of membership organizations within our network.

This Policy deals with the protection of children as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children (people under 18 years of age).

The ECPAT International Child Protection Policy aims to protect children from any form of exploitation, abuse, violence and neglect by

individuals, institutions or processes which directly or indirectly harms or facilitates to harm children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. This Child Protection Policy protects children by preventing:

- hitting, physically assaulting or physically abusing children
- any relationships with children which are exploitative, abusive or put children at risk of abuse
- developing sexual relationships with children
- employing children in contravention of ILO Convention 138 and 182
- putting children in harmful or potentially harmful situations

Our understanding of child abuse and exploitation includes, but is not limited to:

Child Pornography: Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or representation of the sexual parts of a child, the dominant characteristic of which is depiction for a sexual purpose. *(Source: Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.)*

It can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes

and computer disks or files. Generally speaking there are two categories of pornography: soft core which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children and hard core which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation. (Source: ECPAT International)

Child Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse of children can be defined as the contact or interaction between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling or person in a position of authority, such as a parent or caretaker) where the child is used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the will of the child, using force, trickery, bribes, threats or pressure. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. These activities may include looking at pornographic materials, watching sexual acts, taking part in the production of pornography or being encouraged to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Commercial sexual exploitation of children consists of practices that are demeaning, degrading and often life

threatening to children. There are three primary and interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children: prostitution, pornography, and trafficking for sexual purposes. Other forms of sexual exploitation of children include child sex tourism, child marriages and forced marriages. (Source: *Questions and Answers about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*. ECPAT International, Thailand, 2001)

Discrimination: Biased or prejudiced in favour of, or against the children.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed in children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. (Source: Lambeth College, September 2004)

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious

impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development.

Physical Abuse: It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as <fictitious illness by proxy> or <Munchausen's syndrome by proxy>. (Source: *Lambeth College, September 2004*)

Violence: Physical, psychological (psychosocial), and sexual violence to children through abuse, neglect or exploitation, as acts of commission or omission in direct or indirect forms, that endanger or harm the child's dignity, physical, psychological, or social status, or development. (Source: *The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence, 2005*)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Awareness

For effective implementation of the Policy, it needs to be understood accurately by all. ECPAT International will conduct a series of briefings for its staff members, Board

members, partners, volunteers, interns, consultants and other representatives. ECPAT will make all people associated with it aware of the Child Protection Policy through training, induction and briefing.

Prevention

As a prevention measure children's rights to protection will be safeguarded at all times through appropriate management practices, which includes policies and procedures for recruitment of staff and the election of ECPAT representatives; risk assessments and management plans; adequate supervision of children in our care or with whom we have contact with; and policy for appropriate use of information technology (such as email, mobile phones, internet).

Reporting

Clear steps and guidelines on reporting the incidences violating the Codes will be established as well as actions to be taken.

Responding

ECPAT staff members, Board members, partners, volunteers, interns, consultants – or anyone acting as a representative of ECPAT will ensure that positive action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise. ECPAT International takes seriously any concerns raised and will support children,

staff or adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns. ECPAT will act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent investigation. All responses will be guided by the principle of 'best interests of the child'.

Disciplinary Actions

Non-compliance with the above shall be taken seriously. This will involve a thorough investigation and referral of cases to the

police and/or social services if national or international child rights laws have been violated.

Monitoring

All managers and Board members within ECPAT member groups are responsible for ensuring that the intentions of ECPAT International in relation to safeguarding children are taking place and to monitor and evaluate action and effectiveness.

APPENDIX 3:

CYP Participation Questionnaire

CHILD and YOUTH PARTICIPATION SURVEY

1) Does your country file reports to the Convention of Child Rights Committee?

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

2) Does your country file alternative reports (shadow) by NGOs to the Convention of Child Rights Committee?

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

3) Does your country file alternative reports by child and youth groups to the Convention of Child Rights Committee?

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

4) Does the National Plan of Action for your country mention children and youth participation?

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

5) A-Does it mention the youth appeal adopted in Yokohama?

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

B- IF yes, please list the recommendations put forward in the NPA for the participation of children and young people (CYP). Also include the areas in which they are involved?

C- Do you feel that the recommendations for children and youth participation sufficiently meet the expectations of the participatory rights of a child as mentioned in the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Please explain your answer.

YES

NO

NOT AWARE

D-Are there any other recommendations you would suggest for inclusion in the National Plan of Action to ensure child and youth participation?

E- Are there any funds allotted for youth/children in the National Plan of Action??

YES NO NOT AWARE

6) A- Does your country have a National Children's Commission?

YES NO NOT AWARE

B- Are children part of the Commission?

YES NO NOT AWARE

7) Does your country have a National Children's Task Force?

YES NO NOT AWARE

What are the objectives of the Task Force and of the Children's Commission?

8) A-Has your country ever had a national consultation for children/youth on CSEC?

YES NO NOT AWARE

B-If yes, please mention the outcomes, as well when and where the consultation was held. How often is the consultation held?

