



Promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence



Save the Children
Sweden

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY	6
PRESENTATION	7
INTRODUCTION	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	13
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:	28
PROMOTION OF PROTAGONIST AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE	
1. Participation, citizenship and rights	28
2. Brief contextualisation of three forms of violence against children and adolescents	29
3. International legal framework regarding the right of the children to participation	33
3.1 The right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings	34
3.2 The right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them	35
4. Participation of children and adolescents and the Government	36
5. Protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents	38
5.1 Protagonist participation	39
5.1.1 Dignity	40
5.1.2 Change in the power relations	40
5.1.3 New model of society	42
5.1.4 Empowerment	42
5.1.5 Advocacy	43
5.1.6 Protagonist process	44
5.2 Meaningful participation	45
5.2.1 Levels of children and adolescents' participation	45
5.2.2 Seven standards for children and adolescents' participation	46
6. Importance of the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence	49
7. Synergy of two concepts: participation that promotes (self) protection	49
8. Participation spaces, situations, mechanisms and methodologies	51
8.1 Participation spaces	51
8.1.1 Family and neighbourhood	51
8.1.2 The school	52
8.1.3 The community (international, national, regional, local)	54

8.2	Participation of children and adolescents according to their situation	55
8.2.1	Sexual exploitation and abuse	55
8.2.2	Organised armed violence	57
8.2.3	Physical and humiliating punishment	59
8.3	Basic participation mechanisms for children and adolescents	60
8.3.1	General benefits of the children and adolescents' participation in a child-led organisation	61
8.3.2	Examples that demonstrate that children and adolescents' participation in child-led organisations promotes the fulfilment of other rights	62
8.3.3	Group and protagonist experience of children and adolescents allows breaking cycles of violence	62
8.3.4	Elements to be considered in order to create child-led organisations	63
8.4	Methodologies for the participation of children and adolescents	64
9.	Ideal profile of the chaperone accompanying children and adolescents exposed to violence in their participation	65
10.	Obstacles for participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence	67
10.1	Obstacles for participation of children and adolescents in general	68
10.2	Children and adolescents exposed to violence also face particular obstacles for their protagonism	69
10.2.1	Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment	69
10.2.2	Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse	70
10.2.3	Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence	71
11.	Interventions to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence	72
11.1	Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment	73
11.2	Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse	74
11.3	Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence	75
12.	Interventions found in the bibliographic resources to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence	76
12.1	Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment	77
12.2	Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse	78

12.3 Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence	79
13. Experiences in promoting the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence	79
13.1 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence in general	80
13.2 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment	80
13.3 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse	81
13.4 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence	82
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	94
APPENDIXES	100
APPENDIX 1:	
Key points of the international legal framework for cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and organised armed violence	100
APPENDIX 2:	
Views of children and adolescents exposed to violence about aspects of protagonist participation	104
APPENDIX 3:	
Empowerment and advocacy experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence who participated in workshops	107
APPENDIX 4:	
Meaningful participation experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence collected during workshops	110
APPENDIX 5:	
Strategic planning to ensure financial, political, institutional and social sustainability of child-led organisations	112
APPENDIX 6:	
Obstacles for participation in general and in the three forms of violence defined by children and adolescents found in bibliographic resources	113
APPENDIX 7:	
Interventions	118
APPENDIX 8:	
Good practices for promoting participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence in general and to the three forms of violence	130
APPENDIX 9:	
Gathering document	138
APPENDIX 10:	
Resources for the study and methodology	139

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
DEMUNA	Municipal Defence Office of the Child and Adolescent
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
MOLACNATs	Latin American and Caribbean Movement of Working Children and Adolescents
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, PHYSICAL AND HUMILIATING PUNISHMENT, AND ORGANISED ARMED VIOLENCE: We have used the term “children and adolescents exposed to violence” in the study to refer to children and adolescents that may suffer violence as well as to those who are currently suffering it. Therefore, this category includes children and adolescents who need prevention and those who need assistance. When we want to refer to one particular group, we will specify children and adolescents who are victims or children and adolescents who are at risk.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE: We use this term to group the children and adolescents who suffer sexual abuse and those who suffer sexual abuse and exploitation at the same time. The study is mainly focused on children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation. If we want to refer to one of the two groups, we will specify it by using child sexual abuse (CSA) or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The study does not try to extend in the problem of children and adolescents who only suffer from sexual abuse.

PRESENTATION

Protection and participation are two fundamental principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which group specific rights. On one hand, the rights related to the protection of children appeal to the common nature of this life stage in which it is necessary to provide special care and assistance, so that children and adolescents may develop properly. On the other hand, the right to participation recognises children's capacity to comment, to express themselves and to be taken into account, according to their personal evolution, on all matters affecting them.

After 18 years of the CRC declaration and its progressive and almost total ratification by almost all the States in the world, we see progress in the dissemination of the rights of the child in society, although with less success in its implementation. Sadly, the progress in science and technology which characterises the modern world does not have an appropriate correlate regarding children protection. On the contrary, in recent years, violence in its different forms has increased, and has shown new ways of aggression towards children and adolescents, especially against those who face exclusion situations caused by economic, social, political and cultural reasons.

In this context, it is good to recognise that different sectors of society are concerned about the struggle against violence affecting children and about reverting this situation. Among other factors, a greater participation is necessary from all levels, especially that of children and adolescents, as shown by the UN Study on Violence against Children and the actions taken within this framework. Other initiatives are being taken, on a daily and regular basis, in different spaces convened by the State as well as by the civil society.

Save the Children Sweden applies the rights-based approach in its task; for this reason, it promotes and supports children's participation as a fundamental strategy that is present in all its programmes, projects, and activities carried out directly or along with its partner organisations and other stakeholders. On this matter, we have detected little or weak participation of children in risk situation or who are being affected by violence. Therefore, it is necessary to make these problems visible and that the affected people may give their opinion and be taken into account in the decision-making process that affect them, with the appropriate care and protection that they deserve.

In order to answer two questions: "How can children and adolescents exercise their right to participate in direct strategies of prevention from all forms of violence?, and How can the children and adolescents be involved in the design of strategies and interventions but, at the same time, without being exposed or re-victimised and/or stigmatised?", Save the Children Sweden presents the result of a research that has finished in the elaboration of a conceptual framework referring to the promotion of the protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence. This study deals with the situation of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and organised armed violence. It is worth mentioning that children and adolescents have participated in the different stages of this study.

We hope this study will be a contribution in the fight against violence towards children, especially due to the participation that the children and adolescents themselves may exercise to change this situation. They give us the possibility of living in a fairer and more harmonious world, where respect to dignity and all individuals' rights become a reality.

Save the Children Sweden

INTRODUCTION

This study is the first stage of a research intended to respond two final questions:

1. How can children and adolescents exert their right to participate in direct prevention strategies for all forms of violence?
2. How can the children and adolescents who have suffered some kind of violence be involved in the design of strategies and interventions, and at the same time, how can they be prevented from becoming exposed or re-victimised and/or stigmatised?

The subjects of this study are children and adolescents in general and their needs to participate in the prevention of physical and humiliating punishment, children and adolescents who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and children and adolescents involved in organised armed violence.

This study proposes the following starting objectives:

1. Preparing a conceptual framework to understand children's participation in cases of children and adolescents at risk of violence, with an emphasis on the cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence.
2. Gathering existing information at regional and global level in order to analyse the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence¹ and identify the gaps and difficulties from a right-based approach.

However, the study has widened the scope of the questions and has adopted the title "Promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence". It involves a participation that goes beyond a mere participation in strategies and intervention in development projects in order to cover the whole society.

In the second phase of the study, we intend to build a methodology and instruments to promote the participation of children and adolescents in assistance and prevention programmes and projects of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and organised armed violence attention under the framework of protection stated by the CRC.

In an Excel page attached to this document, we have compiled all information related to participation and violence and found in bibliographic resources. This file has an option to classify existing documentation and allows specific searches by topic, year, author, and so on.

During the compilation, we have seen that there is not much information combining children and adolescents' participation with the protection against violence. Only in the case of physical and

¹ We have used the phrase "children and adolescents exposed to violence" in the study to refer to children and adolescents who are, or are at risk of, suffering violence. This category covers, therefore, children and adolescents who need prevention and those ones who need assistance.

humiliating punishment there is more documentation available. For this reason, we had considered necessary to organise some workshops to gather information from primary sources for this study.

In this context, we gathered primary information about the participation of children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence during an international seminar where young people exposed to organised armed violence took part. These youths and children are supported by Luta pela Paz, an organisation from Rio de Janeiro. In Lima, two workshops were organised with the Commission against Punishment and Vichama —both organisations work on physical and humiliating punishment with the children and adolescents. In Bogota and Cartagena, we developed two workshops with young people involved with Ecpat International² through the NGO Renacer. They gave an opinion on the conceptual framework and made contributions by indicating some obstacles that prevent their participation and strategies to promote it. They also specified an ideal profile of the chaperone. The first systematisation of the collected data appears in the appendixes of this study.

The study links, first of all, the ideas of participation, citizenship, government and rights, and analyzes the concept of participation within the regulatory framework of the Convention. It also briefly describes the three ways of violence that children and adolescents suffer, which are part of the study.

We explain then the terms “protagonist participation” and “meaningful participation” in order to build the conceptual framework. We link these terms with the problems of children and adolescents exposed to violence. We also mention the paradigm shock between the protagonist participation and the one of the protection and the synergy of both concepts: a participation that promotes (self) protection.

Following with the conceptual framework, we distinguish spaces, situations, mechanisms and methodologies of participation, and analyze their special features in the case of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence based on the obstacles for the protagonist participation that the children and adolescents exposed to violence undergo.

The study emphasises the child-led organisation as a real mechanism of protagonist participation that manage to arouse a virtuous protagonist process, and shows that the group and protagonist experience of children and adolescents allows breaking cycles of violence like no other mechanism.

Then an ideal profile of a chaperone the children and adolescents in its protagonist participation in the three cases of violence is created, based on the information gathered during the workshops.

Subsequently, we elaborate an analysis of different obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence, differentiating the physical and humiliating punishment, sexual

² ECPAT is a network of organisations and individuals who work together to eradicate the child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence. The possible interventions and experiences existing to promote the participation of children and adolescents in these situations of violence are also analysed.

As a final point, we formulate some conclusions, recommendations and strategies for the promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence that should answer to the key questions of the study.

The entire document was submitted to a validation by the children and adolescents who participated in the workshops, as well as by several specialists in the issue of participation. However, the reactions have been limited.

We believe that the study offers an enough structured and understandable conceptual framework for children and adolescents as well as for adults, and contains a compilation of the most important documentation related to participation and violence that exists, apart from primary sources that may clarify the protagonist participation in the cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence. The study results should be used to develop specific methodologies to promote the participation of children and adolescents in violence situations.

This study is, however, the start of a research field that is still unexplored. We hope it will raise the interest of experts in children's rights as well as of children and adolescents who have a position in the child-led organisations in order to research the issues of participation and violence.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participation, citizenship, government and rights

Participation is related to citizenship, government and rights. Government refers to decision making and citizenship, to the meaningful and comprehensive participation in public discussion and in decision making. Participation is a basic right for the fulfilment of the other rights, which in turn are fundamental guarantees for the well-being of a person and of society as a whole.

Children and adolescents are subjects of rights and their participation is a continuous process whereby they express themselves and get actively involved in decision making on those issues that affect them. From a systematic and dynamic point of view, participation is one of the four basic rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, together with the rights to non-discrimination, the right to life, to development, and to be protected, all of which are interrelated.

The Government is the primary duty bearer of the rights of the child although parents, NGOs, companies and children and adolescents themselves are duty bearers as well.

Promoting children's and adolescents' rights also means promoting their citizenship and their well-being.

Brief contextualisation of three forms of violence against children and adolescents

Physical and humiliating punishment is a form of violence against children and adolescents and it is a violation of their right to dignity and physical integrity. This violation increases violence within society and makes it seem legitimate before the eyes of the coming generations. Children and adolescents are deprived of their full citizenship when society accepts beatings as a valid rearing method for its smallest and most vulnerable members. Physical and humiliating punishment is an abuse of power and parents, teachers and caregivers must learn to exert their authority over children and adolescents by using non-violent methods and favouring a positive rearing. This form of violence has serious physical, psychological and social consequences for the affected children and adolescents.

Sexual exploitation and abuse can be broken down into commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse (CSA). Although the first one is a sub category of child sexual abuse, both forms imply a physical and psychological intrusion of the victim, as well as a rupture of the trust, generating deep consequences, hard to overcome.

Child sexual abuse is one of the worst forms of violation of the rights of the child, and can equally cause irreversible physical and psychological damage, even death. Children and adolescents can suffer from child sexual abuse within their family and within their local community, as well as from

their peers. Girls are more vulnerable than boys and therefore it is important to consider gender aspects when drafting interventions to fight against this kind of violation.

Children and adolescents suffer from commercial sexual exploitation of children through trafficking in children, sexual tourism, pornography, and sex industry. They also suffer from abuse and exploitation during wars and as refugees, in their education environment, at work, in the streets, in religious environments, when performing leisure activities, in prisons and even in care and protection centres.

Other especially vulnerable groups to child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children are children and adolescents with disabilities and particularly children and adolescents with hearing disabilities because this limitation in their communications skills is also a limitation to file a complaint. Likewise, poor children and adolescents are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation as an exchange for economic compensation. Sexually exploited children and adolescents also suffer from other kinds of violence by pimps and customers. A determining factor in the child sexual abuse phenomenon is the culture of society, for it justifies abuse and makes it difficult to file formal complaints in contexts of family honour, virginity, early marriages, etc.

Finally, the origin of youth organisations with violent traits is the result of a complex interaction of different factors. These organisations seem to proliferate in those places where the social order has been disintegrated and where there are no alternative forms of shared cultural behaviour. Children and adolescents involved in organised armed violence witness torture and murder, which cause insomnia, nightmares, traumas, constant terror and fear; moreover, it also generates a situation where they become used to violence. They tend to have a fatalist attitude towards their own lives, which leads them to live a life away from moral standards, with alcohol and drug abuse, sex, weapons, parties and adrenaline.

International legal framework

Although the word “participation” does not appear as such in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12 determines, on the one hand, the right of children and adolescents to freely express their opinion with respect to all the issues concerning them; and on the other hand, the right to be heard in legal or administrative procedures affecting them. This second declaration is very important in the case of organised armed violence, given that children and adolescents involved in it are in constant conflict with the law.

There are other articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child referring to the exercise of the right to participation; these are articles 5, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 29, 31 and 40.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child should be considered as an organic document which content is being constantly interpreted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and is complemented with other legal instruments.

Cases of physical and humiliating punishment and sexual exploitation and abuse —the latter receive plenty of attention in a Facultative Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child³ — are well defined and have been open to debate in different fora. The only case which still has not received the attention it deserves is organised armed violence and there is no explicit reference to it in the Convention. Only the Riad Guidelines, which address the prevention of juvenile delinquency, highlight important participatory aspects for children and adolescents in conflict with the law.

Children and adolescents protagonist and meaningful participation

The title of this paper is "Promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence". During the workshops carried out for this research, we related protagonist participation with elements such as dignity, the change in power relations, the new model of society, empowerment and advocacy. On the other hand, we reached the conclusion that meaningful participation is also related to quality standards.

Dignity is a fundamental right and an intrinsic value of the person, who holds it as result of its human condition. The respect for the dignity of children and adolescents means listening to them and facilitating their participation when making decisions that affect them, and thus allowing them to live a decent life.

Through protagonist participation, children and adolescents can change the unequal power relation existing between them and adults. In agreement with the gender theory, we aim at turning this relation based in *power over* —which implies domination— towards more positive forms of power such as *power for*, *power to*, and *power with*. This last one reflects the exercise of shared power with adults.

In the new model of society to which participation is aimed at, there must be an equal or shared power relation between children and adolescents and adults, in order for them to fully exert their rights as citizens and to live a decent life.

On the other hand, empowerment is the impact which protagonist participation has in the personal development of children and adolescents. It is related with self-esteem, autonomy, social skills, identity, solidarity, safety, and dignity. Children and adolescents use external elements or develop other intrinsic ones in order to promote their efficient and effective performance in different participation spaces. Empowerment allows them to identify their weaknesses in order to accept them and their potentials in order to develop them in an optimum manner.

Advocacy refers to the social impact of protagonist participation experiences. It is related to a positive visibility, the inclusion of children and adolescents in institutions and organisations, government support to child initiatives, a different inter-generation communication and the development of

³ Facultative Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and the Use of Children in Pornography.

participation mechanisms in decision making. Advocacy can take place both in the family and at the level of national or international policies. This element is essential for children and adolescents to transform power relations and build up a society in which they can exert their rights as citizens. Likewise, political advocacy includes the design of proposals demanding rights and lobbying, the elimination of policies affecting children, public monitoring and the establishment of networks to achieve a greater impact. It is also important to empower and raise awareness on adults in order to take into consideration the opinions of children and adolescents when designing child policies.

Empowerment and advocacy are interdependent and mutually reinforcing given that in order to achieve advocacy, it is necessary to have empowered persons, and in order to facilitate empowerment it is necessary to carry out advocacy work. Each advocacy action also has empowerment effects on children and adolescents. Through this interdependence, it is possible to achieve a shift in power relations in order for children and adolescents to gain full citizenship. It is necessary that the participation mechanisms ensure a combination of both processes to achieve this protagonism.⁴

Along with protagonist participation it is important to deal with quality standards that make participation significant. Besides children and adolescents pseudo forms of participation, such as manipulated, ornamental or symbolic participation, there are different levels of genuine participation according to the degree of independence children and adolescents have in decision making and in the way they cooperate with adults. However, due to the psychological effects of violence experiences, it is very likely that adults should start the children's participation process in order to gradually give them more autonomy.⁵

Save the Children has developed seven quality standards for children's participation which were considered for the preparation of this paper:

1. An ethical approach of transparency, honesty and responsibility.
2. Children adequate and relevant participation.
3. An enabling and friendly environment for children.
4. Equal opportunities.
5. Effective and trustworthy working staff.
6. Ensured safety and protection of children for their participation.
7. Ensured follow-up and evaluation.

The application of these standards in the work carried out with children and adolescents exposed to violence means considering important aspects such as protection, personal well-being of children and adolescents, handling conflictive objectives between adults and children and adolescents, the child's informed consent, confidentiality and trust, clarity with respect to the activity, an eventual compensation for their participation, their inclusion and the empowering effect.

4 Result of the workshops carried out with children and adolescents.

5 Idem.

The participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence is important because in this way they can explain the complexity of their experiences, they can feel safer to protect themselves and to break their silence, state their problems to society and propose disciplinary measures for the aggressors.

Protagonism and protection are not contradictory, for the greater the protagonism, the better position children and adolescents will have to protect themselves and their peers, and to be part of their community development. An empowering participation also promotes protection and goes beyond, to turn children and adolescents into social subjects. However, in order for this participation to be meaningful it is necessary not to expose children and adolescents to greater risk situations. That is why the skill of the chaperone is a key issue to support children and adolescents in their protagonist process—but at the same time, the chaperone must protect the child against any risks during this process.

Participation spaces, situations, mechanisms and methodologies

This paper distinguishes participation spaces, situations, mechanisms and methodologies. Participation as a right is a social relationship and the spaces mark the social relationships taking place within them. This is all about spaces where personality is built, where there is an exercise and development of protagonism. However, child participation is still only present in spaces as a sort of struggle, and not as a daily exercise. Therefore, in order to have an impact in those spaces, it is necessary to define all the actors involved therein.

Domestic violence is difficult to detect and to solve due to the “private” nature within this space [the family]. Besides disturbing the child’s participation, domestic violence makes the formation of a leading personality difficult and facilitates the reproduction of authoritarian and violent personalities in children and adolescents. Therefore, the importance of parental education is obvious regarding the exercise of shared power within the family and in other spaces. The neighbourhood is also an important social interrelation space, where culture is produced and where the psychosocial development of children and adolescents occur given that many values are formed within that circle.

The school is the ideal place to orient the young ones to build a community of people that respect each other and which recognises them as subjects of rights. In several countries, there are institutionalised mechanisms for school participation at different levels, and which sometimes present structures that go beyond the school community. Through these mechanisms, children and adolescents can promote an education which will allow them to grow as subjects of rights. They can also develop their own personal life project, their skills and values, they can experience tolerance, conflict resolution, democracy and child participation; they can foster a more equal child-adult and child-child relation and can have some impact in the school curricula in order to fight against discrimination, abuse and physical and humiliating punishment at school. Training of teachers in children’s rights and in abilities to follow up on their students in their protagonism is also a key aspect.

Participation of children and adolescents within the community —at a local, national, regional and international level— is also important to become full citizens. In 2006, the Committee for the Rights of the Child urged Member States⁶ to promote the institutionalisation of the participation of children and adolescents in policies and resource allocation for them, the appointment of a sort of Child Rights Ombudsman accessible for children and adolescents; their participation in national action plans in favour of childhood, in the assessment of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the review of the laws that affect them; child media initiatives; the creation of children and adolescents parliaments with decision power and the fostering of organisations led by children.

The participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence changes according to the situation, which defines if prevention or attention strategies will be necessary. In the case of organised armed violence, it has to do with restoration rather than attention. In the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence we noticed that most of the risk factors in prevention for children and adolescents are wilful violations of their rights, and that, within our conceptual model, are also obstacles for their protagonist participation. Sometimes, when we try to achieve a greater participation (less exclusion) these children and adolescents end up being victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence. Despite this new situation of violation of (other) rights, children and adolescents see some or their initial needs satisfied. With respect to attention, when we offer children and adolescents a way out of sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence, it is important to grant them access to a life style clearly different than their initial one, a context where the exercise of their rights as citizens is respected and where a great part of their vulnerability is eliminated.

Children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence are stigmatised by the very society which initially excluded them. This makes their protagonist participation even harder. In the case of organised armed violence, there are many youths that are imprisoned — this has been directly translated into non-citizenship participation. In this case, we propose restorative justice as the best means to rescue them as citizens and to transform the problem into an opportunity for the youths to make the best of their human condition.

From the protagonist participation point of view, it is important that children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse are not considered responsible for their situation, nor that children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence are deemed as aggressors. Nonetheless, they cannot be considered as victims who have not made any decisions before reaching the exploitation situation. It is necessary to consider them as subjects of rights who, through protagonist participation, are able to decide not to become members of a gang or to leave the sexual exploitation situation. The solution consists on providing them with access to a decent life project, with possibilities to take part in society as full citizens and to exert their rights.

Physical and humiliating punishment is not usually a consequence of a seeking a way out of a violation of rights. It is more a result of a child rearing culture which repeats itself generation after generation. Nevertheless, with certain poverty situations increasing the stress within the family, the possibilities of

⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd Session. Geneva, September 11-29, 2006.

children becoming victims of physical and humiliating punishment increase. Part of this culture makes children and adolescents with disabilities become more vulnerable. In terms of their participation, this violence circle can be broken by deleting cultural guidelines through the empowerment of children and adolescents over their rights and through strategies that increase their self-esteem. This will help them both to protect themselves and to have some advocate on the mindset of adults in order to promote laws to explicitly forbid physical and humiliating punishment. Doubtlessly, it is necessary to train adults so they can adopt non-violent forms of child rearing.

Basic participation mechanisms

The two basic participation mechanisms for children and adolescents we have distinguished are:

- The establishment of consultation and action systems of children and adolescents within specific programmes/services or advocacy strategies.
- The participation of children and adolescents in organisations led by them and their inclusion as partners of institutions led by adults for the design and implementation of policies.

The first mechanism is more broadly used. There are child participation indicators in projects we have used for our conceptual framework.

The second mechanism implies a greater level of participation than the first one and is of relevant importance for children and adolescents exposed to violence given that their participation in organisations led by children and adolescents has shown to promote the fulfilment of other rights.⁷ Besides, the group experience and protagonism of children and adolescents will allow to put an end to violence cycles.⁸

The participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence in organisations led by children and adolescents⁹ has an important psychological effect when they discover that others share their same emotions and experiences. In organisations led by children and adolescents, they may practice behaviours, new social skills and accept differences, may be creative and reflexive; they can build up an identity to include others, etc. Their participation in an organisation led by children and adolescents allows a critical thought about their reality and orients the groups towards transformation actions that strengthen their self-esteem, solidarity, and promote more functional relations. All these elements are necessary for the prevention of domestic violence. Furthermore, the group becomes a social strength that allows them to build new relations, free of violence both within and outside the family. The

7 Claire O'Kane. *Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners for Social Change*. Part I, 2003.

8 Miguel Ángel Jiménez Rodríguez. *Crece en Libertad*. Save the Children Sweden and Fundación Paniamor.

9 During the workshops, it became evident that it is recommendable that the children and adolescents should organise themselves according to the kind of violence to which they were exposed, but grouping children and adolescents at risk and children and adolescents that need assistance in order to avoid a strong stigma in the latter.

protagonist participation leads to the elimination of violent cultural patterns. The role of the facilitating adult is delicate and key, for he or she has to find a balance between the strength needed to create a safe environment and the flexibility to build trust and self-esteem in children and adolescents.

Different elements have to be taken into consideration in order to facilitate the creation of organisations led by children and adolescents, such as their own agenda, democratic and representative procedures, peer facilitation and a mapping of obstacles and risks. Opportunities should be created for different ages, thinking of ways in which the organisation can be expanded, considering cultural factors and basing its work in good practices. It is also important that children and adolescents are trained in strategic planning to ensure the social, institutional, political and financial sustainability of the organisations led by them.

Although this paper mentions several methodologies to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence, the development of such methodologies shall be presented in the second part of this research.

Role of the chaperone

The role of the chaperone accompanying children and adolescents exposed to violence changes according to the space, the situation, the mechanism and the methodology used, and especially according to each of the children's personal stories.

An important contribution of the organisations led by children and adolescents is the creation of an environment where each girl, boy and adolescent can find elements that favour their resilience. In this regard, the role of the chaperone is to perceive which child or adolescent —outside the daily work in the organisation— requires a more professional attention, besides taking care of a good organisational and democratic environment.

In the case of physical and humiliating punishment, comprehension, patience and sensitiveness are important features of the chaperone. Communication skills are also a must, such as adapting a friendly language according to the age, culture and maturity of the child, using a comfortable communication style with children and adolescents, gaining their trust and appreciating the different vision they may have of their own situation. During the workshops carried out, the children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment also appreciated the following characteristics in their male chaperones: discretion, friendship, transparency, honesty, safety and happiness; besides they had to have leadership skills and be familiar with the issues dealing with children's rights.

Likewise, children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse highlighted the following features of their ideal female chaperone: reliability, discretion, safety, kindness, information, dynamism, friendliness, happiness, care, commitment and comprehension, being able to listen, and to make themselves understood, provide safety and, preferably, to be a woman.

Children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence expressed the following important traits for their chaperone during their participation: visionary, flexible in his or her ideas, open, empathic, charismatic, critical, sensitive, free of prejudices, friendly, human, communicator, conflict mediator, good domain of the topic, they should also be able to grant confidence, to listen to others and to have psychological and pedagogic experience and knowledge.

The chaperones themselves added to the ideal accompanying profile the capacity to relate to institutional structures and to be clear about their own fears, projects and chances.

Obstacles for protagonist participation

In order to develop adequate methodologies for the promotion of participation it is important to define the obstacles that exist, considering children and adolescents as subjects of rights and citizens. We can make a distinction between endogenous and exogenous obstacles that are to be overcome with empowerment and advocacy strategies, correspondingly. These last ingredients are a must in the protagonist process that aims at changing the power relations between children and adolescents and adults. The endogenous obstacles relate to the lack of adequate information, the lack of awareness and of skills required for participation. The exogenous obstacles are a result of the lack of laws, regulations and institutionalised procedures that ensure the right to free association, to participate in political issues, to be able to give an opinion in the media, etc.

We can make a distinction between obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents in general, which also affect those who are exposed to violence, particular obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to violence and obstacles according to the form of violence suffered by them.

Among the general obstacles, we can observe that the physical spaces are not a reference for young people in the cities, due to the new communications technologies, and for young people in the countryside, due to the migration phenomenon. The trends in individualism and competitiveness and the heterogeneity (age, social and cultural) of children and adolescents as a group make their participation rather difficult. Children and adolescents also have difficulties linking political actions with their daily needs, and their conception of life is usually reduced to the immediate ones. The youth awareness about their own condition as social subjects tends to be scarce, and therefore must be enhanced. An effective follow up is necessary to prevent children and adolescents from reproducing authoritarian and non-democratic models of the adult world, and to help them overcome the conception of youths as weak or dangerous beings. However, there is still a need for human resources with such qualities. In order for children and adolescents to adopt the exercise of shared power, it will be necessary to have an articulated expression of a movement of children and adolescents as a well-known actor in the political scenario.

Furthermore, children and adolescents exposed to violence face particular obstacles for their protagonism, such as the strong loyalty towards their parents, fear, pain, shame, as well as cultural

factors of adultcentrism, which prevent children and adolescents to speak about their problem. Smaller children may also have difficulties in understanding violence as such, given the fact that they have been exposed to and socialised in such way and certain groups of discriminated children and adolescents are even less able of expressing themselves.

From the obstacles highlighted by children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment we reach the following conclusions. Psychological obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents require empowerment strategies both for them and for adults, because they are useful in preventing, detecting and filing complaints on violence cases. The trainings for children and adolescents should be used, in the first place, to overcome their fear to express themselves about violent experiences, while adults should be introduced to the use of non-violent forms of upbringing and be trained on the children's rights. The best way to ensure that the opinion of children and adolescents is taken into consideration is through an institutionalised but autonomous participation in safe physical spaces. It is necessary to provide special attention to the most vulnerable groups in the case of physical and humiliating punishment, such as children and adolescents with disabilities and the less informed. It is also necessary that organisations led by children and adolescents, along with other civil society organisations, carry out advocacy work in the long run in order to change the social conception about children and adolescents and their upbringing methods, and to achieve policies addressed to prevent children and adolescents to be exposed to physical and humiliating punishment, and also to look after them.

Despite the obstacles defined by the children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse during the workshops, we have drawn the following conclusions. The obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse show us that the situation of victims also satisfies some of the former needs and takes away some of their insecurities, especially the economic ones. The sexual exploitation and abuse experiences, however, affect their physical integrity and their self-esteem and the situation isolates them from a healthy and protected environment. Both children and adolescents in an exclusion situation (which could lead them towards sexual and commercial exploitation of children) , and victims of this form of violence are cases where it is necessary to offer them access to a decent life project in an organisation led by children and adolescents. They can share their experiences with their peers, they can become empowered to achieve resilience and they can undergo a group and protagonic experience that will help them end the cycles of violence in such organisations. Getting out of this problem should not mean going back to the initial situation of exclusion. It is necessary to open safe institutionalised spaces where children and adolescents can exert their right to participation and can make social advocacy to eliminate the strong stigma they bear and to find the support of the community through the dissemination of information and the promotion of equal gender and inter-generation relations.

The obstacles mentioned by the children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence during the workshops led us to the following thoughts. For those children and adolescents who live in an initial situation of rights violations, exclusion and multiple non-fulfilled needs, the gang becomes very attractive for it offers them a solution to several of their needs,¹⁰ despite the lack of protection the

¹⁰ Basic needs, but also subjective ones.

new situation implies. Becoming members of a gang provides them with money, status and power, and favours contacts with members of the opposite sex. The constant fear which the members of the gang live with is one of the greatest obstacles for their participation: fear to interrelate, fear of involving their families, fear to be murdered by the police or by members of other gangs, but also the fear of going back to the situation of exclusion they lived in before.

There is a lack of safe physical spaces where children and adolescents can express their opinions and make their own decisions. Both for children and adolescents in risk of or victims of organised armed violence, it is necessary to provide access to a decent life project within an organisation led by children and adolescents, as well as to a healthy and protected environment where they will not be judged, where they will be able to share their experiences with their peers and undergo a group and protagonist experience that will allow them to respect and to be respected.

Social advocacy in the community and the work of the police are important to eliminate the strong prejudice against youths of a given neighbourhood, age and ethnic group, which push them further towards the gangs. The participation of the youths exposed to organised armed violence should be ensured in the development stages of any programme or policy which may affect them.

In order to stop the constant “formation” of future “gangsters” and in order to promote a way out for those youths already involved, society itself must create real leisure and working opportunities for them. Likewise, society should offer them a peaceful education in values that forms them as critical persons in topics such as individualism, materialism, consumerism, etc. Any strategy should take into consideration that organised armed violence is a symptom of deep problems in society which make it impossible for youths to build up their citizenship.

Interventions to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

In order to empower children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment, methodologies using art and new communication technologies have proven to be very effective. The best mechanism is to let them become members of an organisation led by children and adolescents where they can collectively build a replica of a safe, inclusive and democratic society. This replica will allow them to eliminate the violence cycles and to design advocacy strategies to fight against physical and humiliating punishment, always with adult assistance. Friendship and an education in values and rights are essential elements to develop their skills.

Other civil society organisations led by adults are ideal partners, but they must respect and adequate to the decisions made by children and adolescents. Parents, teachers and authorities must be trained on physical and humiliating punishment and must be sensitised in order to provide and institutionalise participation spaces for children and adolescents where they can learn, give opinions and make decisions to eradicate physical and humiliating punishment. This issue can be debated in any organisation led by children and adolescents, considering children with disabilities, and the less informed as high risk groups.

The school and the organisations led by children and adolescents are the most suitable places to foster dialogue and good practices among peers. The school is also an ideal space for a first organisational experience. Young teachers and democratic organisations of children and adolescents within the school can promote a safe environment and are very effective to prevent, identify and inform about violence cases and to help to provide care for the victims. A discrete complaint mechanism should be established in order to respect children and adolescents; likewise, the rights of the child should be included in the school curricula or should be disseminated by community caregivers. The representatives of children and adolescents should also be a part of the local government to defend their rights and carry out advocacy work in order to demand the banning of physical and humiliating punishment.

In the case of sexual exploitation and abuse we have also witnessed that the best mechanism to end violence cycles and to carry out advocacy is to be part of an organisation led by children and adolescents where it is possible to develop self protection skills, exchange experiences between peers and recover the child's self-esteem. Within the organisations led by children and adolescents, and with the support of professional adults, the youths can develop new and positive relations and start a personal transformation towards a different mindset regarding rights, power relations, personal development and moral values.

Children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse must be given the opportunity to express themselves through art, especially through drama and other creative means, because protagonism and creativity expressed in this way contrast the traumatic and harmful experiences they have lived.

It is very important to raise awareness in the family, at school and within the community so that some prevention measures are put in place in order to detect victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and to file complaints. Schools are the most suitable places to empower children and adolescents and to carry out social advocacy actions against sexual exploitation and abuse with multiplying effects. The use of institutionalised forms of participation within the school to meet this objective is frequently useful as a first organisational experience for children and adolescents. Schools and municipalities should also carry out prevention activities at very early ages for children and adolescents who may be at high risk of becoming victims of sexual and commercial exploitation of children in the future.

The community must promote participation spaces for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse, and must promote its articulation at a national, regional and global level. Children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse must participate at all the stages of policy and programme development which may affect them and should establish alliances with the police and the governments to find ways to fight against sexual exploitation and abuse in a combined manner. Organisations represented by adults should provide children and adolescents with access to information and resources, and develop their skills to organise themselves and to become advisors, communicators and community leaders.

In the organisations led by children and adolescents, in the schools and within the communities, children should receive training in life skills, gender equity, techniques to file complaints, children rights, conflict resolution, etc.

Children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence must have the chance to be part of an organisation that offers them to create a replica of a democratic and non-violent society where they will not feel excluded and where they can start building a peaceful and dignifying life project. From thereon they can contribute to their community and become leaders and role models for others.

Through symbols and artistic expressions young people exposed to organised armed violence can learn to express themselves about the constant fear they experience. Likewise, it is important to develop interests, abilities and points of view in order to canalise the abundant energy of those youths towards positive goals. It is also important to generate resilience abilities in them and to offer them an education in moral values that criticise consumerism, drugs, weapons and women stereotypes. The chaperone must be a professional who is highly accepted by the group.

Promoting a dialogue among the youths exposed to organised armed violence and the community can reduce, in the first place, any existing pre-conceptions, and secondly, can involve them in the design and implementation of programmes against organised armed violence. The incentives for youths to stay enrolled in school and in labour insertion and recreation programmes should go hand in hand with activities that develop their skills to transform the community. In order to do so, youths as well as their families should have access to citizenship workshops. In the case of gangsters who have been deprived of their freedom, they should be granted access to restoration justice in order to rescue the best of their human condition.

Experiences of participation promotion of children and adolescents exposed to violence

Children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment have organised themselves in commissions and, in alliance with some NGOs, have started social and political advocacy actions such as the production of documentaries, organisation of request lists, and the promotion of positive rearing methods. These children and adolescents have participated in studies within their schools and have organised themselves in clubs to give advice to other children and adolescents. They have detected and informed about physical and humiliating punishment cases and helped looking after the victims. There is also a dialogue between different youth organisations on physical and humiliating punishment to share information and practices. The childhood representatives negotiate their rights with local authorities, caregivers and employers, they participate in international summits where they discuss physical and humiliating punishment and they propose simultaneous political and social advocacy actions in different countries.

Children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse have used drama techniques to learn about themselves and to accept, to love and to appreciate themselves. They have also been

able to convince other children and adolescents to become involved in their organisation. Theatre and drama have allowed them to convey abuse messages in an indirect manner and has helped the psychological recovery as well as the social advocacy. Children and adolescents have managed to quit their silence, to speak out in public and to help their peers. In this way they have been able to start a personal transformation within a dignifying life project. They have developed leadership skills, and abilities to carry out prevention and to inform about violence situations besides the necessary social skills. Children and adolescents have also involved their parents and teachers in their fight against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Through institutionalised youth organisations within their schools and with the help of principals and NGOs, children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse have carried out awareness campaigns inside and outside their schools, they have shared their experiences regarding sexual and commercial exploitation of children among peers and have proposed common prevention strategies. These children and adolescents have the support of their parents and relatives and have become directly involved in prevention and identification actions in cases of sexual and commercial exploitation of children. Likewise, at community level, organised children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse have participated in local, national and international fora in order to carry out social and political advocacy to defend children's rights, in many occasions in partnership with civil society organisations led by adults. Thus, some contributions have been made to draft laws, to design prevention plans, to achieve some legal attention and response and to create "hotbeds"¹¹ in several municipalities, localities and schools.

Groups of girls have organised themselves to create safe neighbourhoods with the assistance of adults, relatives and authorities. They have carried out social advocacy through several methodologies to change the sexist attitude of male adolescents and have set up mail boxes to facilitate complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse. The participation of the girls in all these activities has empowered them to become self-protected and prevent early marriages.

Through the organisation, children and adolescents have been able to start a dialogue with adults regarding prevention and better ways in which they can support the children to inform about abuses and to express their feelings, fears and problems.

Finally, the organisations led by children and adolescents working in partnerships with the media, the police and prison authorities have become very effective in preventing and informing on sexual exploitation and abuse.

The strong prejudices of the community, the government and the police regarding children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence prevented them from receiving enough support to organise themselves in a genuine and effective manner.

¹¹ "Hotbeds" are participation mechanisms for children at an early age who are at high risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation at some time. The empowerment they receive in this "hotbed" aims at preventing this situation.

A policy of youth service has been set up as an educational alternative, integrating both community service and education, and strengthening the community.

A series of projects have successfully included young armed actors to social projects and reintegration programmes. The fact of including these young people in the discussion on how to reduce their participation in organised armed violence contributes to improve the effect of other programmes with this same objective.

Different organisations provide citizenship training to youths and their families, and at the same time, they give them the opportunity to practice some sports and provide them working education and job access. The idea is to combine several components which together can offer youths better chances of finding a space in the society they were excluded from. The cultural and sport activities are effective as means of prevention addressed to the young adults in areas with high levels of violence.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

PROMOTION OF PROTAGONIST AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

1. Participation, citizenship and rights

Participation is related to the concept of citizenship and with rights. An essential characteristic of citizenship practice is the meaningful and comprehensive participation in public discussions and in decision making. Citizenship also implies that the individual has guaranteed his/her moral independence, which means that they have the ability to decide about values for their own lives and the possibility of living in accordance with such values. The individual has two moral basic powers: the ability to have a sense of justice and a conception of what is good.¹²

Citizenship gives certain rights to an individual:

- Civil rights: freedom of expression, freedom and justice.
- Political rights: participation in political decision making.
- Social rights: economic and social security, provisions of social well-being.¹³

The rights are then essential guarantees for a moral life; that is, in order to live a decent and just life, which could be called “human development”. Thus, participation as a right should be mainly a well-being guarantee. We can talk about participation as a methodology or strategy, which indicates only an instrumental use, but if we consider participation as a right, it acquires an intrinsic and priority value. The participation as a right suggests demands binding on duty bearers such as, for example, the State. We can identify participation rights with different public activities: expressing, meeting, protesting, organising, voting, and holding positions. In this regard, the African Charter of Human Rights, in its article 13, defines this right with regard to the political participation and the individual accesses —on equal terms— to the public property and services. This links participation and well-being again.

Participation means “to take part”, which goes beyond elections towards processes of decision and debate, which constitute the political work and include a strong civil society which is capable of influencing significantly on public policy. To better understand participation within the right-based approach, it is advisable to remember the Amartya Sen’s notion¹⁵ of the meta-right, which refers to the existence of rights to demand policies fulfilling our rights in general. Henry Shue’s notion about the basic right is also important —its full possession is a requirement for the full possession of the other rights.¹⁶

¹² Eduardo Cáceres Valdivia. “Participación ciudadana desde un enfoque de derechos”. In: *La participación ciudadana en el presupuesto participativo*. 2000, pp. 11-14.

¹³ Claire O’Kane. Op. cit.

¹⁴ Eduardo Cáceres Valdivia. Loc. cit.

¹⁵ Amartya Sen. *The right not to be hungry*. 1984.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 11-14. The Convention also presents this double meaning when stating that participation is a right and a principle.

The right to participation also has a protagonist nature, which involves having a decisive voice in the political processes. In this case, the essential thing is to have a direction control or power, more than the simple fact of being involved or having been consulted.

The Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) refers to an “active, free and meaningful participation”.¹⁷ It is active due to its protagonist nature; free because it cannot be imposed; and meaningful since it meets several main aspects of participation that we will study later for the case of children and adolescents.

2. Brief contextualisation of three forms of violence against children and adolescents

In this chapter we present a brief contextualisation of the different forms of violence that are part of the research. Risk factors of becoming victims of these forms of violence which we should consider to deal with protagonist participation of children and adolescents are described in section 8.2 “participation of children and adolescents according to their situation”. Other aspects will be tackled in chapters on obstacles, intervention and experiences. The international legal framework of the different forms of violence is described in Appendix 1.

Physical and humiliating punishment

We can define corporal or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. In most cases it involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children with the hand or with an implement —whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve kicking, shaking or shoving children, scratching, pinching, burning, scalding or force them to eat boiling foods or other products (washing children’s mouths with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). Corporal punishment is invariably degrading and there are other non-physical forms of punishment, which are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.¹⁸

Physical and humiliating punishment is a form of violence against children and a violation of their rights to dignity and physical integrity. The UN Study on Violence against Children¹⁹ mentions that only 16 countries had prohibited any forms of physical punishment and since then three countries more have added to it. In the rest of the world, there are still legalised practices of physical punishment at

¹⁷ Eduardo Caceres Valdivia. Loc. cit.

¹⁸ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 42nd session – General Comment Nº 8 (2006), p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibidem. p. 11.

home, in care centres, at school, in the work and in the criminal system as a sentence or a disciplinary measure.

Physical and humiliating punishment increases the use of violence within society and it legitimises violence before the eyes of coming generations. Society deprives children and adolescents of their full citizenship by accepting beatings against its youngest and most vulnerable members. Physical and humiliating punishment is an abuse of power, so parents, teachers and caregivers must learn to exercise authority over children by using positive upbringing guidelines.

Apart from immediate and evident physical consequences, there are important psychosocial consequences for the child when suffering this form of violence:

- Low self-esteem.
- Low school performance.
- Cognitive, sensory and emotional dysfunctional development.
- Rejection to dialogue and reflection in conflict handling.
- Feeling of loneliness, sadness and abandonment.
- Negativism towards people and society.
- Poor communications with parents and rupture of healthy emotional bonds.
- Violence as a normal behaviour, even in a living relationship.
- Feeling of annoyance.
- Anti-social behaviour, which perpetuates violence for generations.²⁰

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Save the Children defines sexual exploitation and abuse as: “the imposition of sexual acts, or acts with sexual overtones, by one or more persons on a child (...). [Sexual abuse includes] indecent touching, penetration and sexual torture, indecent exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material. People sexually abusing children may have an emotional or professional relationship with the child, where they exploit their position of trust and power. Children may also be sexually abused and exploited by abusers or third parties having a commercial or other exploitative interest in the child”.²¹

Child sexual abuse is one of the worst forms of violation of the rights of the child, and can equally cause irreversible physical and psychological damage, even death. It usually happens within the family and local community. Children and adolescents can also suffer abuse from their parents, and generally girls are more vulnerable, therefore, it is important to consider gender aspects when drafting interventions.

²⁰ Save the Children. *Ending physical and humiliating punishment of children - Manual for Action*. 2005, pp. 4-11.

²¹ Save the Children. *Save the children's policy: Protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation*. 2003, p. 5.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is understood as a form of abuse and is defined as follows: “the use of a boy or girl for sexual purposes as an exchange for economic compensation or payment in kind, but it does not mean that such compensation or kind reaches the child. It is usually that delinquency networks, pimps or even the own family of children are who receive such compensations. This use violates the human rights of the children, particularly rights to dignity, equality, autonomy, health and mental and physical well-being of victims”.²²

Children and adolescents suffer CSEC through trafficking of children, sexual tourism, pornography and the sex industry. They also suffer abuse and exploitation in wars and refugee situations, in the education system, at the workplace, on the streets, in religious settings, leisure activities, in prisons and even by services meant to protect and take care of them.²³

Other vulnerable groups to child sexual abuse and CSEC are children with disabilities and particularly, children with hearing disabilities due to their limitation to communicate and to file a complaint. Likewise, poor children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in exchange for economic compensation.²⁴ Sexually exploited children also suffer from other kinds of violence by pimps and customers.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 150 millions of girls and 73 millions of boys under 18 years old have suffered forced sexual relations or other forms of sexual violence, although it is an underestimation. Child sexual abuse is mainly committed by family’s members or by people who live at home or who visit the family, reliable people for children and many times people who look after them. Child sexual abuse in the family is frequently silenced both by children and by their parents or adults who suspect who the aggressor is. Children are too afraid of not being trusted, of being rejected or of the embarrassment their parents may feel if the abuse is made public.

A determining factor in the sexual abuse phenomenon is the culture. When there are strict rules about family honour and gender roles, boys who reveal abuse can be seen as weak and girls run the risk of being hit or murdered. In some cultures, girls are considered accomplices of the abuses they suffer and for revealing violations without having convincing evidences they can be severely punished. Losing their virginity, even as a result of a rape, can affect the family honour and cause their relatives to murder her. The same can occur as a result rejecting a partner or a marriage. Most of these girls are poor and attacks usually occur when they go to school or to get water or fuel. Many cultures promote early marriages when girls suffer sexual violence (apart from physical and psychological violence) as a sign of the unequal power relations and the traditional roles at home. Getting away

²² Definition taken from the research made by Carlos Iván García Suárez – Save the Children. *Abuso sexual infantil y explotación sexual comercial infantil en América Latina y el Caribe*. 2006.