9) A-Did your region have a consultation for children/youth on CSEC?

YES NO NOT AWARE

B-If yes, please mention the outcomes, as well when and where was the consultation was held.

10) Did any youth from your country participate at the 1st World Congress in Stockholm?

YES NO NOT AWARE

Please mention how many youth participated. If possible, provide contact details of those who can be reached.

- 11) Did any youth from your country participate at the 2nd World Congress in Yokohama?
YES NO NOT AWARE

Please mention how many youth participated. If possible, provide contact details of those who can be reached.

- 12) Did your region have a Mid-Term Review Meeting for the Yokohama Declaration?
YES NO NOT AWARE

- 13) Did children and young people participate in the MTR?
YES NO NOT AWARE

- 14) Did the children and young people come out with their own declaration or appeal?
YES NO NOT AWARE

- 15) What impacts/outcomes do you think came from the young people's declaration at the MTR? Please elaborate.

-
- 16) Does the follow-up process of the MTR involve children and young people?
YES NO NOT AWARE

- 17) What is the primary area of your organisation's work?

- 18) Does your organisation have children and young people involved in any capacity?
YES NO NOT AWARE

Age group of children involved _____ years to _____ years

Age group of youth involved _____ years to _____ years

Please list and explain in detail the various projects/programmes your organisation is conducting that involves children and youth:

Governance (Board, Youth Council), Training/Facilitation, Youth Group/Clubs, Research, Programme (Peer Counseling, Rescue Operations, Prevention, Fund Raising etc.) , Consultation/ Conferences, Policy and Advocacy, Others

19) Do you include the views and inputs from children/youth in all programmes involving them?
 YES NO NOT AWARE

20) Does your organisation work with the following children/youth?
 Children at risk, Rescued children, Experiential youth,
 Others (please mention)

21) Does your organisation have:
 Budgetary provisions for CYP YES NO
 Child Protection Policy YES NO
 Children and Youth Participation Policy YES NO

22) Does your organisation intend to start any new projects/programmes with children and young people?
 YES NO NOT AWARE

23) In which area do you think participation of children and young people is most effective?
 Why?

24) In which area do you think the participation of children and young people is most challenging? Why?

25) Did any child/youth from your organisation attend any national, regional or global consultations other than your own consultation/meeting?
 YES NO NOT AWARE

26) Are these children/youth consulted or involved in follow up of any of these meetings/ consultations?
 YES NO NOT AWARE

27) How do you think the ECPAT network and groups could improve/strengthen their child and youth participation in the fight against CSEC?

28) Can you list the capacity building needs within your organisation/country on child and youth participation against CSEC?

29) Are you aware of ECPAT's Child Protection Policy?

AWARE

NOT AWARE

30) Are you aware of ECPAT's Child and Youth Participation Policy?

AWARE

NOT AWARE

31) What do you think are the important child protection issues in working with CSEC?

32) Are you aware of any child and youth related publications from your region/organisation?

ECPAT GROUP NAME:

COUNTRY:

CONTACT PERSON:

APPENDIX 4:

Minimum Standards on Children's Participation in Consultations

The minimum standards on consulting with children were developed and piloted in the preparations and related processes for the East Asia Pacific Regional Consultations for the UN Study on Violence against Children in 2005.³⁹ The minimum standards are being published by EAP Inter-Agency Group on Children's Participation consisting of: ECPAT International, Knowing Children, Save the Children, Plan International, UNICEF EAPRO and World Vision International.

The standards are designed to be relevant in the different country contexts.

What are the minimum standards?

They are statements that describe the minimum expectations of the ways in which adults and children should behave and operate at consultative events. Minimum standards help to improve the quality of children's participation, maintain consistency and adherence and also minimise potential abuse and exploitation in the process of participation of children.

Why do we need minimum standards?

Participation is a right. These minimum standards are based on children's rights as outlined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*:

- Children have the right to be listened to, to freely express their views on all matters that affect them, and the right to freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information.
- Participation should promote the best interests of the child and enhance the personal development of each child.
- All children have equal rights to participation without discrimination.
- All children have the right to be protected from manipulation, violence, abuse and exploitation.

Who are they for?

1. Adults who are consulting with children and young people for national/regional events, including sending children to participate in national/regional consultations; and organising national/regional events with children

2. Children and youth who are facilitating the involvement of other children in relation to the event.
3. Supporting adults (facilitators, interpreters, administration staff, etc.)
4. Children who are participants in the consultation.

About the standards

The standards are a step-by-step guide outlining which standards need to be met before, during and after a consultation.

Alongside each standard is a list of relevant guidelines or procedures that should help to implement the standard as well as the principle of the participation most closely related to it.

The minimum standards will be available on the ECPAT International website and will also be available in hard copy at the Secretariat.

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ECPAT International

328/1 Phayathai Road,
Ratchathewi
Bangkok 10400
THAILAND

Tel: +66 2 215 3388, + 66 2 611 0972

Fax: +66 2 215 8272

Email: info@ecpat.net, media@ecpat.net

Website: www.ecpat.net