²³ Save the Children. *Save the children’s policy: Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*. 2003, p. 1.

²⁴ Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. *United Nations Study on Violence against Children*. 2006, p. 267.

from these kinds of violent marriage is very difficult and can involve rejection and violence against the girl by her own family.²⁵

Child sexual abuse implies a physical and psychological invasion, like a breaking-off of confidence, and consequences can be felt during all the life cycle:

- Low self-esteem.
- Damaged health and development.
- Privation of access to many spheres of life (causes school desertion).
- Early pregnancies, abortions, maternal mortality.
- HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Family and community rejection, thus forcing children onto even more insecure spaces.
- Violation to physical and emotional integrity.

Apart from those mentioned above, CSEC also causes deep consequences, which are hardly overcome for the physical, psychological, spiritual and social development:

- Embarrassment, guilt and inability to get out such situation.
- Personality with traumatic effects as a result of constant physical and emotional violence.
- Nightmares, insomnia and depression, which can lead to suicide.
- Problems with malnutrition, drug addiction and alcoholism.
- Denial of possibilities of study, to learn a trade or to have access to alternative sources of income.
- Treatment and stigma of delinquents, which prevent children from their inclusion in society with dignity and which result in their permanence in the unprotected life they know.^{26 27 28}

Organised armed violence

The phenomenon of children and adolescents involved in organised armed violence (COAV) is defined as “those youths employed or otherwise participating in organisations where armed violence is used. There are elements of a command structure and power and control over territory, local population and resources are exerted”. Although it is mainly a masculine phenomenon, there are also women and girls who participate in these organisations.

The origin of youth organisations with a violent nature is a result of a complex interaction of factors, according to the WHO. These organisations seem to proliferate in places where the established social order has broken up and where alternative forms of shared cultural behaviour are lacking. Other socioeconomic, community and interpersonal factors that encourage young people to join gangs include:

²⁵ Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. Op cit., pp. 75-81.

²⁶ Save the Children. *10 essential learning points- Listen and Speak out against Sexual Abuse of Boys and Girls*. Pp. 28, 41.

²⁷ Carlos Iván García Suárez. Op. cit., p. 50.

²⁸ ILO. *Los medios de comunicación y su participación en la prevención y denuncia de la explotación sexual comercial infantil*. Mexico, p. 19.

- Lack of opportunities for social or economic mobility, within a society that aggressively promotes consumption.
- Failing to enforce the law and order at a local level.
- Interrupted schooling, combined with low rates of pay for unskilled labour.
- Lack of guidance, supervision and support from parents and other family members.
- Harsh physical punishment or victimisation at home.
- Having peers who are already involved in a gang.

Also, an important factor to be considered is the relationship between masculine identity of adolescents and the use of violence.²⁹

Certain elements which are present in the phenomenon of organised armed violence can be identified:

- Membership of an organisation, which is not necessarily a negative element, since it offers young people bonds of solidarity, identity and institutionalism the State cannot offer.
- Violent behaviour of these groups with firearms.
- Particular institutional structures of identify, authority, loyalty, feeling of belonging and a set of own codes and rules.
- Construction of an identity fed in opposition to other identities, which generates violent clashes with other groups or the State.
- Feeling of attachment to a physical setting or community.
- Groups that have acquired their own cultural traditions.
- Collective actors, non-state, aged between 12 and 25.
- Mainly urban phenomenon, particularly in poor areas, although some researches show that also young people of lower and upper classes are part of violent organisations as a means of achieving certain social status.³⁰

There are few studies regarding the consequences for the child or adolescent when participating in organised armed violence, however, it is noticed that they:

- Witness torture or murder causes insomnia, nightmares, trauma, and terrifying and constant fear, but also habituation to violence.
- A fatalistic attitude towards their own death leads them to have a life away from moral, with too much alcohol, drugs, women, weapons, parties, and adrenaline.

3. International legal framework regarding the right of the children to participation

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) specifies that having means of political influence is a human right (Article 21): “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country,

²⁹ More information on this topic can be found in Gary T. Barker, *Dying to be men*. 2007.

³⁰ Daniel Luz i Álvarez - Save the Children Sweden. *Niños, niñas y adolescentes en violencia armada organizada*. 2007, pp. 1-18.

directly or through freely chosen representatives”. Article 12 of the CRC binds States Parties to guarantee “shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” and provide them with the “opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national laws”.³¹ There is a distinction between the collective right of child to be protagonist participants in society and the individual right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings.

3.1 The right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings

The right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings can refer to criminal and civil justice, to family assistance and alternative care, protection, health, immigration and education, among others. It is important to point out that national legislations should widen the right of the child to be heard, particularly in proceedings related to families in order to minimise the risks of children who declare in a court. The UN Guidelines on Justice for Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, adopted in 2005, specify in detail the right to express their views and concerns and to be heard.³²

The right of the child to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings is valid for any situation, including children separated from their parents, cases of custody and adoption, children in conflict with law, child victims of physical violence, sexual abuse and other violent crimes, refugees and children seeking asylum, and child victims of armed conflicts and in emergencies. All these children must be informed in a friendly way about their right to be heard. The Beijing Rules stipulate that proceedings should be held in an environment of understanding, which will allow the involved children to participate and express themselves freely.

All professionals involved in these proceedings should be trained in the implications of Article 12 of the Convention and this article should be incorporated in all laws, rules and national administrative directives. Moreover, children should have access to specialized assistance during these proceedings.

The Riyadh Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency stipulate that young people should have a protagonist role and partnership within society and should not be considered as mere objects of socialisation or control. Youth organisations should be created and given a full participatory status in the management of community affairs. Young people should be involved in the formulation, development and implementation of plans and programmes.

³¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 12.

³² Moushira Khattab (Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child). *The right of the child to be heard* – Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006 and ECOSOC. Guidelines on justice for the child victims and witnesses of crime. 2004/27.

In accordance with Articles 12 and 40 of the Convention,³³ in order to ensure that the views of children and adolescents in conflict with the law are taken into account, State Parties should provide as follows:

- Legal or other assistance.
- Free assistance of an interpreter.
- Respect for the child's privacy at all stages of the proceedings.
- Acknowledgment that the child can freely participate and can not be compelled to give testimony.

There should not be age limits to participate in legal proceedings nor the access to complaint mechanisms within the judicial system. State Parties must ensure that the view of the child and the Best Interest of the Child be given due consideration in all circumstances, including in justice procedures and in post-conflict resolution processes and that all efforts seek to avoid victimisation of the child.³⁴

3.2 The right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them

The right to participation of children and adolescents is one of the four guiding principles of the Convention, and therefore, is an integral part of the implementation of its other attributes.

It has a close relation with the other main rights. Firstly, the right to non-discrimination must allow groups of excluded children (girls, indigenous children, people with disabilities, etc.) to enjoy of their right to participation. Consequently, a greater participation of these groups in society promotes a greater protection for them against discrimination.

Secondly, children's participation is very important to exercise their right to life and development, since when they participate, they develop their abilities, aspirations, self-esteem and important resources to organise their own lives and to integrate into society.

Finally, children's participation in an adequate environment promotes, undoubtedly, the Best Interest of the Child since they are better empowered to face situations of abuse, exploitation and crisis. In other words, a friendly environment trains them in self-protection and fulfils their right to protection.

Besides article 12, articles 13, 14, 15 and 17 refer to the exercise of the right to children's participation. Article 13 refers to the right of the child to freedom of expression; article 14 sets forth the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; article 15 establishes the right to freedom of association

³³ Article about the rights of children and adolescents in conflict with the law.

³⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd session, September 11-29, 2006.

and to freedom of peaceful assembly and article 17 sets forth the right to information adapted to the child's specific characteristics.

Article 5 is also important since it refers to the role of parents to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance. Likewise, the recognition of the right to participation is important in articles 9 and 16 of the Convention which cover essential areas as the right of the child to express a view about any decisions regarding separation from his/her family.³⁵

Article 23 recognises the right of the disabled child to a full and decent life, considering the child's inclusion and protagonist participation in society. Article 29 mentions that the education of the child shall be directed to the preparation the child for the active democratic citizenship, and article 31 sets forth the right of the child to freely participate in cultural life and the arts.

Key points of the international legal framework for cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Participation of children and adolescents and the Government

The four basic rights contained in the Convention are: the right to non-discrimination, the right to participation, the right to life and development and the Best Interest of the Child.

Participation of children and adolescents is a continuous process whereby they express themselves and get actively involved in decision making on issues that affect them at different levels. This process requires shared information and dialogue between children and adults, both based in mutual respect and shared power. A genuine participation gives children power to form both the process and the result and it is a proactive.³⁶

The government is the decision making process, and its implementation refers, to a large extent, to the public thing; but this term can also be applied in other spaces as family, school, etc. The good government means that the institutions and processes observe the laws, are responsible, transparent, effective, accountable before the citizens who elected them, and create spaces for an equal and meaningful participation.³⁷ Children and adolescents' participation in the government is almost inexistent,³⁸ even though the violations of their rights are quite political, and involve unequal power relations. The right to participation means that children and adolescents should participate also

³⁵ Save the Children. *Promoting Children's Meaningful and Ethical Participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children*. 2003.

³⁶ Claire O'Kane. *Op.cit.*

³⁷ *Idem.*

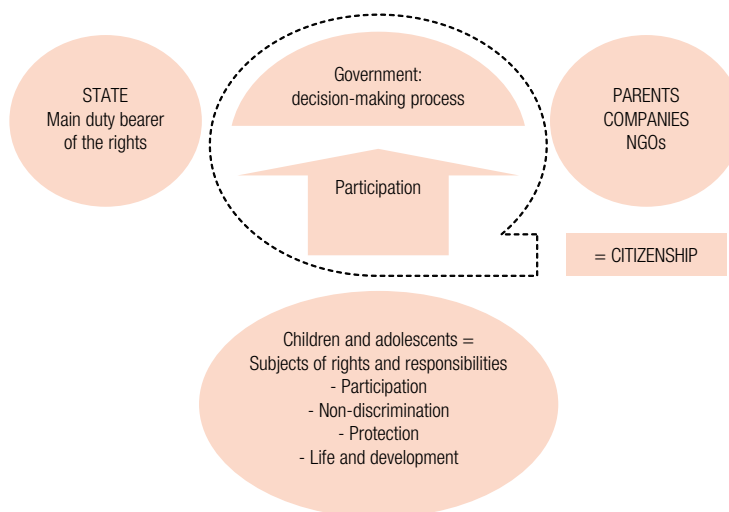
³⁸ However, there are even more experiences of children and adolescents organisations participating in public decision-making spaces such as the participatory budget, etc.

in the political arena to defend their rights. The decentralisation trends in Latin America favour local authorities to have a greater impact on young people's lives, thus creating opportunities for children and adolescents to be part of the local structures of the government.

The State is the main duty bearer, but also the parents, NGO and companies as well as the children and adolescents themselves.

The fact that children and adolescents are respected as citizens involves allowing them to participate in the government, that is, in the decision-making process (Picture 1).

Picture 1



A Save the Children study developed by Claire O'Kane formulates the following recommendations for its partners in order to achieve a vision of children and adolescents' citizenship:

- Adopt a rights-based approach.
- Identify obstacles (cultural, institutional, political, legal) for the children and citizenship and develop strategies.
- Advocate for children and adolescents' protagonist participation in families, schools, communities, local governments, policies and programmes.
- Work with children and adolescents in the wider context engaging key adults.
- Bring a child-focused approach to development agencies, UN bodies, the corporate sector and academia.
- Mainstream gender analysis, disability, non-discrimination and power in international cooperation work.
- Maintain a clear focus on ethical practice.
- Apply minimum quality standards on children and adolescents' participation.
- Adopt a life cycle approach.
- Develop and disseminate child and adolescent-friendly information.

- Develop and strengthen child-led organisations.
- Develop and strengthen networks amongst children's organisations.
- Develop and support children's media initiatives.
- Review organisational policies in order to promote children's participation.
- Ensure capacity building on rights-based approaches for children, adolescents and adults.
- Undertake analysis of governance structures and systems that impact on children and adolescents.
- Build sustainable partnerships between adults and children (and adolescents) to promote child participation in public spaces of decision-making at international, national and local levels.
- Develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the process and impact of child participation.³⁹

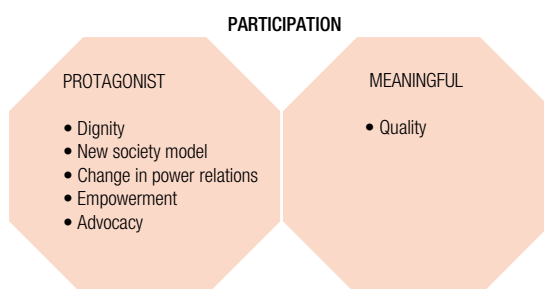
There are four landmarks in the history of child participation at international level:

- The Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children in 2002 that issues the resolution "A World Fit for Children".
- The UN Study on Violence against Children.
- The work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, especially during the country briefing pre-sessions with representatives of civil society.⁴⁰
- The last two Days of General Debate held in 2006 and 2007.⁴¹

There is also children's participation in the Global Movement for Children, in National Action Plans for Children, in strategy documents on fight against poverty and National Codes for Children. Likewise, they participate to obtain better public budgets for childhood at national, regional and local level.

5. Protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents

Picture 2



³⁹ Claire O'Kane. Op. cit.

⁴⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd session, September 11-29, 2006.

⁴¹ Mainly in 2006, when the rights of children and adolescents to participate and to be heard were discussed. ³⁰ children and adolescents participated representing their organisations in different parts of the world.

5.1 Protagonist participation

Protagonism is not contradictory to the Convention, but rather enriches it and emphasises the fact that it should be an organic document. Espinar stipulates in his document on the exercise of the shared power that “the participation concept that uses the leading-role approach is considered as an idea dependent on the social, political, economic and cultural paradigm in which it is registered. (...) participation is a right, an instrumental purpose for the achievement of other rights; it is the specific exercise of social performance and identity construction; it is a principle, a practice and a process which is directed not only to the individual awareness but also to the construction of social actors; it is linked to the exercise of citizens and power”.⁴²

An important participation mechanism in this approach is the organisation of children and adolescents, defined as: “The process of articulation of children and adolescents (individually or as a group) with the purpose of exercising and enforcing their own rights according to their best interest. Such articulation can be achieved at different levels (local, municipal, departmental, regional, national and international) and in different contexts (family, community, school, labour, cultural, religious, etc.)”.⁴³

The image of children as passive objects under the protection of an adult denies the need and the right to express their opinion, and be heard on matters that affect them directly or indirectly. Recognising the right to children’s participation involves accepting that they have values, competences, knowledge and abilities; that they are social subjects of rights, with responsibilities, and able to contribute with society. That is, it involves accepting that they have real possibilities for an exercise of their citizenship as a basic requirement for their development.⁴⁴ In fact, we can not expect that a child who has lived in an autocratic environment for 18 years, to suddenly adopt a democratic attitude in his/her adult life.

The protagonist participation seeks the transformation of power relations that currently exist between children and adults, and it involves the modification of political, social, institutional and cultural structures, as well as of positioning and legitimacy in the society. This participation involves an “oblique”⁴⁵ power exercise, that is to say in which different actors from several origins intertwine with each other, concluding with a most representative way of power.

Protagonist participation has the characteristics indicated below, which were the result of debates in workshops with children and adolescents who experienced violence. Original data can be found in Appendix 2.

42 Ángel Espinar. *El ejercicio del poder compartido*. 2002, p.17.

43 Ángel Espinar. Loc. cit.

44 Gina Arnillas Traverso and Nelly Paucar Meza. *Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation in development projects*. Pp. 15-16.

45 José Alexis Ordóñez. *Los y las jóvenes y la participación ciudadana*. 2000.

5.1.1 Dignity

“Sexual exploitation is a violent way that harms the child and adolescent’s dignity, turning him/her into an object, denying and stealing his/her condition as an individual”.

16-year-old adolescent, Colombia

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

It is important to consider dignity as a philosophical foundation and not only as a simple positive right. Dignity is more than a fundamental right of the human being; it is the foundation of human rights which all people bear simply by our condition as human beings. It is about an unconditional respect that any individual deserves regardless of his/her age, sex, health, social origin or ethnic group, political ideas, religion or criminal history. For this reason, human beings should always be treated as ends and never as means, and they can never be exploited.

Children and adolescents’ right to be heard and participate in the decision-making process on matters affecting them means to respect their human dignity. On the other hand, it involves their participation for the construction of a society in which they are respected as citizens, and may live a decent life.

Children and adolescents exposed to violence (subjects of this study) linked the concept of dignity with the fact of being respected, recognised and supported without being judged. They also relate this concept to self-knowledge and self-esteem, which help them not to make mistakes in decision making. Likewise, they consider dignity as an essential element of their condition as individuals.⁴⁶

A key aspect of dignity is the recognition that it is a source of meaningful presence at a personal, social and political level. Society takes a while to grant such recognition or, in any case, it is merely declarative and formal in the regulations. Without recognition, there is no social existence or personal development. In the real and concrete recognition, we have a basic indicator to speak about participation in all matters concerning children and adolescents, including the context of violence and violation of their dignity.⁴⁷

5.1.2 Change in the power relations

“The world needs a change in the power relations because in society only the word of an adult is taken into account; adults do not consider our need to belong to the society”.

15-year-old adolescent, Peru

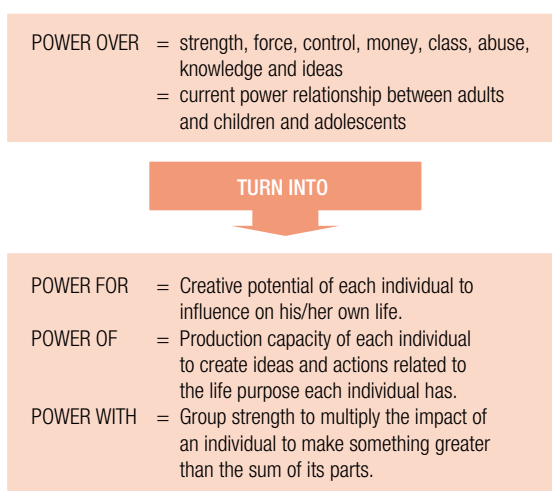
46 Based on answers of workshops carried out with children and adolescents and chaperones within the study framework.

47 Interview with Alejandro Cussiánovich, November 2007.

To explain the relation between participation and change in the power relations, we have borrowed the terminology from the gender theory that distinguishes four types of power. Picture 3 illustrates that a change in the power relations involves a conversion of a power over to other three forms of power. The power with is not only constructed with other children and adolescents but also with chaperones, and corresponds to what we know as shared power.

Picture 3

Change in adult-child power relations ⁴⁸



Children and adolescents' participation constitutes their exercise of power, not a relationship based on the strength, command or control, but on the possibilities of action that may undertake in the relationship. The exercise of power of children and adolescents is translated into the right to express an opinion (article 12 of the Convention), make decisions that affect them without limitations imposed by the adult world. Based on this reasoning, Espinar concludes that children and adolescents' participation is "the exercise of power that children have to make their opinions be seriously taken into account, and responsibly assumed (...) decisions shared with others on matters that affect their lives and the life of their community".⁴⁹

Children and adolescents exposed to violence think that a change in the power relations means that they have more power to prevent or contribute in benefit of everybody, not only the wealthiest. They also link power with the fact that they can express their opinion and be taken into account to improve their situation. They are also aware of the fact that power entails serious consequences for individuals with less power. A chaperone of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse summarises the power relationship as follows: "In sexual abuse and exploitation, there is an asymmetric relation: the gender roles that make many members of the society snatch the decent condition from the woman, restricting her development; or the adults who do not respect or conceive

⁴⁸ Own elaboration from concepts taken from the gender-based approach. Proyecto *Participa Perú. Manual de incidencia política*. 2003, p.16.

⁴⁹ Ángel Espinar. Op. cit., p.23.

children and adolescents as individuals with rights because they hurt them: patriarchal model, sexist educational model, asymmetric relationships”.⁵⁰

5.1.3 New model of society

“We have to create new rules that completely benefit the parents and children in favourable and unfavourable situations; and that, for the first time, the children and adolescents have an opinion that is taken into account and applied”.

17-year-old adolescent

The new model of society, which participation seeks, is the one where there is an equal and shared power relationship between children and adolescents and adults, where they may fully exercise their rights as citizens and live a decent life. It implies that they are promoted by child-led organisations, and they are elected as delegates of all children and adolescents, influencing in moments of government decisions, and in projects developed through civil society or governmental organisations.

Children and adolescents exposed to violence point to a society that allows their participation as decent individuals, who are able to advocate on the decisions that affect them, and that allows them a development and an integral training from the rights perspective. It should be a fairer and more equitable society, where the interest and welfare of the boy and girl prevail over other issues and matters. It should also give them a leading role.⁵¹

5.1.4 Empowerment

“Empowerment is the ability of an individual to take control of an issue, and inform the entire society about it to improve something”.

14-year-old adolescent, Peru

Empowerment is the impact which protagonist participation has in the personal development of children and adolescents. To be a protagonist:

- Is to have dignity, self-esteem safety and autonomy.
- Develops social and responsible skills: dialogue, leadership, conflict resolution, proposal drawing up, critical sense, democratic spirit, capacities to express feelings and views.
- Develops a social and personal identity, which strengthens otherness and lays the foundations for solidarity and citizenship.
- Generates and consolidates a social base in favour of the human rights.
- Contributes to their process of political socialisation and social integration and to the development of their collective awareness as social group.⁵²

⁵⁰ Based on answers of children, adolescents and chaperones during workshops carried out within the study framework.

⁵¹ Idem.

⁵² Alejandro Cussánovich and Ana María Márquez. *Hacia una participación protagónica de los niños, niñas y adolescentes*. P. 46.

Children and adolescents exposed to violence think that through empowerment they can appropriate external elements or develop other intrinsic ones in order to promote their efficient and effective performance in different participation spaces. Empowerment allows them to identify their weaknesses in order to accept them and their potentials in order to develop them in an optimal manner.

5.1.5 Advocacy

“Advocacy is the impact or social and political positioning of an issue to include it in different public and private agendas to achieve the development of preventive actions and care, emphasising the rights perspective”.

Chaperone, Colombia

The social impact of protagonist participation experiences is known as advocacy, and involves:

- A positive social visibility which improves the equality in the relationship between child and adult, and has an impact the social popular beliefs.
- A presence that democratises: greater presence and inclusion of children and adolescents in organisations and community institutions, and greater governmental support to its initiatives.
- A different intergenerational communication: greater impact of children and adolescents in moments of political decisions at local, national and international level, and the development of participation mechanisms.⁵³

Children and adolescents exposed to violence understand advocacy as making proposals and reforms in society in order to improve their quality of life. They also recognise the importance of participating in the decision-making process and the possibility to generate guidelines or parameters that may have an influence on the social scenes, which are committed with the defence and promotion of their rights. The advocacy may be developed at the family level (for example, a girl who managed to avoid her parents from beating her anymore, by talking with them) and at the political level (for example, a child-led organisation that managed to change the childhood code to include a specific prohibition against the physical punishment).⁵⁴

Political advocacy can be defined as “a deliberate and systematic process that involves carrying out a set of political actions of the organised citizens, led to influence those who make decisions on policies through the elaboration and presentation of proposals that provide effective solutions to citizens’ problems in order to achieve specific changes in the public spheres, which benefit wide sectors of the population or more specific sectors involved in the process.” Another more compact definition is the following: “a process managed by social subjects, who build relationships and carry out actions,

⁵³ Idem, pp. 10-15.

⁵⁴ Based on answers of children, adolescents and accompanying individuals during workshops carried out in the study framework.

in a coordinate way, through which they managed to transform the social power relations that exist in their social reality”.

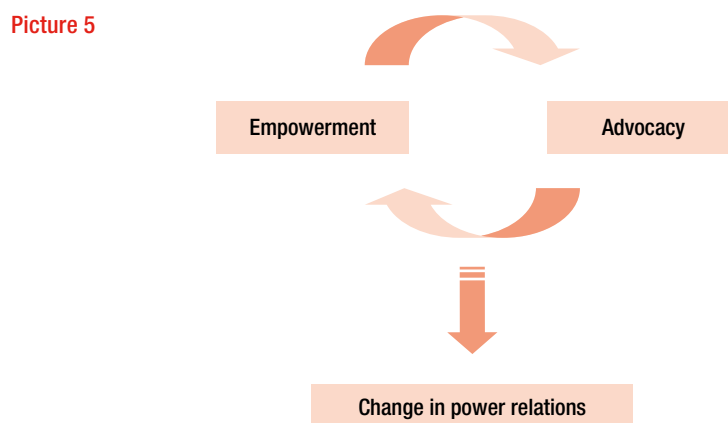
The need of political advocacy is imposed in the following cases as regards the violence situation that affect the children and adolescents, and demands certain appropriate actions (Picture 4).

Picture 4

Cases	Actions
Lack of policies suitable for rights of children and adolescents exposed to violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaborate policies proposals against that absence. - Lobby for the approval of these proposals.
Validity of policies that affect the rights of children and adolescents exposed to violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove those policies through social and political advocacy actions. - Watch the policies and make them effective (public inspection).
Systematic noncompliance of existing policies in favour of children and adolescents exposed to violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise key sectors of the society and form networks to achieve a greater impact.

It is also necessary to sensitise and teach individuals who make and implement policies, and promote structures for a more participative and more transparent decision-making process, which has more possibility to accountability.⁵⁵

5.1.6 Protagonist process



⁵⁵ Proyecto *Participa Perú. Manual de incidencia política*. 2003.

The empowerment process of children and adolescents in the organisation is an essential factor for the political advocacy to develop collective capacities, identify and analyze specific problems, identify individuals with decision power, create alliances and design strategies for a formal plan of impact.

Empowerment and advocacy are interdependent (see Picture 5), and reinforce each other since the latter requires empowered individuals and the only influence action empowers the children and adolescents. There may also be an institutionalised empowerment through public policies as a result of the political impact. Thus, we have a virtuous process of empowerment and advocacy that lead to a substantial change in the power relationship existing between children and adolescents and adults.

The participation strategies will be effective only if they guarantee an empowerment process as well as an impact process of children and adolescents.

5.2 Meaningful participation

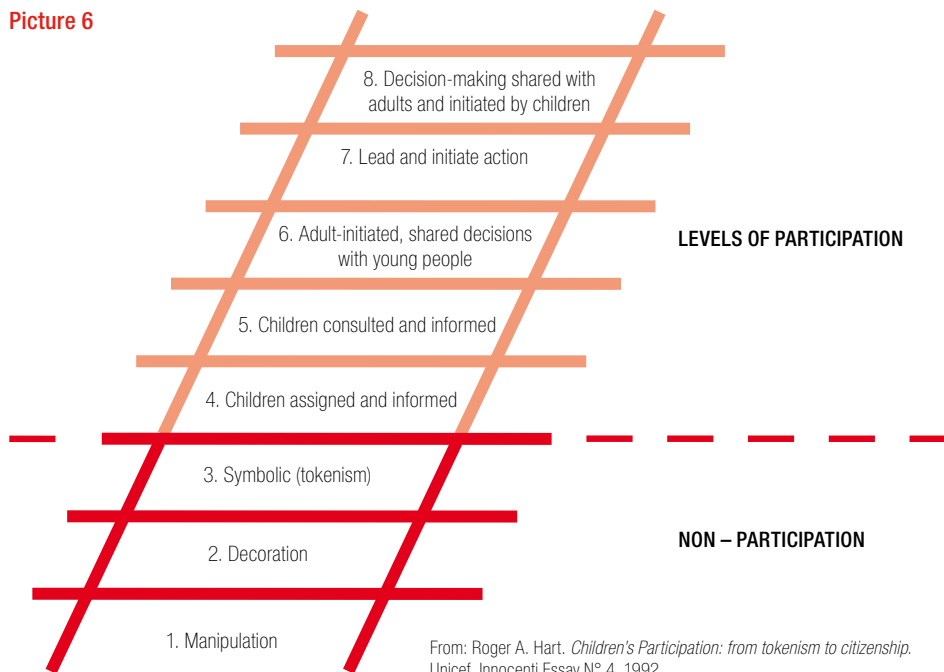
5.2.1 Levels of children and adolescents' participation

In fact, today there are organisations and institutions that think that, in order to comply with the article 12 of the Convention, they simply have to invite some young people without the actual possibility of participation. This participation is called manipulated, decorative or tokenistic, but never meaningful.

Hart's ladder (Picture 6), despite its limitations, clearly shows that different levels of quality can be distinguished in children and adolescents' participation. It also shows there are pseudo-participation situations, although children and adolescents are present. A weakness of the Hart's model is that, in the case of victims of violence, it is improbable that they start the participation process, because their traumatic status, in general, does not allow it.⁵⁶ Here, the adult role is fundamental at the beginning to get them out of an existing violence circle and empower them, so in the future they may start participation processes. Another possibility is the support of other children and adolescents' organisations that assume this task with the support of chaperones, which corresponds to the step 8 according to Hart' ladder.

⁵⁶ Result of reflections on the Hart model during the workshops.

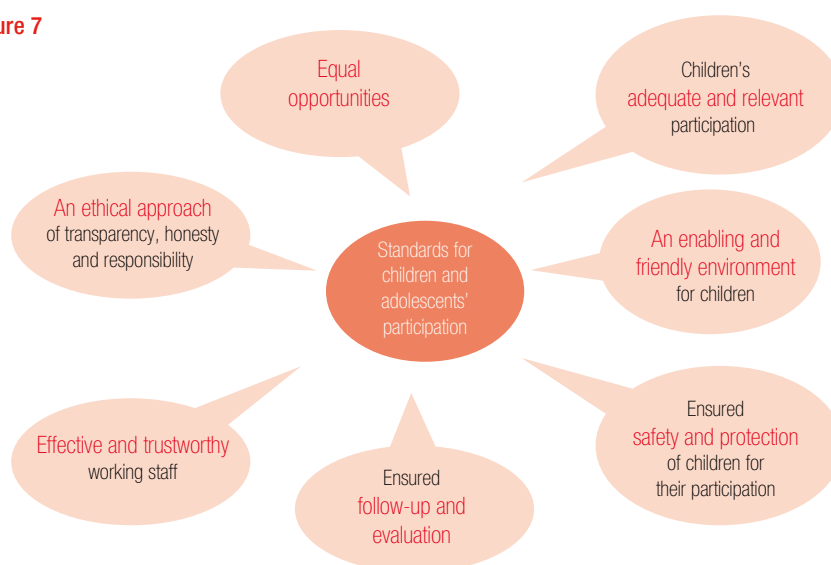
Picture 6



5.2.2 Seven standards for children and adolescents' participation

Save the Children has developed a series of standards (see Picture 7), which are aimed at the participation quality of children and adolescents. Comply with these standards make their participation significant:

Picture 7



1. An ethical approach of transparency, honesty and responsibility.
2. Children adequate and relevant participation.
3. An enabling and friendly environment for children.
4. Equal opportunities.
5. Effective and trustworthy working staff.
6. Ensured safety and protection of children for their participation.⁵⁷
7. Ensured follow-up and evaluation.⁵⁸

The application of these standards in the work with children and adolescents exposed to violence means that in any activity carried out with children —either research for an analysis of situation, monitoring and evaluation or to include them in topics of campaign or other activities— should be considered the following items:

- Protection: the adult must protect as well as give support to the child during the whole process, and know what to do in the event of abuse and risk confessions.
- Children and adolescents' well-being: must be properly promoted, by giving them all necessary support during whole process.
- Conflicting agendas: adult should accept children's unexpected views.
- Informed consent, it means having:
 - The right to say "no" without consequences.
 - The right to take enough time to decide or not to answer some questions.
 - The right to leave the activity anytime they want to.
- Confidentiality and trust.
- Clarity about how much time each activity will take, the purpose, own contribution and the outcomes.
- Compensation according the context.
- An inclusive approach.
- Competence, strong and resilience must promote the child participation.⁵⁹

The UN Study on Violence against Children also mentions that in order to achieve a meaningful participation the following aspects must be considered:

- Importance of working with adults on how to promote the child participation.
- Dedicating enough time, funds and planning to ensure the quality of children's participation.
- Young adults as important resources for promoting the child participation.
- Promotion of the work of children and adolescents with the media and their protection in the media.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ This study is personal and describes better the sense of contents.

⁵⁸ Save the Children. *Practice standards in children's participation*. 2005 and Save the Children. Promoting Children's meaningful and ethical participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children. 2003.

⁵⁹ Save the Children. *Ending Physical and Humiliating Punishment of Children – Manual for Action*. 2005, p.100.

⁶⁰ Save the Children. *12 Lesson Learned from Children's Participation in the UN General Assembly*. Special Session on Children, 2004.

Children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment made observations about the meaningful participation based on their experience in child-led organisations. To them, applying an ethical approach means to comply with, tell the truth, share, have a good communication, incorporate the collaborators, and be authentic, reliable and responsible. By equal opportunities they understand to collaborate with adults and include children with different abilities.

The child-led organisation provides them a safe environment in which they can express their problems and opinions with the support of reliable collaborative adults. They consider that, for an appropriate and relevant participation, it is important to make decisions by consensus, participate in “gained” spaces, and promote an inclusive participation. The children and adolescents should be seen as individuals who are able to freely express their opinion and make proposals, and not as mere victims. They also emphasise the importance of using the media to fight against punishment, and the importance of the child-led organisation as a mechanism to interrelate better with the society. Children and adolescents consider the continual evaluation of actions in the organisation to be of great importance. It is about a friendly and favourable environment, where they can develop their abilities with autonomy, express their opinion, and modify matters according to their needs. In the organisation, they are allowed to speak and vote. They also think that the theatre methodology is very suitable for children and adolescents who suffer punishments, because they can self-identify and express their problems. Children and adolescents consider the organisation as a learning laboratory where the differences between generations do not mean power differences, and where they may gradually assume more responsibilities.⁶¹

The Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children used the following quality standards to gather its information:⁶²

- All activities and discussions were held in the children’s home language and were adapted in terms of pace, language level and age group.
- Opening and closing activities were designed to relax children, to clarify objectives and to promote a safe, positive and non-threatening participation.
- Confidentiality and an option not to participate were ensured.
- Children were not asked about who punished them.
- Drawing and discussion techniques, speaking in third person about the punishment incident, were applied in order to create emotional distance and increase confidentiality.
- In no cases distressed children were forced or surveyed.
- Children were informed that in the case of sexual abuse, the researcher would need to report to the research supervisor, who would then report the case to the established legal bodies.
- In other cases apart from sexual abuse, researchers would ensure confidentiality.
- Children who wanted help contacted a local service provider or a trained teacher.

61 Systematisation based on workshops about physical and humiliating punishment and children and adolescents carried out in Peru within the study framework. For more details, please see Appendix 3.

62 Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. Part 2 annexes - regional submissions, p. 68.

A strategy developed to tackle with difficulties when doing research with children on physical and humiliating punishment is to avoid them asking about their personal experiences. Instead of this, a fictitious character that cares about the children's life is created. Children answered the following questions: What do children feel when they are beaten? Why are children beaten? This method has succeeded with small children, because they are allowed to freely talk without being exposed or exposing their parents.

6. Importance of the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

The participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence is important because they:

- Are the ones who can provide information and evidence about violence from their own experience.
- Can explain the complexity of their experiences, the dilemmas they face and the choices they make.
- Are highly effective and influential advocates.
- Are more likely to feel confident to voice and protect themselves from violence.
- Can make their issues more visible, which urges society to take measures against vulnerability of children and adolescents and end the silence.
- Can propose effective disciplinary measures.⁶³

Their participation allows them to change power relations with adults and end the silence that has led them to marginalisation, exploitation and abuse for a long time.

7. Synergy of two concepts: participation that promotes (self) protection

Although protagonist participation as a paradigm includes more than the dominant paradigm of protection,⁶⁴ paradoxically the protagonism, which is the core issue of the first paradigm, is the key point to promote the protection and self-protection of children and adolescents in society. If children's protagonism is promoted, they will be in conditions of self-protection and demand of protection when need it. Therefore, protagonism and protection can and should be promoted at the same time. The access to information, the exercise of free expression, and being involved in the decision-making process contributes to the integral development of children and adolescents, and place them in better conditions to protect themselves, look after themselves and their peers, and be part of the development

⁶³ Save the Children. *Ending physical and humiliating punishment of children - Manual for Action*. 2005

⁶⁴ "The paradigm of the leading role emerges as a horizon different from the one underlying the adult society when this emphasises the protection paradigm as the only one that rules the responsibility of family and adult world against childhood. In Alejandro Cussiánovich. *Participación ciudadana de la infancia desde el paradigma del protagonismo*. P. 24.

of their community.⁶⁵ An empowering and reinforcing participation promotes the protection and goes beyond it to turn the children into subjects and social actors.

Protagonism and protection are not contradictory then, although there are clear tensions between the two concepts. A non-meaningful participation (defined in title 5.2) could expose them to situations of higher risk by the police,⁶⁶ for example when they protest against violence; or when they protest against the ill treatments of their caregivers in an institution. Other examples of protagonism that promote the protection are groups of children and adolescents that talk to adults to prevent early marriages or working children and adolescents who negotiate better conditions of employment with their employers.

The role of adults is extremely important: on one hand, they should support children and adolescents in their protagonism and, on the other, they should protect them against the risks that this protagonism may cause them; but in no case, they should avoid their participation, making excuses by saying that there are lower risks. A good understanding of the principle of the Best Interest of the Child, which should prevail at every moment, is convenient. This principle is respected when one finds ways to participate by applying suitable protection measures against risks that involves that participation.⁶⁷

An open, informed and respectful conversation between children and adolescents and adults about risk situations is necessary. Protagonism does not mean that children and adolescents should participate without consulting with adults, but that adults do not control the speech. The need to sensitise adults and convince them that the children and adolescents have the capacity to express their opinions and fully participate in matters that affect them arises here.

In the case of children and adolescents exposed to violence, it is extremely important, and this is the purpose of the study, that they are considered in society and supported to participate and make their voices heard in order to achieve a greater protection.

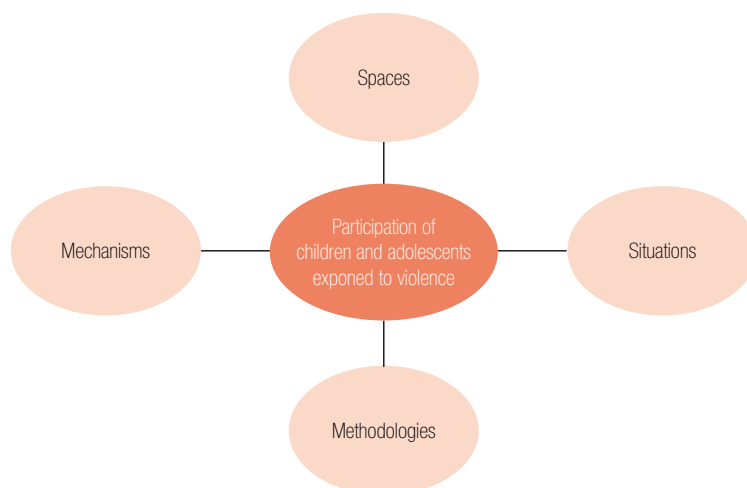
65 Gina Arnillas Traverso and Nelly Paucar Meza. *Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation in development projects*. Pp. 15-16.

66 An emblematic example was the report made through the media by a homeless little girl in Brazil, who reported the ill treatment she received from the police. Some days later, she was found dead, covered with the newspapers that had covered her story.

67 Claire O'Kane and Clare Feinstein. *Participation is a virtue that must be cultivated*. 2007, pp. 41-42.

8. Participation spaces, situations, mechanisms and methodologies

Picture 8



8.1 Participation spaces

Participation as a right is a social relationship and the spaces mark the social relationships happening within them. This is about spaces where personality is built, where there is an exercise and development of protagonism. However, child participation is still only present in spaces as a sort of struggle, and not as a daily exercise. Children and adolescents should defend their right to participation by using their own profile in these spaces and their right to build their tools of representation in order to exercise a responsible citizenship. Therefore, in order to have an impact in those spaces it is necessary to define all the actors involved therein.

8.1.1 Family and neighbourhood

The family is the first social space in which children and adolescents have their participation experiences, at least when they are included in the family project, because the power exercised by the parents usually leaves children little possibilities to participate in the decision-making process.⁶⁸

In the family, participation frequently takes the shape of help and obedience, and not an active participation recognised as a right, since all adults command according to a way conceived as

⁶⁸ Ángel Espinar. Op. cit., p.33.

“natural”. The family is considered to be a private sphere that escapes from the speeches in favour of a childhood with right to participation, opinion and association. Here it is important to consider the following principle: “what is private is public”.⁶⁹

Domestic violence not only makes participation impossible, but also makes the formation of a leading personality and favours the reproduction of authoritarian and violent personalities in children and adolescents.

A family structure in which children may freely express their points of view is used as a model to promote children’s participation in society, in general.⁷⁰ Parents should know that children’s participation and parents’ authority are mutually reinforced; and it is important to comply with the right to be heard at home in order to prevent the domestic violence.⁷¹ Therefore, it is essential to promote parents’ awareness on their children’s right to the participation in the family and other society spaces.

Children and adolescents’ participation in the labour market to help the family inside and outside the household is not properly acknowledged and, for this reason, wasted for the development of a protagonist personality.⁷²

The neighbourhood is also an important space of social interrelation, cultural production and psychosocial development of children and adolescents, since many ideas about what is fair and what is not, valuable and important are formed there. In order to guarantee the participation, it is essential that children and adolescents have a physical space to meet, to form and to support their initiatives.

8.1.2 The school

“The school is the place par excellence for coexistence and for building knowledge which directs the construction of a community of people who learn to recognise each other as subjects of rights, with equal dignity”.⁷³

Cussiánovich and Márquez propose turning it into a school for the individual. There, children and adolescents:

- Get a quality education that makes them grow as citizens and social actors.

69 An interesting study on the issue is *Family Practices and Child Participation from the children’s and adults’ point of view: an exploratory study in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Promundo Institute.

70 Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd session. Geneva, September 11-29, 2006.

71 Moushira Khattab [Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child]. *The right of the child to be heard* – Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006.

72 Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 34.

73 Ángel Espinar. Op. cit., p.34.

- Can define and develop their life project and develop their talents, skills, confidence, self-esteem, creativity and initiative.
- Can develop the ability to make decisions, understand and experience tolerance and democratic values as if in a micro-society.
- Participate as an educational, political and public objective of the school.
- Develop their integral protagonism, that is, their condition as citizens, social actors and individuals.
- Develop experiences of children's participation and organisation.
- Experience desirable and non-hierarchical child-adult relationship.⁷⁴
- Can be active participants in the preparation and evaluation of school curricula and methodology ensuring contents related to human rights, values, citizenship, democracy, and thus, they are capable of better fighting discrimination, violence and physical punishment at school.⁷⁵
- Respect each other, which excludes bullying practices.⁷⁶

Regarding the promotion of children and adolescents citizenship, the school has three fundamental purposes:⁷⁷

1. To develop skills in students so they assume and exercise their condition of democratic, supportive and responsible citizens from a critical point of view and a sense of commitment.
2. To turn the school into a democratic space of collective action and deliberation that promotes children's rights and develops a sense of ownership toward a style and an organisation of coexistence, based on confidence and participation.
3. To promote a democratic culture that respects the diversity and condemns discrimination.

Some examples of students' organisation and participation are School Municipalities (Peru), Student Governments (Venezuela and Ecuador), School Councils (Paraguay), and so on. In Peru, representatives of several schools from the same geographic area meet together periodically, plan joint actions and request support from organisations and local authorities.⁷⁸

Training teachers on children's rights and abilities to accompany their students in their protagonism is a key factor once again. Without it, the school may turn into a dehumanizing place.

⁷⁴ Idem, pp. 27-29.

⁷⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd session. Geneva, September 11-29, 2006.

⁷⁶ Comments by Save the Children's staff.

⁷⁷ Ángel Espinar. Loc. cit., p.34.

⁷⁸ Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 27-29.

8.1.3 The community (international, national, regional, local)

Children and adolescents' participation in the community is very important for their formation as citizens. Recommendations issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2006 are clear:

- Regarding participation in events, State parties should establish a systematic inclusion in public policies in order to ensure that children can express their views and effectively participate in all matters affecting them. Children's participation should be taken into account in resource allocation and mechanisms to ensure that their participation is institutionalised.
- State parties should clearly designate the authority responsible for the implementation of children's rights and ensure that this entity establishes direct contact with organisations led by children and young people in order to engage with them.
- An ombudsman should facilitate that children can express their concerns and that adequate resources are dedicated to involve children in the implementation of children's rights.
- Children and adolescents shall be included in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of National Plans of Action on the Rights of the Child.
- Public officials who working in children's issues should be trained in children's rights.
- The creation of children parliaments at national, regional and local levels offers a valuable insight of the democratic process and establishes links between children and decision makers; it is important to establish clear guidelines on how the views presented by children are taken into account.
- It is important that children participate in monitoring the implementation of the Convention and play a protagonist role in local political issues related to budget allocation in education, health, working conditions for youths and violence prevention.
- Children can play an important role in reviewing domestic legislation like the Children's Code, especially in countries that have yet to adopt such Code; also, they can make important contributions in the preparation of international human rights instruments.
- The fact that more organisations led by youth are established in the world is important: the right to exercise freedom of association as stipulated in article 15 should be reminded; likewise, the space given to youths by organisations of civil society is also essential.
- Participation should be innovative according the preferences of children in order to ensure they feel comfortable to express their views: article 31 of the Convention establishes the right of the child to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- The media plays an essential role in promoting awareness of the right of children to express their views and should include children in the development of programmes and allow children to lead media initiatives on their rights.

- Participation of children in researches on child issues is essential.
- In some countries, children under 18 are subject to military service, although they still do not have the right to vote.⁷⁹

8.2 Participation of children and adolescents according to their situation⁸⁰

The participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence changes according to their situation, which defines whether they need prevention or assistance strategies. In the case of organised armed violence, we speak of restoration rather than assistance.

In the three cases of violence, prevention refers to children and adolescents at risk of suffering it. In the case of organised armed violence, prevention intends to avoid children and adolescents from becoming gang members. In order to define the children and adolescents with whom to work in prevention, risk factors are handled, especially in the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence. The risk factors to become victims of physical and humiliating punishment are not well defined, although the possibilities increase when the child is disabled, a girl or lacks access to information.

From a participation point of view, according to our model of protagonist and meaningful participation with a rights-based approach, we can make the following observations:

8.2.1 Sexual exploitation and abuse

In the first column of Picture 9, is the initial situation of children and adolescents before they become victims of child sexual abuse and CSEC. The characteristics mean a flagrant violation of their rights. A protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents in society involves the full exercise of their rights as citizens. In this scheme, the risk factors are actually obstacles for this protagonist participation.

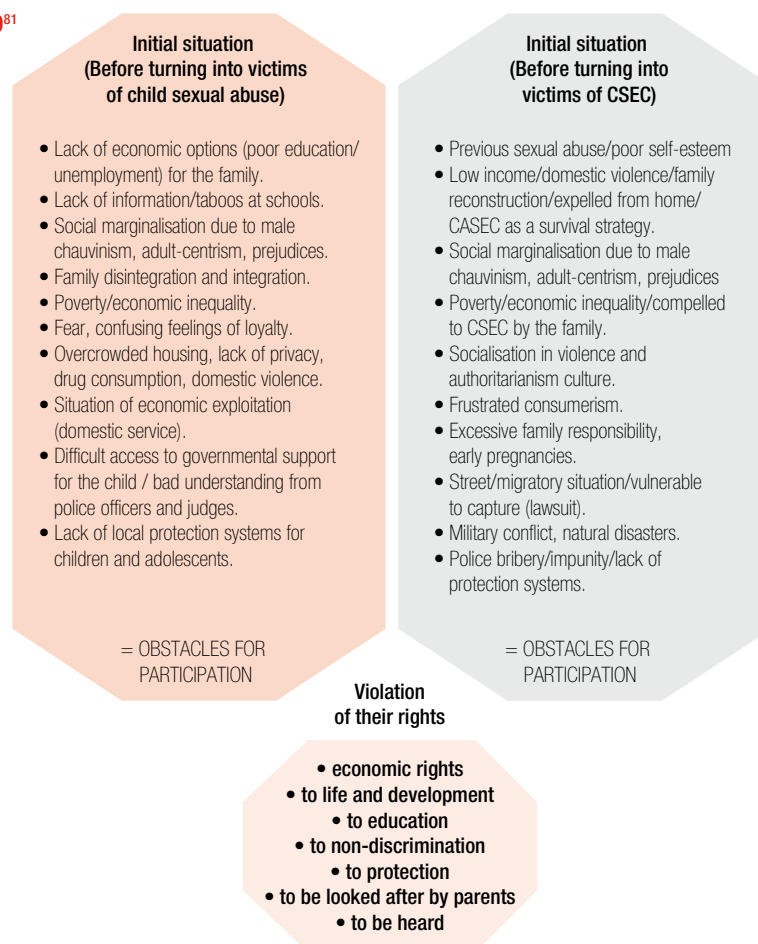
Due to the situation of rights violation, of which they are already victims, these children and adolescents may easily become victims of sexual abuse or exploitation, and intend to leave from this denial of rights they are experiencing. However, despite the fact that the new situation is also dysfunctional, some requirements of children and adolescents in the initial situation are “met” in the sexual exploitation situation. We have the example of a homosexual young man who was victim of discrimination until he became victim of sexual exploitation —situation in which, despite everything, he was accepted as a homosexual. Girls are another example. They consider sexual exploitation as the only possibility to be part of a consumer society. They even felt more protected as victims of sexual exploitation and living unprotected in the street than before they became victims.

⁷⁹ Committee on the Rights of the Child. 43rd session. Geneva, September 11-29, 2006.

⁸⁰ This paragraph was mainly developed based on the information gathered in different workshops with children, adolescents, and chaperones.

The fact is that what makes them vulnerable at the beginning is the lack of citizen participation, evident by the noncompliance with minimum conditions of survival and security. This is a violation of their rights. In order to quit this situation, they find themselves in another violation of rights that may be sexual exploitation. Guaranteeing the participation of children and adolescents in the decision-making process (that is, a greater citizenship) makes them less vulnerable of becoming victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. The prevention task should be directed at offering the child a protagonist participation that will allow him/her to enjoy rights as citizens, which eliminates their vulnerability to a greater extent.

Picture 9⁸¹



81 Risk factors taken from Carlos Iván García Suárez – Save the Children. Op. cit., pp.30-43.

During the workshop a story of a girl who quit sexual exploitation was told. She said that life was very “easy” (economically), and earned too much money, but by the intervention of an NGO, she started to appreciate life in a different way. Her motivation to quit exploitation was getting a sexually transmitted disease, and the fear that it produced on her.

8.2.2 Organised armed violence

In the case of organised armed violence, along with prevention and restoration, the situation of the gang or Mara is presented, which after all is a form of participation (although dysfunctional) within a micro-society linked with the macro-society, whose members suffer the violation of rights by the gang members.

On the other hand, the youths can be deprived from their freedom, which corresponds to non-citizen participation. Young people in gang situation are in constant conflict with the law and restorative justice is a concept that intends to rescue them as citizens. According to this concept, any infraction of the law is a human problem and any intervention should try to turn the problem into an opportunity to make the best of their condition as individuals. “The youth is a holder of enforceable rights, including the right to learn again his/her human condition, restore his/her self-esteem, repair the damages caused, make it up with his/her victim, face the music even if offended”.⁸²

Young people who are at risk of being part of a gang are once more excluded from (do not participate in) the society, lack protagonist participation, rights and citizenship. This situation leads them to become members of a gang because they receive solutions for their exclusion situation, although at the same time, their rights are violated. The fact that they violate many people’s rights with their criminal activities makes the work with young people exposed to organised armed violence a very delicate task; for this reason, it is difficult to get support.

For prevention, it is necessary to save the obstacles to the participation of the first chart (Picture 10). Thus, the risk factors are eliminated and the reasons for becoming members of a gang decrease substantially. For restoration, it is necessary to reorient young people who want to quit the gang, offer them possibilities of protagonist participation as citizens in society with full exercise of their rights.

According to a 28-year-old former member of a gang (who is already considered as a survivor) of one of the most violent neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro, the biggest motivation to quit a gang of drug-traffickers, when he was 22, was the constant insecurity with which he lived.

⁸² Alejandro Cussiánovich. “La justicia juvenil nos concierne a todos” in: *Justicia para Crecer*, N° 7 July – September 2007, p. 8.

Picture 10⁸³



83 Own preparation with data from *Neither War nor Peace* by Luke Dowdney.

Certainly, we are before difficult-discernment situations, not only legal or criminal, but socio-educational. In the common sense and in the governmental policies, a trend toward the firm hand and the most severe sanctions as clear ways to stand up to the increasing phenomenon of violence in the current contexts of Latin American societies is now installed.⁸⁴ This trend is a sign of the society helplessness before the complexity of the phenomenon and the obvious inefficiency of what is not rigor. The common belief that children who are already criminals will become incorrigible elements is widespread. All this explains why the deinstitutionalisation and the application of freedom deprivation, as the last ratio, are difficult.^{85 86}

What we need to demonstrate for the sexual abuse and exploitation and the organised armed violence is that the children and adolescents can not be considered as aggressors, because the initial exclusion they live in leads them to exploitation situations. However, they can not be considered as mere victims in the sense that they have not made any decisions before arriving to exploitation or a gang situation. The first view gives a priori a judgment of imputability and too much presumption of responsibility—that is, it is a qualification that does not include the complexity of any antisocial act. The second one gives very little responsibility to children and adolescents and reduces them to objects without possibilities of protagonism. It is important to consider them as subjects of rights who, through protagonist participation, can decide not to become members or quitting the exploitation or gang situation. For this reason, it is necessary that they realise they can have a decent life project by participating in society as citizens who exercise their rights.

When children and adolescents are involved in sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence, it is important that they find an alternative for their current situation, which under no circumstance represents a return to the initial situation of rights violation. The prevention should be focused on preventing children and adolescents from experiencing that initial situation which pushed them toward these scenarios.

8.2.3 Physical and humiliating punishment

Contrary to sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence, physical and humiliating punishment is not a primary consequence of a search for a way out of a rights violation situation. Rather, it is the product of a child raising culture which repeats itself generation after generation. However, in some indigence situations, family stress can be increased and thus the possibilities of children becoming victims of physical and humiliating punishment. In terms of their participation, this violence circle can be broken by deleting cultural guidelines through the empowerment of children

84 Interview with Gina Solari: "at the same time, there is a trend to a defensive and self-protection attitude against the ineffectiveness of current measures of the governments."

85 Interview with Alejandro Cussiánovich, November 2007.

86 Editor's note: The privation of freedom is the last resort (last ratio) among penalties that may be applied.

and adolescents on their rights and through strategies that increase their self-esteem. Thus, they will be capable of advocating on the mindset of adults and on laws to explicitly ban physical and humiliating punishment.⁸⁷ Doubtlessly, it is necessary to train adults so they adopt a child upbringing culture which respects the rights of their children.⁸⁸

In cases of physical and humiliating punishment it is important to identify and fight against the main causes of violence, mainly the different structures of power, which can be patriarchal, based on age, gender, caste, social class, skills, etc.

8.3 Basic participation mechanisms for children and adolescents

The two basic participation mechanisms for children and adolescents we have distinguished are:

1. The establishment of consultation and action systems of children and adolescents within specific programmes/services or advocacy strategies related to them.
2. The participation of children and adolescents in child-led organisations and their inclusion as partners in the design and implementation of policies and other actions related to them.

For the first mechanism the following child participation indicators in projects involving children were developed:

1. Mechanisms for children's participation in the design of proposals.
 - The institution has included consultation mechanisms for children for the proposal development.
 - The institution has carried out a shared work with children in the proposal design.
2. Project includes participation mechanisms of children in decision-making for the formulation and execution of activities.
 - Children participate by proposing activities in the project execution.
 - Children's proposals are included in the project execution.
 - Project activities are organised, conducted and executed by children with chaperones.
 - Children are consulted and participate in decisions about possible adjustment to the project.
3. Project considers participation mechanisms of children in follow up and evaluation of proposals.

⁸⁷ For example, in December 2007, physical and humiliating punishment was banned by law in Spain, Venezuela and Uruguay.

⁸⁸ Adult participation is, however, out of context in this study, if their participation is not linked to the participation of children and adolescents.

- Children participate in the follow up the project progresses.
- Children participate in the evaluation of the promoters' performance.
- Children participate in the evaluation of the project outcomes.
- Children participate in the evaluation of the achievements of the project.⁸⁹

We can add the following indicator: the organisation has facilitated all the relevant information referring to actions which promote children's participation in friendly formats.

The second mechanism implies a greater level of participation than the first one. Within child-led organisations, children and adolescents can autonomously choose their representatives, who in turn can participate in first-type mechanisms. Also, a child-led organisation becomes a model for protagonist participation to achieve desirable levels of empowerment and advocacy, especially in the case of children and adolescents exposed to violence, as will be shown below. In this case, it is recommendable that children and adolescents are organised according to the type of violence, but always gathering children and adolescents at risk and those who need assistance in order to avoid a stronger stigma on the latter.

8.3.1 General benefits of the children and adolescents' participation in a child-led organisation

The experience of MOANI (Apostolic Movement of Children and Adolescents) in Venezuela —which is an organisation of working children and not an organisation based on the violence they live in— shows, however, the different benefits for children and adolescents, and their peaceful relationship in the movement.

- Relationship atmosphere existing in the group.
- Possibility of dialogue, communication and training that they find there.
- Progressive autonomy that chaperones provide to assume responsibilities.
- Give some meaning to their lives.
- Chances to meet other children, travel and learn new things.
- Leaving the local area allows other interpretations of what is personal and group.
- Stable environment to stay a considerable period of time.
- Atmosphere of affection, proximity, mutual respect are also motivations for children and adolescents.
- Humane environment where they are recognised the way they are.
- Their word is heard and taken into account.
- Construction of rules and ethical criteria of collective coexistence.
- Demanding attitude of respect for their rights.
- Mentality to see, judge and act.⁹⁰

89 Ángel Espinar. Op. cit., p.50.

90 Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 40.

All these topics point to a replica of inclusion-oriented and binding society where children and adolescents may develop their skills, feel respected and build a project of decent life. This situation contrasts with the macro-society that excludes them, does not respect their rights and exposes them to violent situations. The organisation is an excellent mechanism to prepare them for protecting themselves.

Alejandro Cussiánovich emphasises the following contribution of a child-led organisation: children and adolescents live tensions, conflicts, differences, rivalries, jealousy, frustrated aspirations to assume positions; and often, serious difficulties before adults and chaperones. This is not always solved, but they may learn to deal with impasses, tensions, situations of symbolic violence and even direct violence among children and adolescents or between them and adults, or between their organisations and others, both of children and adolescents and NGO or international entities and State officers.⁹¹

8.3.2 Examples that demonstrate that children and adolescents' participation in child-led organisations promotes the fulfilment of other rights

- Initiatives of child-led organisations to promote birth registration have increased school registration and decreased children's marriages.
- There are successful initiatives of child-led organisations to register working children and adolescents (NATs) in schools.
- Through child-led organisations, they have been able to express their opinions about sexual abuse and exploitation, and protect themselves from these; they have prevented early marriages through negotiations with parents and promoted legal actions against child abusers and traffickers.
- Children of different ages and skills, religions, castes and ethnic groups have been organised against discrimination.
- Children have made collective efforts at a local level to improve sanitation and health practices, and the environment protection.
- Advocacy initiatives of child-led organisations have changed the adults' image so they may fulfil their obligations with children.⁹²

8.3.3 Group and protagonist experience of children and adolescents allows breaking cycles of violence

- The experience of participating in a child-led organisation generates an important psychological effect.⁹³

⁹¹ Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 40.

⁹² Claire O'Kane. Op. cit.

⁹³ "Group interrelation makes desinhibition easier in adolescents, as well as a more intense emotional environment, and a rapid reduction of concerns. Group experience led appropriately by adults can favour positive and mature solutions and internal change through new perspective of multiple perception", p. 131.

- It promotes the self-discovery, knowledge, emotional support, exchange of opinions and specific actions for change.
- It has an empowering effect as children discover that others share the same emotions and experiences.
- The facilitator should find a balance between strength to create a safe environment and the flexibility to arouse confidence and self-esteem in children and adolescents.
- The environment allows the young person to test independent behaviours within the group and to be more creative and reflexive.
- It is a place to practice new social abilities like properly joining discussions, talking to others assertively, control boredom, anger, sadness, empathy, respect and concern in the group, etc.
- The group builds the strength of the children and adolescents' self-concept; the group acceptance is a constant concern among children and adolescents, and it may be their first experience of group experience.
- It favours coexistence and the acceptance of differences.
- Reciprocal search for own and others' identity leads to a differentiated identity which includes the fellow man.
- Values and behaviour guidelines of the group allow young people to analyse their own beliefs and attitudes.
- The emotional experience of the group does not reproduce the primary emotional group experience (the family).
- In a child-led organisation, a feeling of belonging is developed and, once the group cohesion is achieved, children and adolescents integrate themselves, use a common language, share resources, opinions and are able to carry out a collective work before the problems that affect them.
- A child-led organisation strengthens the collective skills for protagonist participation; it is an important factor to prevent violence.
- Participation allows a critical reflection on their reality, and direct the group towards transforming actions that strength the self-esteem, solidarity and the most functional relationships; they all are indispensable elements for the prevention of domestic violence.
- The group of youths becomes a social power that manages to undertake collective actions that turn their reality into the main protagonists of new social relationships without intra-family violence and extra-family sexual abuse.
- Protagonist participation leads to breaking the cultural patterns of violence.⁹⁴

8.3.4 Elements to be considered in order to create child-led organisations

- Foundations for sustainability: important foundations that make a child-led organisation grow and be productive in the long term. The sustainability model developed with the regional organisations of working children and adolescents in Latin American is shown in Appendix 3.

⁹⁴ Miguel Ángel Jiménez Rodríguez. Op. cit.

- An own agenda for children: what children prioritise for action or advocacy.
- Representation: democratic and representative procedures (prevent children and adolescents turning into new elite, overexposed and not already representative of their peers).
- Representation: democratic and representative procedures (prevent children and adolescents turning into new elite, overexposed and not already representative of their peers).
- Facilitation among peers: as children, they help each other in their participation.
- Obstacles to facilitate children's participation.⁹⁵
- Risks that may occur when facilitating child-led organisations.⁹⁶
- Cultural factors that facilitators should know.⁹⁷
- Gradual expansion of child-led organisations: external expansion by sharing learning experiences with children and adults to start new organisations; internal expansion turning into more effective as a child-led organisation to influence adults spaces through institutional links.
- Best practices.
- Creating opportunities for different ages.⁹⁸

Children in situation of streets and working children and adolescents from India have distinguished, also, the following components of child-led organisations:⁹⁹

- Access to resources, funds and training.
- Participation in all stages of actions planning.
- Access to information and information analysis.
- Respect for diversity, equality promotion.
- Participation election (when and how).
- Rights and duties.
- Creative methodologies.
- Common identity and appropriation of such identity by children.
- Clear communication channels.
- Cooperation and community (teamwork).
- Decision power.
- Regular encounters (platforms for expressing themselves).

8.4 Methodologies for the participation of children and adolescents

In 2008 in the second half of this paper, mythologies and instruments will be presented to promote the participation of children and adolescents in programmes and projects of attention and prevention of the three forms of violence within framework of protection stated by the Convention.

⁹⁵ See chapter on obstacles.

⁹⁶ For example, a risk can be that child-led organisations turn into gangs due to bad accompanying.

⁹⁷ For example, in some countries it is not culturally acceptable to put boys and girls together in a same organisation.

⁹⁸ Claire O'Kane. Op. cit. Part I.

⁹⁹ Claire O'Kane. Op. cit. Part II.

9. Ideal profile of the chaperone accompanying children and adolescents exposed to violence in their participation

The role of the chaperone accompanying children and adolescents exposed to violence changes according to the space, the situation, the mechanism and the methodology used, and especially according to each of the children's personal stories.

Even though the organisation, which is in the hands of children and adolescents, is not a therapeutic or group of psychological analysis, it is worth mentioning that a by-product of their contribution in the life of children and adolescents is to create an atmosphere in which every child or adolescent find elements that favour their resilience.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it is necessary that adults accompanying these organisations have a minimum of shrewdness, that is, of sensitivity to perceive individuals who—apart from the regular life in the organisation—require a more professional care. Looking after the good organisational and democratic climate constitutes a necessary demand for the organisation to favour the resilience before life experiences.

During the workshops carried out for this study, children and adolescents have appreciated some essential characteristics in the chaperone (see Picture 11):

Picture 11

Physical and humiliating punishment	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Organised armed violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows reliability and friendship. - Is more a friend than just a chaperone. - Is committed and familiar with cases of children. - Respects the rights of the children and adolescents. - Is concerned with problems. - Offers a family treatment. - Is transparent and does not have a double personality. - Is elected by the group. - Is a good leader. - Has initiatives. - Is honourable, democratic, equitable, positive, fair, good leader, understanding, humble, safe, enthusiastic, happy.¹⁰¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows reliability and discretion. - Is able to listen to children, understands them and supports their ideas. - Is interested in helping others. - Is sure of what to do and say. - Provides participation opportunity in decision-making for the good of all. - Is informed. - Respects the children and adolescents' decisions. - Is understanding. - Asserts the rights of the children and adolescents. - Provides safety. - Organises his/her thoughts and ideas that contribute to society. - Is dynamic, kind and happy. - Makes him/herself understood. - Helps to organise brainstorming. - Provides love, support and friendship and does not demoralise girls for her problems. - Grants confidence when telling stories.¹⁰² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listens to children and adolescents. - Is visionary. - Is flexible in his or her ideas convictions. - Is opened to new learning. - Is empathetic, charismatic, and has critical vision. - Grants confidence but with sensitivity (no compassion). - Handles his/her prejudices. - Has good technical knowledge, but is a good friend, is humane. - Bad example = traditional model of school teacher who controls children and adolescents. - Is good communicator and good conflict mediator. - Has psychological and pedagogic experience.¹⁰³

100 Resilience refers to the ability of people to feel better quickly after unpleasant events or sorrow periods.

101 Workshop with children and adolescents members of Vichama in Peru.

102 Workshop with children and adolescents members of Renacer in Colombia.

103 Workshop with children and adolescents members of Luta pela Paz in Brazil.

Adult specialists developed the following profile of the ideal chaperone for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence:

- Sensitive, understanding and tolerant.
- Clarity about his/her own fears, projects, proposals and bets.
- Technical ability.
- Commitment with what he/she is doing.
- Works as a reference.
- Age is not important.
- Able to relation with institutional bodies: advocacy and leadership skills.¹⁰⁴

In a Save the Children publication, we find the necessary skills so that chaperones can appropriately communicate with children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment:¹⁰⁵

Personal commitment and communication skills are essential pre-conditions to work in this sensitive area. Consulting children on any aspect of physical and humiliating punishment requires understanding, patience and sensitivity. Time and resources should be allocated to ensure that staff is adequately prepared for and supported in this work. Involving children in programme planning and implementation is complex and time consuming.

The following skills will enhance the quality of communication with children:

- The ability to feel comfortable with children and to engage with them in whatever style of communication suits the individual or group —e.g., by sitting on the ground with the children, using games, and being able to tolerate expressions of distress, aggression and so on.
- The ability to use language and concepts appropriate to the child's age, stage of development and culture.
- An acceptance that children who have had distressing experiences may find it extremely difficult to trust an unfamiliar adult. It may take a great deal of time and patience before the child can feel sufficient trust to communicate openly.
- An ability to see that children may view their situation very differently from the way adults might see it.

Among other kinds of responses and reactions, children may fantasise, invent explanations for unfamiliar or frightening events, express themselves in symbolic ways, emphasise issues which may seem unimportant to adults, and so on.

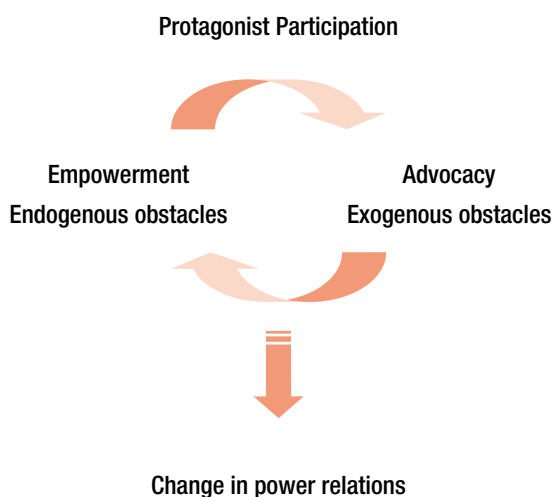
¹⁰⁴ Workshop on organised armed violence with specialists from different countries.

¹⁰⁵ Save the Children. *Ending physical and humiliating punishment of children - Manual for Action*, 2005.

10. Obstacles for participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

We have seen that protagonist participation involves the fact that children and adolescents are citizens with full rights and who participate in all society environments that affect them. In order to develop adequate methodologies for the promotion of participation it is important to define the obstacles that exist for the child participation. We can make a distinction between endogenous and exogenous obstacles.

Picture 12



If we consider the picture of the process of protagonist participation (Picture 12), endogenous obstacles can be overcome by means of empowering strategies and are related to the lack of adequate information, the lack of awareness and of skills required for participation. Exogenous obstacles can be eliminated by means of an advocacy process and are related to the lack of laws, regulations and institutionalised procedures that ensure the right to free association, to participate in political issues, to be able to give an opinion in the media, to be able to apply for a political position, so on.

It is still a challenge to save obstacles for the children and adolescents' participation, since the power relations intends to be changed but, without doubt, will be defended by those who have a greater power. "The cultural change and the transformation of social representations, when these operate as functional and justifiable ways of domination, submission and privilege of some age groups over others, is complex, long and difficult".¹⁰⁶ It refers to a society that does not recognise children

¹⁰⁶ Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 20.

and adolescents and manifests itself in the resistance to change and the rejection to a cultural transformation without which the exogenous factors may cause that children stop doing things of their age, that is, a deprivation of protagonist and meaningful participation that reduces the individual psychological development of the child.

In Appendix 6 a complete list of obstacles found during workshops with children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence and obstacles for participation found in publications, is presented.

10.1 Obstacles for participation of children and adolescents in general

Children and adolescents exposed to violence also face particular obstacles for their participation.

The neighbourhood spaces are not the higher references of urban young people in the Internet era anymore, and the community for the rural young people has passed from being a vital space to a temporary and ephemeral space (migration).

Children and adolescents do not often see clearly the articulation among their daily needs and the conquests of wider and more political nature. The participation is a process that takes time and the conception of the children and adolescents' daily life is many times reduced to what is immediate, also because the youth stage is relatively short.

Likewise, the children and adolescents used to have a low level of awareness of their condition as subjects of rights. For this reason, it is important to see them and make them be seen as a power (more than as present or future), that is, they have all conditions to fulfil themselves completely.¹⁰⁷ Another obstacle is the fact that children and adolescents are not a homogeneous group and the current society is characterised by its individualism and competitiveness.

There is a generalised incompetence to conciliate multiculturalism with effective participation. The fact of escaping from the dominant paradigm of protection that reflects the social image of children and adolescents as weak and danger turns out to be difficult as well. Children and adolescents themselves many times suffer to create their own ways of participation without reproducing the authoritarian and non democratic models of the adult world.

Lack of trained human resources to adequately accompany children and adolescents in their protagonist participation and most of the time, participation is symbolic, decorative or manipulative in the consultation, in decision making, in control and in implementation.

¹⁰⁷ More information on representation of the child as future, as a becoming and, therefore, without influence at present, in Cussiánovich, *Participación ciudadana de la infancia desde el paradigma del protagonismo*, p. 5.

While the articulated expression of a children and adolescents' movement at national and international level does not exist, the political parties and other sectors of the society that take advantage of children participation will not take young people's opinions into account (on the one hand, because they do not have the right to vote), and while the adult-centrism exists, it will not be possible to include the children and adolescents in the exercise of power.

10.2 Children and adolescents exposed to violence also face particular obstacles for their protagonism

Living under threat of violence has considerable consequences for the daily life of children, and presents different obstacles for their participation:

- Children and adolescents may feel a strong sense of loyalty towards their parents, which makes it difficult for them to talk about how they are treated.
- Children and adolescents may feel fear, shame and hurt which can get in the way of being able to express their views; these difficulties can be serious in countries where children and adolescents are not encouraged to express their views or participate in decision-making at any level.
- They may be seen as the property of parents, expected to respect and do what elders tell them.
- They are not used to talking about violence that they experience with adults.
- The youngest children may have difficulties in recognising violence as such by having been socialised this way.
- For disabled children, girls and other discriminated groups, in fact, it is more difficult to break the silence.
- Some types of violence can be taboo issues or involve big stigmas.
- The violence experience turns children and adolescents into distrustful individuals and arouses victimisation, passivity and silence in them
- Children and adolescents are many times more vulnerable in situations in which they have fewer opportunities to express their opinion.¹⁰⁸

During workshops with children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence, they identified different obstacles for their protagonist and meaningful participation. Based on such data, we have reached the following observations and conclusions.¹⁰⁹

10.2.1 Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment

Psychological obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment require empowerment strategies both for children and adolescents affected and for caregivers, school personnel and classmates who cause ill treatment. An important factor

¹⁰⁸ Save the Children. *Ending physical and humiliating punishment of children - Manual for Action*. P. 98

¹⁰⁹ Systematisation based on information gathered during workshop with youth exposed to the three forms of violence.

that should be overcome is the fear that abusers generate, which avoids any effective intervention as they are not able to communicate anything that happens to them. Trainings on the issue that are addressed to all those who are involved can be used for prevention as well as for detection and report. Virtues of children's and adolescents' participation in a child-led organisation to break violence cycles and recover psychologically have been described in the previous paragraph and are highly recommendable to overcome psychological obstacles.

Different types of training should promote not violent ways of upbringing for caregivers and let them see the importance of the protagonist participation of children and adolescents for the exercise of their rights. But there should also be safe physical spaces that facilitate the children's and adolescents' participation in the community as well as in school. An autonomous institutionalised participation is the best way to take their opinions into account.

It is necessary to pay special attention to groups more vulnerable to physical and humiliating punishment such as the disabled, girls and the less informed individuals in society. Assuring the necessary change in the common beliefs regarding children and adolescents and their upbringing, as well as the public policies directed at the prevention and care of children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment, are matters of a long-term advocacy work made by child-led organisations in collaboration with other organisations of the civil society.

10.2.2 Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse

We have seen in the chapter on participation, according to each child and adolescent's situation, that the situation lived by children before turning into victims is one of rights violation, of citizenship exclusion, which leads them to other situations of rights violation, that is to say, sexual exploitation and abuse.

The obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse show us that the situation of victims also satisfies some needs and takes away some of their insecurities, especially the economic ones. Sexual exploitation and abuse experiences, however, affect their physical integrity and their self-esteem and the situation isolates them from a healthy and protected environment.

In the prevention field, it is necessary to detect children and adolescents in an exclusion situation, which could lead them to CSEC, and offer them access to a decent life project. It would be better to integrate them into an organisation where they can share their experiences with their peers in the same situation and where they can become empowered to overcome psychological obstacles and can undergo a group and protagonist experience that will help them to end the cycles of violence. For children and adolescents who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse the same strategy is appropriate and it is necessary that quitting these problems should not mean going back to the initial situation of exclusion.

For children and adolescents in risk situation, it is necessary to take preventive measures to eliminate risk factors that we have defined as obstacles for their real citizenship participation. Therefore, it is vital to establish participation spaces for children and adolescents, allocate funds and pass laws in order to institutionalise such participation as an inalienable right of children and adolescents.

Likewise, it is essential to carry out social advocacy to change the social mindset on children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, who suffer from a strong stigma and discrimination, and to turn this rejection into support from the community. Community access to information in general and promoting gender equity and generation relations must be ensured.

Most vulnerable groups should receive special attention and children and adolescents must be given certain autonomy to take decision after having been appropriately empowered.

10.2.3 Overcoming obstacles for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence

For those children and adolescents who live in an initial situation of rights violations, exclusion and multiple non-fulfilled needs, the gang becomes very attractive for it offers them a solution to several of their needs, despite the lack of protection the new situation implies. Becoming members of a gang provides them with money, status and power, and favours contacts with members of the opposite sex.

An important psychological factor of the victims of organised armed violence is the fear of involving their families,¹¹⁰ but also the fear of experiencing again the previous situation of exclusion. The isolation of the “regular” world is also very big by the stigma that involves being a member of a gang that they present to mix with others. There is a lack of safe physical spaces where children can feel protected and of places out of gangs where they can express their views and take decisions. Also, violence has turned into a usual cultural guide for children and adolescents in our societies at present.

It is necessary to detect children and adolescents who live in this situation of exclusion and give them access to a project of a decent life, preferably through their involvement in an organisation that empowers them within a healthy and protected environment where they can share experiences and live the group and protagonist experience that allows them not to become victims or quit the gangs. An organisation where children and adolescents may create a replica of a society, in which their rights are respected and not stigmatised, can overcome many obstacles to their protagonist participation. If children and adolescents who are victims of organised armed violence do not have pending debts, other members of gangs do not usually come up with obstacles for their exit.

¹¹⁰ During the workshop, a former member of a gang told that their relatives always had to call him before entering into the house, so he would not shoot them by the fear of the police or members of other gangs.

It is also necessary to provide information about rights, and to promote dialogue between the police and young people. The strong stigma that exists over the young people of some neighbourhoods, of certain age, who belong to some ethnic groups, pushes them to become more involved in gangs, turning them into a “self-fulfilling prophecy”. It is important, then, to raise the public awareness of organised armed violence and against discrimination. The participation of young people whom the programmes are directed should be guaranteed from the planning and in each stage of any programme.

Society itself should make sure there are actual recreation and job opportunities for young people who live in dangerous neighbourhoods. Society is also responsible for offering an education of values that remakes the individualism, consumerism and materialism, as well as supporting the creation of social networks that help to create a safe and healthy environment with the participation of young people. Participation should also include young people who are victims of organised armed violence, who should not be considered as criminals without the right to express their opinion.

When formulating strategies, it is always important to understand that the organised armed violence is a symptom of deep problems in the society, which prevent young people from constructing their decent life project. Trying to solve the organised armed violence’s problem without considering the social and economic marginalisation, the lack of infrastructure, the little political will to improve these neighbourhoods, corruption, poverty and the number of weapons in the hands of civilians is a utopia. This way, only some young people could be taken away from the armed violence, whereas many others could turn into new victims.

11. Interventions to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

Violence is a key concern of children and adolescents from all over the world. Their participation in actions against violence is necessary in order to create a society that respects their right to protection, supports their resilience and allows them to protect themselves against the abuse, violations and injustices.

Participation in a suitable and friendly environment may help the children and adolescents, affected by violence, to explore past experiences and regain confidence in the future. Participation may be also an important instrument to leave the victimisation, passiveness and silence behind.

With the opportunity to participate, children can share their experiences and have more control of their lives; less risk of exploitation, less fear in life situations where strict rules prevail, like in State institutions. Experiences demonstrate that if children and adolescents can have contact with adults who take them seriously, the hidden or ignored situation of violence comes to light and children

and adolescents who have access to information about complain procedures or report mechanisms usually look for help to protect themselves.

Participation improves children and adolescents' self-confidence and self-esteem before violence situations. When participating, children and adolescents obtain and expand their skills upon knowing that others share similar experiences; they achieve purposes and competences for their own lives and the belief that they may influence positively their own and others' lives. Children and adolescents who have participated in student bodies, town committees and youth clubs have used these opportunities to express, prevent and end the violence against themselves, their peers and the community.¹¹¹

During the workshops carried out with children and adolescents exposed to different types of violence, they suggested several measures in order to promote their protagonist participation, which we have systematised for our conceptual framework.¹¹² We have separated the interventions suggested by the children and adolescents during the workshops (11.1, 11.2 and 11.3) and those suggested by the bibliographic resources (12). The first systematisation of measures is shown in Appendix 7.

11.1 Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment

In order to empower the children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment, methodologies involving art: theatre, audiovisual tapes, slides, images, songs, and workshops turned out to be very effective. The use of new communication technologies can break also the isolation where the affected children and adolescents live. It is necessary the use of some methodologies to teach them to organise spaces in order to work the issues of punishment and rights in general, as well as the bonds of comradeship, which are strong motivations to develop abilities. It is also important to promote values inside the group such as: responsibility, respect, equal opportunities, tolerance, etc.

Children and adolescents, preferably representatives of child-led organisations should be involved in all impact strategies. Several methodologies such as theatre and radio spots made by children and adolescents, which also empower them, as well as the information fairs, reflection workshops, recitals, passacaglia, and different sensitisation campaigns can be used for the social impact.

It is also necessary to involve children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment in the strategies of political impact and social surveillance. They preferably, through an organisation and with the support of other organisations of the civil society, "gain" the public spaces of participation where they can express their opinion and make decisions.

111 Latin America Regional Secretariat for the UN Study on Violence against children and adolescents. Violence against children and adolescents – Latin America Report in the context of the UN Global Study, 2006, p. 79.

112 Systematisation based on information gathered during workshops with youth exposed to the three forms of violence. The data gathered can be found in the appendixes.

It is desirable to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment in a child-led organisation, and try to institutionalise that participation. The media and the school space turn out to be very useful at the moment of persuading them to be part of an organisation, which should include children and adolescents of different ages, abilities, sex, and social groups, since these are factors that influence their vulnerability to physical and humiliating punishment.

In order to win the participation spaces, it is essential to sensitise parents, teachers and authorities. It is also necessary to train them about physical and humiliating punishment. Health care staff which is often the first to detect physical and humiliating punishment cases should know how to proceed.

11.2 Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse

Children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse have an urgent need of prevention workshops and feeling part of an organisation as a safe and healthy environment where they live personal recognition processes and perform participation exercises regarding the issue through playful, pedagogical and recreational activities. This way they are empowered to undertake collective impact actions and develop self-protection abilities from the organisation. In the organisation, they learn to talk about their problems, which is the beginning of a personal transformation to a different thinking about rights, power relations, personal development, society and values. Individuals who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse managed to talk in public places a short time later. This helps other individuals in the same situation and, at the same time, influences their self-esteem in a positive way. The fact that they form solid opinions and leadership abilities, assertiveness and prevention achieved in the organisation gives them an important capacity of self-protection. In the organisation, they learn about their rights and how to enforce them; they obtain basic values education and it includes social abilities such as solidarity, empathy, and good interpersonal relationships. They learn also how to report a case of sexual exploitation and abuse. Theatre techniques especially turned out to be effective for children and adolescents exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation, so they may know, appreciate and accept themselves. This methodology is also used to involve new children and adolescents. All these elements are used so that the children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse may take preventive measures, self-protection and live as real citizens.

In terms of impact, it is necessary to create strategies for different spaces: family, school and community. In the family, it is necessary to awaken the interest in the sexual abuse and exploitation, since its members may contribute a lot at the moment of preventing and detecting victims. The organisation of children and adolescents exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation is also an important place to detect cases of domestic sexual abuse, and propose the appropriate measures.

School authorities should support the sensitisation processes about this problem, and open spaces so the children and adolescents may meet and reflect about it. An initial space created in the school is, also, an excellent beginning to create an organisation of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse. It is possible to promote replicas in other schools from the school itself, and cause a social impact in the entire district. The institutionalised structure of the school offers the children and adolescents a good opportunity to communicate with others about it, undertake preventive measures together and raise awareness of this matter in the community. The school should include this problem in its educational programme in order to break myths related to sexuality, supported by impact campaigns, and achieve this way an important catalytic effect in terms of prevention. For all that, the institutionalised participation of children and adolescents (school councils or other similar organisation), which might arise, can be useful.

There are a many impact strategies of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse in the community. There are recreational strategies against children exploitation such as wall newspapers designed by children and adolescents, dance groups, radio ads carried out by young people, marches, and organisations of youth forums on the promotion of the coordination of youth initiatives at regional, national and international level. At the same time, it is necessary to support the collaboration between youth organisations and parents, which are organised against CSEC, and with NGOs in order to influence on public policies as well as to promote its collaboration with schools and city councils in order to carry out prevention at an early age for children and adolescents at high risk of becoming victims of CSEC (hotbeds). Likewise, it is necessary to organise trainings and workshops about the prevention of this problem and defence of the children's rights aimed at parents along with children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse. It is desirable that children and adolescents, exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse, participate in programmes and the elaboration of laws as well as in legal and psychological assistance. It is indispensable to have an effect on it, so the state support economically the creation of child-led organisations and institutionalise its participation in public matters that affect children expose to this situation.

11.3 Interventions proposed by children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence

Fear is a predominant factor among the children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence, who can learn to express through methodologies of art and symbolism. Sport is a good introductory activity to awaken interest in children and adolescents in order to join an organisation. It teaches them to have discipline, accept rules and have different expectations. It is important to promote interests, skills and images young people's plentiful energy may be focused on positive purposes.

For victims of organised armed violence, it is necessary to empower them in order to generate a resilience capacity that can be an important factor to become leaders as a role model for others who

are in the way of becoming victims. Young people have to regain confidence and self-esteem through a project of decent life without fear and with rights. This project can be carried out in an organisation where they receive moral and ethical education and learn to reject the consumerism, drugs, weapons and the idea of women as objects. Monitoring by an adult with a high level of acceptance by the group is an indispensable factor.

When empowerment strategies are carried out in an organisation, it is necessary to develop programmes that offer job and recreational opportunities in society. It is also necessary to promote dialogue between children and adolescents and governmental institutions and involve individuals exposed to organised armed violence in each stage of the projects cycle; a participation that has been poor so far due to the criminal stigma that children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence bear and to the ignorance of children and adolescents' rights in general.

The approach must be preventive; however, restorative justice and alternative measures to confinement must be promoted so that young people affected can recover the best of their human condition and participate again with autonomy in the society. The organisation, apart from establishing guidelines for self-protection, can also help in the protection offering children and adolescents symbols of the organisation that identify them in the streets. It is also necessary to establish a monitoring system of young people who have decided farewell the gang's violent life.

The issue about children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence must continue be investigated and they must be involved in the process. It is an indispensable strategy to promote the creation of child-led organisations capable of recovering psychologically through group experience and with possibilities of real impact in the society aimed at their rights defence.

Families must be involved, particularly women, in order to change the social image that accepts the violence as a cultural guideline. These families should be given the opportunity to participate in the same workshops about citizenship in order to emancipate the whole community.

12. Interventions found in the bibliographic resources to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence

Literature mentions many interventions that promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence, although they are not dealt in depth and their results are not

mentioned either. We will make a summary of the most important measures and we will list all the measures found in Appendix 7.

12.1 Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment

Children and adolescents can be involved as active actors in many activities against physical and humiliating punishment. The best mechanism, as described above, is to let them be part of a child-led organisation along with adult collaborators. This allows them to break violence cycles and collectively build a replica of a safe and inclusive society with democratic values, and establish strategies of effective impacts to fight against the physical and humiliating punishment. They can choose representatives who make queries based on their foundations to decide the way they can collaborate with other civil society organisations that should respect elected children and adolescents' representatives and adapt to the decisions that have been democratically made. Since the profile of the child or adolescent at risk of suffering physical and humiliating punishment is not well defined as in other cases of violence, the issue can be discussed in any children and adolescents' organisation, but it is important to take into account disabled children, girls and those who are less informed because they represent a high risk group.

Children and adolescents can participate in researches and in every stage of the project cycle. They can also design their own media campaigns and produce their own plays for social impact. The strategy to bring up young educators is very effective in order to prevent and identify violence cases and help with the assistance.

School councils are children and adolescents' democratic bodies that can promote a safe environment in the school and many times are used as a first experience of self-governed organisation. This council can be very effective in reporting physical and humiliating punishment domestic violence cases perpetrated by school personnel and also in detecting and reporting cases of domestic violence. Including children's rights in the school programme is very important and if children and adolescents do not go to school, rights training must be promoted through guardians and the community. The school and the organisation are ideal places to promote dialogue and best practices among peers. Apart from raising awareness on the dangers of physical and humiliating punishment for children, adolescents and adults, a mechanism of report that respect the child and adolescent discretion must be established.

Likewise, it is important to stimulate the participation of a children and adolescents' representative in local governments in order to defend their rights and also influence socially and politically in order to demand the end of physical and humiliating punishment. The best support that civil society organisations, represented by adults, can offer is to promote safe environments for young people

where they learn, talk and express an opinion about the physical and humiliating punishment and make decisions that can put an end to this problem.

12.2 Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse

In the same way, in the case of sexual exploitation and abuse, we have seen that the best mechanism to break violence cycles and have influence is being part of a child-led organisation where self-protection skills can be developed; experiences can be exchanged among peers; self-esteem can be recovered and becoming a social actor who fights against violence can be also possible. In the child-led organisation and with the support of professional adults, young people can develop new and positive relationships. Furthermore, in child-led organisations, schools and communities, training in life skills, gender equality, children's rights, conflict management, etc., can be given to children and adolescents.

The responsibility of society organisations represented by adults is to give children and adolescents access to information and resources, and to develop youth skills in order to organise and become counsellors, communicators and community leaders. Opportunities must be created so that children and adolescents design and participate in social impact campaigns that promote protection. It is necessary to promote associations among child-led organisations and the police and governments in order to share ideas about effective ways to fight against CSEC and to help young people to reduce their fear of the authority figures. Young people can be protected during activities in the community, offering them identification materials with certain projects.

It is essential to let children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse to participate in policies and programmes research, planning, development, execution and monitoring. However, it would be better to support children and adolescents projects as they are the first individuals who should identify methods that can have a positive impact on their closest environment, including libraries, recreation areas and youth clubs building.

It is very important to offer theatre, poetry, painting, dance and literature workshops that allow the victims to express themselves through the art and other creative means that give them confidence through public plays in other organisations, schools and local communities. There is no protagonism without arts, aesthetics and games. Protagonism is autonomy, permanent creativity; the individual's creativity, personal marks and existence are fused in art. If there is something that may help understanding the right to protagonist participation, it must be shrouded in art, imagination and sensitivity, which are elements that are lost in a society that is tired of the daily survival and the circus and buffoonery that the social media offers. Protagonism expressed in art and creativity represents a counterculture of the deteriorated way of humour that today our mediocre television particularly offers.¹¹³ The theatre generates a space of games; creation and beauty that contrast with traumatic

113 Interview with Alejandro Cussiánovich, November 2007.

and painful experiences lived by children and adolescents who are victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. A path of searching, learning, surprises, studies and a dose of magic must be initiated.

It is necessary, of course, to base all the initiatives on the established security and protection principles, so the participation may be meaningful.

12.3 Interventions for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence

Children and adolescents involved in gangs are already organised but in a dysfunctional way, which also puts their lives at risk. In that case, it is important to give both, children and adolescents at risk and those already involved in organised armed violence, an opportunity to be part of an organisation that offers them the creation of a non-violent society replica with democratic values in which they are not judged by their past and may start to build a decent life project without violence. Here, they can learn how to contribute to their community and become community leaders and models for the rest.

Young people who quit drug trafficking are also indispensable to participate in the design and implementation of programmes against organised armed violence. Promoting dialogue between young people and the community may reduce the stigmas and existing pre-concepts.

Likewise, State programmes that give financial incentives in order to guarantee that the children and adolescents attend school and develop programmes for labour insertion are very important, but it is necessary to develop the children and adolescents' skills in order to change all the community. It is advisable to offer consultancy and psychological support to children and adolescents' families exposed to organised armed violence.

In case of gang members deprived of freedom, it is necessary to advocate the restorative justice application that preserves the best of the human condition.

13. Experiences in promoting the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

Appendix 8 includes a complete list of experiences related to the participation promotion of children and adolescents exposed to violence in general, and to the three forms of violence in particular. For our conceptual framework, we have systemised the experiences that could be copied.

13.1 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence in general

The violence issue has been discussed through children and adolescents' organisations in schools and through civic education and education for peace, which also includes training for school personnel and training for parents on peaceful management of conflicts. Training programmes on citizenship help young people becoming models who renounce violence. The school is considered as an ideal environment to fight against violence according to the UN Study on Violence against Children.

Local youth councils have been installed to empower young people to a conscious and non-violent participation in the community life. Also youth centres have been opened in areas with displaced people in order to promote the dialogue between different ethnic groups. A social youth service has been organised to promote the potentials of young people who can be involved in social activities, and help to build a safe society.

Different programmes intend to create safe environments for children and adolescents at home, school and in the community where they can live and fully develop their potential. Sports and arts are methodologies used to reach and empower young people to adopt positive life styles. Some programmes are led by young people and they also include quality promotion and access to public services; policies development and legislative reform; and impact and social mobilisation.

Theatre, among other artistic expressions, is used as initiative of social and political action that arises as a collective response to violence against young men and women, and to the imposition of an authoritarian model of control in urban popular sectors.

13.2 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment

In some countries, children and adolescents are organised into committees around the physical and humiliating punishment in alliance with NGO and have carried out media campaigns and made contacts with politics and member of the congress. Children and adolescents have used the media for the social impact, for example for the promotion of non-violent ways of education, and have participated in documentaries broadcast nationwide in order to eliminate physical and humiliating punishment practices. They have also organised claims for the approval of laws that prohibit practices of this type of violence.

Through a research, educational resources have been developed for both children and adolescents and adults, which incorporate the first ones' points of view in order to show the government the results and turn them into public policies.

The communication and dialogue promotion about physical and humiliating punishment between children and adolescents from different schools and youth organisations has been an excellent

strategy to make children aware of the violence issue. There are children rights clubs in the school whose members give advice to students, talk with abusive parents, represent a punished children and adolescents and report such cases in the school.

Summits have been organised worldwide where children's representatives from different countries discuss about the physical and humiliating punishment issue and elaborate corresponding proposals. Children and adolescents have negotiated through their organisations their rights with local authorities, caregivers and employers.

13.3 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse

A group of girls from various ethnic groups are organised to identify dangerous places and have looked for emotional support and protection in adult people in order to create safe neighbourhoods. Adult people support them, above all, in the negotiations with the authorities in order to ask for security service in dangerous places. The girls considered necessary to include boys to change their attitude towards them, and established group behaviour regulations that include the respect to confidentiality. Interactive sessions have been organised with community actors to change sexist attitude; street theatre; bulletin boards; oratory competition; videos and documentaries about sexual exploitation and abuse. They have decided to report all violence cases and for this purpose, they have created mail boxes. Messages against harassment have been transmitted in the cinema and they have obtained the prohibition of many early marriages in the community. Girl's participation in all activities has empowered them to protect themselves. Also girls' brothers have been involved in the actions, which allow them to open their eyes and they not only leave girls alone but also protect them.

A dialogue between adult people and children and adolescents has been promoted. This dialogue is about the abuse prevention and sexual exploitation and the best way to support children so that they reveal the abuse and express their feelings, fears and problems. Children and adolescents' victims of sexual exploitation and abuse have accessed to a confident environment where they can be empowered before expressing their experiences. In order to have resilience, it is important that the victims feel affection, sociability and happiness. The fact that one may trust in somebody has turned out to be a previous requirement to look for support without fear, and report the abuse to the authorities. The support sources are relatives, specialists, friends, therapists and fellow-creatures.

Children and adolescents' empowerment through children theatre used to break the silence around sexual exploitation and abuse has had a lot of success in indigenous community of rural areas. The strength of the programme laid on the support and visibility that the community gave to children and adolescents. There are also theatre techniques with children and adolescents' victims of CSEC that have gone beyond the therapeutic attention upon exploring other ways of participation through the art. What is interesting is that the theatre technique has been not only an important tool to psychological recovery but also a didactic tool through which children learned to talk about the issue. Also, theatre,

drama and role playing game carried out by children and adolescents have been successfully used as instruments for impact. Thus, messages have been transferred in the most indirect way, and the actors have been able to feel free to teach incidents of abuse that they would have probably never mentioned during an interview.

Organisations of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse have also worked on the rescue and recovery of victims and on the promotion of the change of attitude in the community towards victims. Participation in schools has been promoted through Student Governments and in communities, through other existing ways of children organisation. Alliances have been made between child-led organisations and the police in order to identify and report sexual exploitation and abuse cases. There are experiences of institutional links between children and adolescents' representatives in the school and criminal authorities, which gives a real power to the first ones who fight against sexual exploitation and abuse.

13.4 Experiences of children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence

Organised armed violence is, without doubt, the form of violence that has less successful experiences due to the strong prejudices on the issue and the lack of research. Even some value contributions about organised armed violence were omitted —ultimately and without reason— from the report of the independent expert for the UN Study on Violence against Children. However, we have found some useful experiences.

A youth service policy has been created as an alternative of education and learning, which integrates the community service with the education, teaches civic responsibilities and strengthens the community.

Gangs participate in dialogues in order to make sure that the groups have a meaningful participation. Particularly in armed violence and less violent cases¹¹⁴ it is effective to contact leaders of the groups and encourage them to participate in the design of programmes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration for their members. A series of projects has successfully included armed actors in social projects and reintegration programmes. In some countries, such gangs have requested meetings with governmental representatives and vice versa. The fact of including this young people in the discussion about how to reduce their participation in organised armed violence, contributes considerably to improve the effect of the programmes that have set this objective. The need of different negotiation and dialogue methods might arise for the most violent armed groups,¹¹⁵ similar to conflict resolution strategies with armed groups in armed conflict situation. Conflict resolution among groups has also been a major issue discussed by the authorities to restrict armed violence.¹¹⁶

114 Type 1 and Type 2 according to *Neither War nor Peace* by Luke Dowdney.

115 Type 3.

116 *Neither War nor Peace* by Luke Dowdney. 2005, p. 304.

Different organisations provide young people and their families with citizenship lessons and at the same time, they give them the opportunity to practice sports as capoeira and boxing; they also provide them with education and job opportunities. The idea is to combine various components, so that young people may be provided with the best possibility of obtaining their space in a society from which they were excluded. Cultural and sports activities are effective as a way of social prevention for young people from areas with high levels of violence.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

As a result of this paper we have developed a broad conceptual framework on protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence based on a study of the literature and direct consultations with specialists and also through workshops carried out with children and adolescents exposed to violence.

Within the conceptual framework we find references to a first systematisation of all the data and bibliographic sources, collected in a spreadsheet with a browsing option according to the different topics. The conceptual framework allows us to draw the following conclusions and to make the following recommendations and we have tried respond to the key questions of the research, making a list of the strategies that should serve to develop methodologies under the framework of a programme or project:

- How can children and adolescents exert their right to participate in direct prevention strategies for all forms of violence?
- How can the children and adolescents who have suffered some kind of violence be involved in the design of strategies and interventions, and at the same time, how can they be prevented from becoming exposed or revictimised and/or stigmatised?

When developing public policies, programmes and strategies to promote the rights of children and adolescents, it is not enough to consider their participation as one more item in the agenda, it is necessary that the children and adolescents themselves design their own agenda and look for the support of adults to carry out their own programmes. Although it may seem easy to say, it is not that easy to perform given that it is a struggle in a power relations scenario, of social representations that justify the domain and the privilege of adults over children and adolescents.

Getting adults to give in some power to children and adolescents is a complex and hard process, for children need adults due to their greater and almost exclusive access to resources, knowledge, communication means, etc. Paradoxically, in order to end up with the exclusive adult domain, children and adolescents need to become allies with their current dominators and reach the exercise of shared power. Here, it is important that children and adolescents get in contact with alternative adults, that is, that they can find in their teachers a different culture to the one which is predominant in their families, in their society or in the Government.

In this scenario, cross-cutting the rights of the child in all policies, programmes and strategies means, doubtlessly, an important progress, but it does not guarantee that a good deal of the funds is directly destined to the organisations led by children and adolescents allowing them to become stronger as a group within the society in order to change this unbalanced power situation. In this regard, the experience of feminist groups can serve as an example.

Unfortunately, the protection speech to which children and adolescents are entitled to is constantly used by adults to prevent them from fulfilling their real role in society as subjects of rights, as citizens.

This participation will allow them, however, to place themselves in better conditions to be protected, to look after of themselves and their peers and to be part of their community development. An empowering participation which does not expose children and adolescents to greater risk situations promotes protection and goes beyond it, to turn children and adolescents into social actors.

In the case of children and adolescents exposed to violence, the need to ensure protection during their participation is greater and the chaperone must also be a person who allows the protagonism of children and adolescents to develop. He or she must be a person who knows how to measure risks and who has the ability to accompany them in their suffering as a result of the violence experienced by them. The need for greater protection also represents a greater manipulation risk that could turn a child into a vulnerable and voiceless object.

The participation of children and adolescents in public discussion and in decision making should guarantee their well-being and turn them into citizens with full rights. Society must be made aware of the children's and adolescents' right to participation and this must be made effective through public policies and laws in order to transform the existing social representations.

The participation we are aiming at should be protagonist and meaningful. Protagonist because it must imply empowering and advocacy processes that lead to a new society model where an equal power relation exists between children and adolescents and adults and which allows them to live a dignifying life as citizens with full rights. It must be meaningful because each participation process should try to achieve excellence and to comply with strict quality standards, especially in cases of violence, where they should combine protagonism with protection. The programmes promoting protagonism of children and adolescents should favour these processes. In this way, children and adolescents exposed to violence will be able to explain the complexity of their experiences, feel safer to protect and express themselves, introduce their problems to society and promote disciplinary measures against their aggressors.

The strategy that should be applied and the role of the chaperone accompanying the children and adolescents exposed to violence change according to the space, situation, mechanism and methodology used, and especially, according to the specific story of each boy or girl.

At a family level, it is important to consider that "the private is public" in order to put an end to violent situations within the family, which impairs the formation of a protagonist personality and reproduces a violent and authoritarian nature in children and adolescents. The institutionalised trainings addressed to parents on bringing up their children are necessary. Likewise, the neighbourhood as an important scenario for social interrelation, culture production and psychosocial development should provide children and adolescents with their own space, training and support to their initiatives.

In school it is important to institutionalise autonomous participation mechanisms with decision power and advocacy in the curricula, to allow children and adolescents to grow as good citizens and to build up a society without violence.

At a community level it is important to make advocacy work in order for children and adolescents to find the necessary means to set up organisations led by them and to get support for their initiatives. At the same time, they should get support to participate in the development of public policies, the generation of ways to get justice, and ways to monitor the fulfilment of the laws that affect them.

In the case of sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence, we find that the majority of the risk factors for children and adolescents in a situation of prevention represent wilful violations of their rights, which, within our conceptual framework, are also obstacles for their protagonist participation. When they attempt to run away from the exclusion they live in, they end up becoming victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence —and going back to the initial exclusion situation will not encourage them at all to leave the new situation of rights violation.

Therefore, it is important to offer children and adolescents in risk situation, as well as to the victims of these forms of violence, access to a dignifying life project, a situation which respects the exercise of their rights as citizens and which eliminates their vulnerability to a large extent. We also believe that the only valid strategy is to reduce the increasing “supply” of children and adolescents for these violence situations. Both organised armed violence and sexual exploitation and abuse are symptoms of a society which creates victims due to the lack of protection of children and adolescents entitled to rights. Currently, many efforts are made to remedy the effects of the victims of organised armed violence or sexual exploitation and abuse. They are also stigmatised by the same society which initially excluded them, which makes their protagonist participation even harder.

In the case of organised armed violence there are many youths deprived of their freedom, a situation which prevents them from participating. In this case, it is important to promote restorative justice as the best method to rescue them as citizens and to transform the problem into an opportunity for the youths to remake the best of their human condition.

Due to the fact that children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse or organised armed violence are in this situation as a result of the exclusion context, of rights violation, of lack of citizenship, they cannot be regarded as aggressors, nor as victims without any power of decision, but rather as subjects of rights who, through a protagonist participation can abandon the gangs or get away from exploitation situations. They have to be offered access to a dignifying life project and the possibility to participate in society as citizens with full rights.

Physical and humiliating punishment is the product of a child upbringing culture which repeats itself generation after generation. The best strategy to eliminate it is to empower children and adolescents on their rights and with strategies that increase their self-esteem, both to protect themselves as well as to have an influence in the mindset of adults and in laws to explicitly ban physical and humiliating punishment.

A very effective participation mechanism which should be fostered is the organisation led by children and adolescents and its participation as a partner in the design and implementation of policies

especially if it deals with children and adolescents exposed to violence. The support for the creation or the sustainability of the organisations led by them is more useful than the support to consultation or action mechanisms for children and adolescents within specific programmes, services or advocacy strategies. The latter are also necessary, but they could be more effective if the members were also representatives of the organisations led by children and adolescents.

The participation of children and adolescents in organisations led by children has proven to promote the exercise of other rights and the group and protagonist experience of children and adolescents allows ending up with cycles of violence. Adults play a key role for they have to find a balance between the firmness to create a safe environment, and the flexibility to gain trust and self-esteem in children and adolescents. The research suggests different elements to be considered for the creation of organisations led by children and adolescents as expressions of the protagonist process.

The research also mentions different features the chaperone accompanying children and adolescents exposed to violence must have and shows the difference between cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence. These aspects should be considered when training social workers, officials working in childhood environments and in rearing courses for parents.

In order to develop adequate strategies and methodologies to promote the participation of children and adolescents as subjects of rights and citizens, it is important to define the existing obstacles. The endogenous obstacles can be overcome with empowerment strategies, and the exogenous obstacles can be tackled with advocacy strategies, which should be promoted to ensure a protagonist process.

Based on the obstacles and on the interventions and experiences collected in the conceptual framework, we designed the following strategies for the promotion of protagonist and meaningful participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence.

Strategies for children and adolescents in general:

- Train youths on their right to participation in order to raise their awareness as social actors. Explain the link between their participation in political and social environments and their well-being.
- Design strategies to convince children and adolescents to develop their protagonism through collective action within an organisation led by them. This organisation should serve as a laboratory of democratic and multicultural experiences without reproducing the society model of authoritarian and dominant adults who consider children and adolescents as weak or dangerous beings.
- Train adults in human resources to adequately accompany children and adolescents in their protagonist participation process and to end up with pseudo-participative, manipulative, symbolic or decorative techniques. Trained chaperones should prepare the youths to exercise shared power in society.

- Make children's participation a cross-cutting theme in all global, regional and national initiatives. Support children and adolescents as a group in society. This cross-cutting initiative is at risk of eliminating the forces that aim at a real shift in power to children and adolescents in society.
- Ensure that country reports submitted to the Committee for the Rights of the Child include recommendations made in consultations to children and adolescents. Likewise, institutional processes should be built in order to generate the required mobilisation for these consultations, adapted to the particular situation of each country.
- Involve the youth representatives of organisations led by children and adolescents in every intervention (even researches) affecting children and adolescents at community level. Seek to link organisations led by children and adolescents with other civil society organisations, in order to exercise shared power.

Strategies for children and adolescents exposed to violence:

- Promote protagonist and group experiences of children and adolescents to stop the cycles of violence, involving them in organisations led by children and adolescents. Seek to make participation comprehensive within organisations led by children and adolescents. Include schools as appropriate spaces for a first organisational experience.
- Train professional facilitators to accompany youths within organisations led by children and adolescents. These should be able to find a balance between the firmness to create a safe environment and the flexibility to gain trust and increase children's and adolescents' self-esteem.
- Establish safe physical spaces to ensure the participation of children and adolescents both in the community and in school.
- Involve children and adolescents in all the stages of any programme or action against violence to create a society which respects their right to protection, to support them in building resilience and to allow them to protect themselves against abuse, violations and unfair situations.
- Promote relations between children and adolescents exposed to violence and trustworthy adults. Likewise, provide children and adolescents with access to complaint procedures or information mechanisms so that they can freely speak up. The fact that children and adolescents belong to an organisation can facilitate the prevention, detection and information of violence cases and can also be of great help when receiving assistance.
- Promote civic education and education for peace in schools. This includes trainings of the school staff and parents on rights and the peaceful management of conflicts. The inclusion of moral values such as responsibility, respect, gender equity, tolerance, commitment and others is also essential.
- Include the children's rights in the school curricula, if children and adolescents do not attend school, training in rights should be promoted through the caregivers and the community.
- Establish local youth councils to empower children and adolescents in awareness and non-violent participation in community life —especially in those communities where there are displaced people to promote the dialogue between different ethnic groups.

- Establish a youth social service to promote youths' potential, involving them in social tasks and in the creation of a safe society.
- Use sports and arts as methodologies to empower children and adolescents and to promote the adoption of positive lifestyles in different environments.
- Use theatre and drama methodologies as means for social and political action in order to face violence against youths and the imposition of authoritarian control models in low-income urban sectors.
- Allow young people to lead the promotion of the quality of and the access to public services, the design of policies, law reform and social advocacy and mobilisation.
- Create State mechanisms which main purpose is to listen to children and adolescents in order to have them directly involved in the design and implementation of policies that address violence against them and to support the measures proposed by children and adolescents to eradicate violence.
- Document, systematise and share good protagonist and meaningful participation practices of children and adolescents in prevention activities against violence and the construction of tools to end up violence against them. Organise national and international summits about violence for child representatives and promote global actions.
- Promote programmes to include the participation of children and adolescents victims of violence in prevention activities—in a voluntary manner and with competent monitoring as part of their recognition process.
- Guarantee the participation of children and adolescents in protection processes in accordance with the principle of progressive autonomy.
- Ensure legal procedures that guarantee the Best Interest of the Child through respectful procedures (videoconference, boards, etc.) preventing secondary victimisation. These processes should prevent the repetition of the victims' stories before the judiciary authorities. In other words, promote single-story testimonies.
- Train young trainers for the prevention, detection, information and attention of violence cases.
- Promote direct contact between organisations led by children and adolescents and political representatives and congresspersons to have an impact in public policies against violence.
- Organise training sessions on violence prevention and the rights of the child addressed to parents, with the assistance of children and adolescents.
- Finance researches on violence involving children and adolescents exposed to violence.

Strategies for children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment:

- Train children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment about this topic. Train caregivers, school staff authorities, employees and classmates. These trainings are useful for prevention, detection and information. Also medical staff, which is usually the first one to detect cases of physical and humiliating punishment, should know how to proceed.

- Develop training sessions for parents, caregivers and teachers about non-violent forms of education and upbringing.
- Provide specific attention to physical and humiliating punishment most vulnerable groups such as girls, children and adolescents with disabilities and the people with less access to information in society.
- Carry out advocacy policies in cooperation with organisations led by children and adolescents to pass laws banning all forms of physical and humiliating punishment in the education of children and adolescents and to adopt policies addressed to prevent and to look after children and adolescents exposed to physical and humiliating punishment.
- Use empowerment and advocacy methodologies through art and traditional and new communication technologies to put an end to the isolation in which affected children and adolescents live.
- Make better use of the methodologies previously used by children and adolescents themselves to address physical and humiliating punishment, such as drama, radio spots, information fairs, spiritual retirements, concerts, parades, documentaries and others.

Strategies for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse:

- Offer children and adolescents exposed to and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse a decent life project within an organisation led by them. This is a safe and healthy environment where children and adolescents, with good chaperones, can undergo personal recognition processes, can participate in prevention workshops and can carry out participation exercises on sexual exploitation and abuse through games and pedagogical and recreational activities. This organisation is also an important space to detect, inform and look after cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Prevent children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse from going back to the initial exclusion situation they lived in before becoming victims.
- Take all the necessary preventive measures to eliminate risk factors that we have defined as obstacles for their real citizenship participation.
- Carry out advocacy actions to change the social mindset about children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse who suffer from strong stigmas and to prevent further discrimination. Use this advocacy to turn this community rejection into a real support.
- Raise family interest in sexual exploitation and abuse because its members can contribute much in prevention matters and victim detection.
- Use the school as an adequate platform to support awareness processes regarding this problem within the community as a whole and generate spaces for children and adolescents to meet and to think about sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Integrate the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in the school curricula to end the myths related to sexuality, to disapprove unacceptable sexual behaviours and to set a strong statement against sexual exploitation and abuse by using the institutionalised structures of children and adolescents participation at school.

- Provide spaces to allow children and adolescents to speak about their problems and start a personal transformation that implies a different mindset about rights, power relations, personal growth, society and consumerism.
- Promote cooperation among organisations led by children and adolescents, schools, municipalities and NGOs to have a social impact and to carry out prevention actions at early ages for children in high risk of becoming victims of sexual and commercial exploitation (“hotbeds”).
- Promote the combined work of organisations led by children and adolescents, the police and prison authorities to share ideas about effective methods to fight against sexual and commercial exploitation of children and to help reducing the fear of youths towards authorities. Create safe neighbourhoods free from the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse in the design of programmes, legislation and legal and psychological assistance.
- Provide materials with logos for children and adolescents in risk of becoming victims of sexual and commercial exploitation of children in order to protect them.
- Design empowerment strategies so that children and adolescents may develop skills such as solidarity, empathy, better interpersonal relations and the capacity to file a complaint on sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Carry out strategies to share experiences and knowledge about sexual exploitation and abuse among peers.
- Establish complaint mechanisms accessible for children and adolescents exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Promote an easy access for children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to safe environments, with reliable chaperones in order to allow them to express themselves about their experiences and to develop resilience.
- Make good use of the methodologies used to address sexual exploitation and abuse, such as wall drawings, dance troupes, radio spots, parades, youth fora, publications, speech contests, videos and documentaries. Provide summer workshops for activities such as drama, poetry, role play and puppets that allow the victims to express themselves through art and to gain the necessary confidence through public plays in other organisations, schools and local communities. Through drama, a space can be created to play games, carry out creative and beauty activities contrasting with the traumatic and harmful experiences lived by the children and adolescents victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Develop drama techniques so that children exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse may learn about and accept themselves, and may include new children and adolescents.

Strategies for children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence:

- Promote sports as an initial activity to raise interests in children and adolescents so that they can become part of an organisation and learn some discipline, accept rules and generate different expectations.

- Develop methodologies to potentiate interests, abilities and mindsets in order to canalise the abundant energy of youths towards positive purposes.
- Propose empowering strategies for youths to generate a greater resilience in them and thus develop leaders to set examples for other victims.
- Educate them in positive moral values that will tackle consumerism, drugs, weapons and sexism.
- Train chaperones that can generate a high acceptance level among the group of youths.
- Carry out programmes to generate real working and leisure opportunities in low-income neighbourhoods.
- Develop programmes that guarantee the permanence of children and adolescents in school and their insertion in the labour market.
- Promote dialogue between children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence and the community and government institutions to eliminate the strong stigma of aggressors they bear.
- Advocate for the application of restorative justice and alternative measures to imprisonment so that the affected youths can discover the best of their human side and be able to participate in society in an autonomous way.
- Produce symbols and materials that link the youths to the organisation so they can have more protection in the streets.
- Establish a rigorous follow-up system for youths who have decided to leave their gangs.
- Foster the creation of organisations led by children and adolescents that offer youths to be part of a non-violent replica of society with democratic values where they are not judged because of their past, and where they can start building up a dignifying life project free of violence and fear. Combine several components which may offer youths the best possibility to ensure their spaces in society.
- Develop skills in children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence in order to transform the whole community.
- Provide advice and psychological aid to the families of children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence.
- Establish a service for youths as an alternative to education and learning that combines community service with education, which teaches civic responsibilities and strengthens the community.
- Contact the group leaders and encourage them to participate in the design of programmes for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration for its members.
- Develop programmes to encourage conflict resolution between rival groups to limit armed violence.
- Give citizenship classes addressed to the youths and their families.

- Propose art methodologies and others based on symbols so that children and adolescents exposed to organised armed violence can learn to express themselves about the fear they experience day after day.
- Promote the prevention and restoration of children and adolescents as part of a social investment that counters the large amounts of money destined to security spend by entrepreneurs, authorities and the society in general.

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http://www.iss.co.za/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/M136CHAP1.PDF?link_id=23&slink_id=4841&link_type=12&slink_type=13&tpl_id=3

http://www.iss.co.za/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/M136CHAP2.PDF?link_id=23&slink_id=4842&link_type=12&slink_type=13&tpl_id=3

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1:

Key points of the international legal framework for cases of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence

Physical and humiliating punishment

- The Committee on the Rights of the Child defines the corporal or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however, light. Most involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children with the hand or with an implement —whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve kicking, shaking or shoving children, scratching, pinching, burning, scalding or force them to eat boiling food or other products (washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). The committee expresses that corporal punishment is invariably degrading. Also, there are other non-physical forms of punishment, which are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.¹¹⁷
- Before approving the Convention, the International Bill of Human Rights established the right of every person to respect for his/her human dignity and physical integrity and to equal protection under the law.¹¹⁸
- In the preamble of the Convention, it is stated that “freedom, justice and peace in the world are based on recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family”. Likewise, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that “children are entitled to special care and assistance”.¹¹⁹
- Article 37 of the Convention sets forth that State Parties shall ensure that “No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. This statement is complemented and expanded in Article 19 which stipulates that State Parties “shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment

¹¹⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 42nd session – General Comment Nº 8 (2006), p. 5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”.¹²⁰

- Paragraph 2 of article 28 of the Convention mentions about school discipline and indicates that State Parties “shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention”.¹²¹
- Corporal punishment and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment, which conflict with the human dignity and the right to the child’s physical integrity can not be justified as in the best interests of the child.¹²²
- Article 5 of the Conventions states that State Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents “to provide [the child], in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention”, it should be in conformity with the whole Convention and should not leave no room for justification of violent or other cruel or degrading forms of discipline.¹²³
- Article 39 of the Convention stipulates that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of “any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.¹²⁴

Sexual exploitation and abuse

- Save the Children defines sexual exploitation and abuse as: “the imposition of sexual acts, or acts with sexual overtones, by one or more persons on a child”.¹²⁵
- Article 19 of the Convention stipulates that State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of sexual abuse.
- Article 34 of the Convention and the Facultative Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child commit the States Parties to pass and put into practice domestic legislation against sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

¹²⁰ Ibidem, p. 7.

¹²¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, 42nd session – General Comment N° 8 (2006), p. 7.

¹²² Ibidem, p. 10.

¹²³ Ibidem, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Ibidem, p. 12.

¹²⁵ Save the Children. *Save the Children’s Policy on Protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation*. 2003, p. 5.

- Article 35 of the Convention insists on the need of creating appropriate measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children.
- Article 39 of the Convention commits the States Parties to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of sexual abuses.
- Freedom of expression (article 13) and right to be heard (article 12) are of particular importance when a child needs to speak about sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse is harmful and is in conflict with the basic right of the child to the life and development, as stipulated in article 6 of the Convention.¹²⁶
- Of special importance for the protection of children who have been victims of sexual abuse and other violent crimes are the UN Guidelines on Cases of Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, especially article 8 of the second instrument mentioned.

Organised armed violence

- The Convention does not directly mention children victims of organised armed violence. However, the preamble of the Convention mentions The Beijing Rules that refers to administration of juvenile justice and stipulates conditions for the participation of children and adolescents in legal proceedings.
- Children involved in organised armed violence have, of course, the same right to protection as any child, and in such regard, article 39 stipulates the promotion of physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.
- Also, the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Riyadh Guidelines focus on the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The latter highlights important participatory aspects in several paragraphs. The following aspects are stressed:
 - The protagonist and participatory role that young people should have within society and that they “should not be considered as mere objects of socialisation or control”.
 - Youth participation in delinquency prevention policies, including recourse to community resources, application of youth self-help, and victim compensation and assistance programmes.

¹²⁶ Ibidem, p. 1-2.

- Respect for the personal development of the children and adolescents, and they should be accepted as full and equal partners in the socialisation and integration processes in the family, community, peer groups, school, professional training and the labour environment.
- The importance of promoting youth participation in family and community activities.
- Effective and protagonist participation of youth in the educative process and activities that promote a sense of identity with and of belonging to the school and the community and to encourage youth to respect diversity.
- The importance that youth organisations are given full participation in the management of community affairs and these organisations should encourage youth to organise collective and voluntary projects aimed at helping young people.
- The need of ensuring that young people have access to information and to a positive image in the media.
- The need that young people themselves should be involved in the formulation, development and implementation of public policies.

APPENDIX 2:

Views of children and adolescents exposed to violence about aspects of protagonist participation¹²⁷

Dignity

- Any person's right to be treated with respect without threatening or violating his/her fundamental rights.
- It is related to the self-esteem a person and which helps to think better and not to make mistakes when making decisions.
- With sexual exploitation and abuse, children and adolescents are wounded in their dignity, turning them into objects, depriving them and taking away their condition as subjects.
- It is necessary to have dignity in order to face the reality, so that one might participate in the community with dignity and assert the rights that one has in the society.
- Dignity is something that everybody has and it is very valuable and it would be terrible to lose. Our dignity also lets us know how we are.
- It is an important element in order to be heard and supported.
- It is the freedom of expression that each individual has without being judged and without hurting feelings due to his/her identity and recognition of his/her acts.

Power relations

- The world needs a change in power, since in society only the opinion of an adult is taken into account without considering the need we are, as children, part of the society—which could be used to prevent or contribute somehow. It is very important that this change benefits everybody and not only people who have money or privileges. The expression of opinion is free, so we, as children and adolescents, have the right to express our opinion and be taken into account since we express our opinion of something that is affecting us and which we want to change.
- Not only anyone can achieve this, but everyone has the power to change things that will be beneficial for the society.

¹²⁷ Declarations of participants in the workshop were literally recorded to respect the children's and adolescents' expressions.

- In sexual exploitation and abuse, there is an asymmetric relationship: gender roles make many members of a society take away the decent condition from woman, limiting her development; or adults who do not respect and conceive children and adolescents as individuals with rights, and as a consequence, they violate their rights: patriarchal model, educational-sexist model, asymmetric relationships.
- Changes in the power can have sometimes serious effects, affecting people with less power.

New model of society

- We have to create new rules that fully benefit parents and children who are whether in favourable or unfavourable situations, where, for the first time, children and adolescents have an opinion that is taken into account and applied.
- A society where individuals assume leading roles about different issues that involve them.
- A society with capacities to allow the participation of children and adolescents as decent individuals capable of influencing the way decisions involving them are made and allowing them to have an integral development and education from a human rights perspective.
- A more equitable and fairer society that gives preference to children's interest and welfare over other issues and aspects.

Empowerment

- Several strategies to make children and adolescents can take the control of external elements or develop intrinsic elements in order to promote their effective and efficient performance in different spaces of participation.
- Self-knowledge, and the identification of weaknesses and strengthens, aimed at managing and accepting weaknesses, and developing strengthens in an optimum way.
- The ability of an individual to take control of an issue and communicate it to the society in order to improve something.

Advocacy

- Some people are able to make their proposal or reforms be easily accepted in society, thus helping to improve their life quality.

- The importance of participating in boards of directors, expressing opinions and ideas for the society.
- The possibility to create guidelines or parameters that may influence directly the social scenarios, which are directly or indirectly committed to the defence and promotion of children and adolescents' rights.
- The social or political impact or positioning of the issue to include it in different public and private agendas, and achieve the development of prevention and care actions, emphasising the human rights perspective.

APPENDIX 3:

Empowerment and advocacy experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence who participated in workshops

Empowerment experiences

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Bogota

- Self-knowledge (drama techniques).
- Self-acceptance.
- Multipliers training process.
- Speaking in public.
- Thematic knowledge, appropriation of it and spreading of sexual exploitation and abuse with peers and adults (parents, teachers, etc).
- Self-esteem increasing (love and value oneself).
- Creation of new improvement techniques for the daily life.
- Learning of drama techniques to reach others.
- Capacity building for leadership.
- Being confident of opinions.
- Appropriation of prevention mechanisms.
- Learning about the value of the word to transform.
- Knowledge about rights and fulfilling them.
- Appropriation of language for the speech.
- Learn to leave shyness and present ideas and suggestions to society in favour of children.
- Construction of a common mission.
- Maintain a structure where each one has a role.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Cartagena

- Better knowledge about rights, power relations and personal improvement.
- Changes produced in children and adolescents before society, the way of advocating, youth and children and adolescents.
- At the beginning, egoistic thinking, then more equitable.
- The way youths think; demanding with rights and disseminating the rights they have as children and adolescents.

- Knowledge of the rights of the child and adolescents.
- Values: respect, responsibility, commitment, perseverance.
- Leadership and working in peer groups.
- Ability to report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Changes in inter-personal relationships.
- Association.
- Empathy.

Advocacy experiences

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Bogota

School

- From board and principal's office: supporting the process, validating the story, opening spaces for dissemination and advocating in other partner schools (posters against CSEC).
- Inter-institutional contacts with advocacy in other places (not only in the same place), by spreading Renacer's vision and mission.
- Ways by which young people can reach others (they tell participation experiences) about common topics and expectations at schools of the Suba community to prevent sexual exploitation; clarify topics about sexuality.
- Interest about the issue of CSEC is awoken with groups of peers. Cases of CSEC to generate awareness are reported and children provide guidelines to prevent it.
- Change myths referring to sexuality and handling of sexual behaviours with the support of young people.
- Arrangements for the demonstration against CSEC: calls for the event were made in several schools; dissemination campaigns were promoted (banners and slogans) against CSEC.

Family

- Awaken interest of family members about CSEC, participants' brothers and sisters even stressed direct prevention processes and identification of cases (chain reaction).
- Parents received the interventions in a positive way.

Community

- Participation in local and district spaces with playful strategies.
- Mural paintings against CSEC made in group by young people.
- National meeting of multipliers to share participation experiences and unify action criteria.
- Mothers of the community against children ill treatment. Link with Renacer.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Cartagena

- Youth forum against CSEC.
- Regional and national youth meetings of ECPAT groups in Colombia; they promote and defend children's rights.
- Training and workshops for parents, children and adolescents in prevention and sensitisation of CSEC and defence of the rights of the child.
- Opening spaces in public policies with public bodies and NGO.
- Playful and recreational workshops with students.
- Creation of radio spots against CSEC.
- Sensitise population through demonstrations.
- Participation in political spaces at international and national level.
- Contributing to the preparation of action and assistance plans at legal level.
- Participation at national level: I Legislative Forum of Laws against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.
- Establishment of hotbeds in several entities: four councils, two communities of the city, five schools.
- At cultural level, creation of a dance group against CSEC and connections with local singers in the II Forum.
- Partnership with a member of the Youth Council.
- Network of representatives (school mayors).
- Partnerships with NGO and public entities.

APPENDIX 4:

Meaningful participation experiences of children and adolescents exposed to violence collected during workshops

<p>Ethical approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comply with the campaign tasks: “No to punishment”. - Attend meetings on time. - Say the truth. - Share the commitment. - Good communication among children. - Integrate more collaborators. - Management of ethical standards in the theatre as well as in the radio programme. - Transparency of each person; trying not to assume another personality. - Give the necessary confidence and consider the members as honest people; they are assigned responsibilities and provided with education as well. - Responsibilities for cleaning the space of the organisation. 	<p>Equality of opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At first, only children and adolescents got together but then, they allow adults participation. - Disabled children and adolescents need to be included in the organisation since they are the ones suffering more physical punishment. - In the radio programme of the organisation, equal opportunities are taken into account when selecting the participants. 	<p>Safety and protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As representatives of children and adolescents who are victims, we did not allow ourselves to give punishment testimonies. - Chaperones give a lot of confidence. - When interviewing children on the radio, we do not ask incriminating questions, they can express their opinions freely; we do not impose an idea or a way of thinking.
<p>Appropriate and relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings with counterparts to make decisions by agreement. - Participation in “gained” spaces. - The participation is appropriate but must continue promoting others’ participation. - More commitment by the members of the organisation. - Children and adolescents are not victims but individuals capable to express an opinion. - Theatre helps children and adolescents express their 	<p>Friendly and suitable environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the organisation, our voice and vote are taken into account. - We are given the opportunity to express our opinion and to change something according to our preference. - We have been able to develop our capacities. - Abuse or discrimination testimonies as a tool to carry out the campaign are missing. - With the play “La vida es un 	<p>Effectiveness and confidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adolescents have managed to talk confidently in meetings. - More adults have to participate, lack of commitment from institutions and everybody’s opinion and experience. - The organisation is a learning laboratory. Spaces in the organisation do not have generational differences but roles, functions. As planned activities are carried out more and more due to the

<p>opinion freely without fear of being corrected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and adolescents create their own outlines and elaborate topics with proactive approaches (topics with messages). - Being in a radio programme helps to realise what is going on with children and thus, the child will not be indifferent and will fight to put an end to any kind of abuse or punishment. - Participation in the organisation helps the child to build a better relationship with society. 	<p>garabato” (“Life is a scribble”), about punishment, children hugged us and told us that their parents beat them. We tried to erase that moment of bitterness and kept them company. The environment was friendly and we were very fond of them. We looked for ways to make them feel good and respect their rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organisation is like our home and everything inside it, is freely offered. 	<p>organisation development, children and adolescents assume more and more responsibilities on the way and they are getting better in the daily routine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is effectiveness since great objectives have been assumed, but disagreements in the development still arise.
<p>Monitoring and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the radio programme, we constantly evaluate whether we are sharing the information in an understandable way for everybody. 		

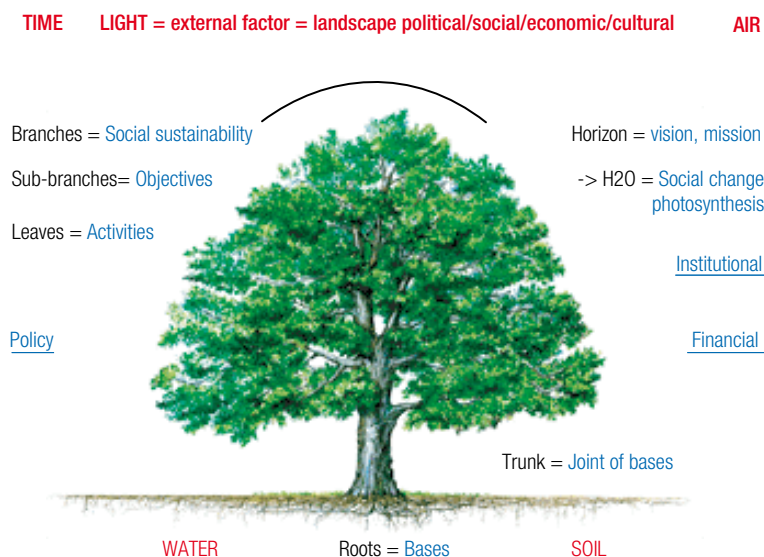
APPENDIX 5:

Strategic planning to ensure financial, political, institutional and social sustainability of child-led organisations¹²⁸

Children and adolescents of the MOLACNATs have made a strategic planning of their organisation by developing a balanced model based on the social, institutional, political and financial sustainability that should guarantee the protagonist participation of working children and adolescents in Latin America for many years.¹²⁹

The model uses the metaphor of a tree that should grow in a balanced way to explain the administration of a child-led organisation so it may be sustainable. The tree roots are the organisation foundations that are combined in the trunk. The organisation has different branches that should be developed and support the organisation: social, institutional, political and financial branches. The sub-branches are the organisation goals; the leaves are the activities. The tree horizon is the organisation's vision and mission. Impact and social change that generates the organisation is the photosynthesis process of the tree. The external factors that influence the organisation are the political, social, economic and cultural landscapes that are compared throughout the time, as well as light, air and soil.

THE TREE



¹²⁸ Bart Tilkin. Study for Save the Children on the sustainability of MOLACNATS, 2006.

¹²⁹ For further details, contact Save the Children Sweden's office in Lima.

APPENDIX 6:

Obstacles for participation in general and in the three forms of violence defined by children and adolescents found in bibliographic resources

Obstacles for the participation of children and adolescents in general:

- Children and adolescents do not clearly see the articulation between their daily needs and the conquests of wider and more political nature. Participation is a process that takes time and the conception of children and adolescents' daily life is often reduced to immediate things.
- Children and adolescents used to have a low level of awareness of their condition as subjects of rights. For this reason, it is important to see them and to make them see themselves as a power (more than as a present or a future), in other words, they have all conditions to fulfil themselves completely.¹³⁰
- Social relations in general and adult-child relation in particular.
- Incompetence to conciliate multiculturalism with effective participation.
- Protection as the dominant paradigm.
- Laws, programmes and plans in force limit youth and are focused on protection and punitive actions, reflecting the social idea of children and adolescents: dangerous and weak beings.
- Lack of policies that promote participation of children and adolescents in decision-making spaces.
- Lack of participation channels for children and adolescents in their social spaces.
- Inappropriate methodologies to favour participation: practice of symbolic, decorative or manipulative participation in the consultation, decision-making, control and implementation which do not affect the established power.
- Lack of trained human resources to promote participation.
- Lack of a democracy-building culture from social relations at all levels.

¹³⁰ More information on representation of the child as future, as becoming and, therefore, without influence at present, in Cussiánovich, *Participación ciudadana de la infancia desde el paradigma del protagonismo*, p. 5.

- Neighbourhood spaces are no longer references for urban young people due to the Internet, and the community for the rural young people has passed from being a vital space to a temporary and ephemeral space (migration).
- Participation is a process, and childhood and youth as stages are relatively short. Children and adolescents usually give priority to immediate action.
- A legal obstacle is the coming of age, which is 18 or more.
- The individualistic spirit of society does not promote participation.
- There is very little research on the real interests of children and adolescents.
- Children and adolescents are not a homogeneous group.
- Lack of a citizenship education.
- How to incorporate children and adolescents into power exercise, if:
 - In many countries the articulated expression of a children and adolescents' movement at national level does not exist.
 - Political parties do not take the young people's interests into account (on one hand, because they do not have the right to vote).
 - There is indifference from adults towards young people.

Obstacles for participation in the three forms of violence defined by children and adolescents during workshops

Physical and humiliating punishment

Commission against Punishment – Lima

- Fear.
- Lack of safe physical spaces.
- Lack of examples of participatory practices.
- Deterioration of social networks.
- Imposition of participation rules.
- Low self-confidence, low self-esteem.
- Repression-violation of rights/discrimination.
- Individualism/consumerism/cultural transformations.
- Lack of community identity.
- Fear, shame and sorrow.

- Telling and reliving the past.
- Children and adolescents are considered incapable of thinking reasonably or expressing an opinion because we have not lived enough and we are not psychologically matured yet.
- Fear of being battered again by their parents or those accused or reported for injustice or mistreatment; for this reason, they are afraid of speaking or expressing an opinion.
- Parents do not allow participation.
- Parents' authoritarianism.
- Fear their parent's hatred.
- Lack of information for children who have not been punished yet and for those who have already been punished.
- Low appraisal as individuals.
- Lack of equal opportunities.
- Accepting ill treatment and violence as cultural guidelines.
- Fear, shame when giving views and participating.
- Lack of knowledge about the rights.
- When we are treated as objects and not as subjects of rights.
- Teachers do not promote the participation of children and adolescents.
- Authorities do not acknowledge and value children's participation.
- When children and adolescents are abused.
- Lack of organisation (school, community, group).
- Lack of dialogue, communications, group understanding.
- When participation of children and adolescents is not promoted.

Vichama – Lima

- Over-protective parents.
- Poor upbringing by parents.
- Parent's and children's insecurity.
- Stigmatisation of children by society.
- Discrimination.
- Shyness.
- Organisation's lack of information and advocacy.
- Lack of self-confidence.
- Fear of being punished.
- Ill treatment from peers which causes low self-esteem.
- Culture which views punishment as a way of discipline.
- Children do not give their views because they know that if they are wrong they will be punished.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Renacer – Bogota

- Being accustomed of such a way of life and vulnerability; fear of losing what is safe for children.
- Low self-esteem due to experiences of sexual exploitation.
- Disabled children victims of sexual exploitation.
- Lack of opportunities to be heard.

- Unequal relations.
- Lack of autonomy to take decisions.
- Not having the right to freedom of expression.
- Being considered by society (adults) as incapable beings.
- Lack of access to information.

Renacer – Cartagena

- Adults need to open spaces for children and adolescents / poor incentives from adults.
- Restrictions by public bodies.
- Few laws protecting the right to participation of children and adolescents.
- Few economic and conceptual resources for young people.
- Welfare assistance instead of participatory assistance for children and adolescents.
- Bad cultural and governmental influence (myths, believes, etc.).
- Low self-esteem.
- Economic possibilities given by sexual exploitation.
- Shyness.
- Few interpersonal relationships.
- Lack of knowledge and concepts.
- Lack of confidence.

Organised armed violence

Specialists' view

- Fear: I do not express myself because they make fun of me, judge me and threaten me in the neighbourhood.
- Lack of safe physical spaces, without being seen, or feeling of threat.
- Curfew by paramilitary groups and guerrillas (which kill drug addicts).
- Political control of gangs by political parties. Political criteria, territory control.
- Lack of good examples for participative practices, which generates frustrations.
- Deterioration of the social network.
- Imposition of participation rules. Exclusive discourse.
- Little self-confidence.
- Repression, denial of rights / discrimination.
- Lack of knowledge of rights.
- Individualism, consumption, cultural transformations; the individual stands out more than the group.
- Community identity. The community creates a stigma on youths. Lack of identity because they have been displaced. There is no history, there are no roots.

Luta pela Paz – Brazil

- Lack of general information about rights. How to participate?
- Presence of intimidating actors in the participation space (police officers); there is a mutual prejudice.

- Fear of youths involved in organised armed violence because they may be exposed and also expose their families.
- Even if people suffer a relapse, it can not be considered a failure.
- Prejudice, discrimination by gender: men die more; by ethnic group: Afro-descendants; by age: 15-24 years old; by the place they live in.
- Fear of the great change and lack of confidence.
- The culture of violence is deeply rooted and is not considered as something to work upon. Violence is a cultural guideline of society.
- State violence. Police officers shoot with different criteria in rich neighbourhoods and in poor ones.
- A lot of confusion in the identification of gangs' members or others individuals because they dress the same.
- (Governmental) Programmes reaching the community but they do not responding to the youth's and community's demand.
- A lot of fear of quitting because life is easier in the gang: money, status, power, women, pressure, psychological pressure.
- Lack of opportunities in the society.
- Lack of self-confidence as a (future) multiplier actor and as an individual with actual participation.

APPENDIX 7:

Interventions

I. Interventions to promote children and adolescents' participation in general

Mechanisms

Creating institutionalised participation mechanisms in school (for example, school committees) and other spaces (children's parliaments, conferences, meetings, leagues, clubs, associations, cultural groups, young representatives' committee, leaders' group, etc). It is necessary to offer them a physical environment and a chaperone as a facilitator.

Children and adolescents' empowerment

- Developing leadership and communication skills that increase the self-protection level.
- Developing self-confidence in order to face their responsibilities and making the best of their skills.
- Developing skills and attitudes required for the exercise of citizenship: solidarity, responsibility and dialogue.
- Developing and promoting healthy life styles.
- Getting information and knowledge about what involves becoming citizens (rights and political, legal and economic duties).
- Learning to debate and making clear their position collectively, and presenting proposals to authorities and disseminating them through the media.

Advocacy

- Effects of the social view of childhood and the impact on the public opinion.
- Creating permanent channels between child-led organisations and governmental areas, and making alliances with NGOs to influence socially and politically. Promoting official bodies in favour of children at a local level (for example, Childhood and Youth Coordinator in Cotacachi, DEMUNAs in Peru). In some town councils, experiences promoting children's and adolescents' negotiation with authorities of their local governments are being developed. The idea is to recognise their right to be represented in the area defined by the local policies.¹³¹ The participation mechanism may turn into a mean that allow channelling some concerns and worries towards the responsible authorities.¹³²
- Guaranteeing the visibility of children and adolescents, emphasising human rights in the media:
 - Children and adolescents as an issue: the media offers daily information about situations that reinforce children's image as victims or aggressors, for example, when disseminating cases

¹³¹ Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., p. 30.

¹³² Ibidem, pp. 32-33.

of abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect or negligence cases, as well as images of violent facts carried out by children and adolescents. Children and adolescents' opinion must be well approached and must not violate their integrity. Generally, the media broadcast events with children if these activities involve authorities. Elements that facilitate the publication of children and adolescents' opinions in the media articles or reports about the national situation and the children's rights situation are opinion polls carried out by some NGOs.¹³³

- Children and adolescents as producers of radio programmes or as news editors in print press: this participation in the media is still premature. It is recommended to make efforts to increase it with the following criteria:
 - Promoting children's voices and not that of adults' who use children and adolescents to say what they want.
 - Taking the children's and adolescents' opinion as a source on those issues affecting them.
 - Creating specific spaces with children's and adolescents' participation by leading, expressing their opinion and producing information.¹³⁴
- Creating links whereby they may exchange opinions (for example, Web pages, e-groups) and publish them.

Strategies

- Introducing education elements for citizens' participation at school and other scenarios.
- Creating alternative schools that promote the community, participation and autonomy.
- Training young leaders systematically.
- Encouraging children's and adolescents' abilities and skills for protagonist participation permanently.
- Developing the ability of adults to listen to, understand and consider the children's views and their wish to review their own views to find solutions. Adults are capable of guiding children and allowing them to take part in the decisions affecting them.¹³⁵
- Considering children and adolescents as subjects of rights and development. We have to consider them as full individuals with own capacities.
- Making children's participation a cross-cutting theme in all global, regional and national initiatives. However, support children and adolescents as a group is essential. This cross-cutting initiative

133 Ibidem, p. 33.

134 Latin America Regional Secretariat for the UN Study on Violence against children and adolescents. Violence against children and adolescents –Latin America Report in the context of the UN Study, 2006, p. 79.

135 Moushira Khattab [Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child]. *The right of the child to be heard* – Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006.

is at risk of eliminating the forces that aim at a real shift in power for children and adolescents in society (as has occurred, to some extent, in gender issues).

- Guaranteeing the institutionalisation and sustainability of the children's participation in the decision-making process, by creating spaces, opportunities, structures and appropriate mechanisms.
- Involving children and adolescents in the voluntary military service and youth associations, community actions, awareness and information campaigns, conferences, leisure time and cultural activities directed at the reflection and awareness, civic exercises (simulation of elections), suggestions boxes, etc.¹³⁶
- Organising networks of youth interest.
- Promoting pilot experiences with regard to youth employment,¹³⁷ which more than a therapeutic or rehabilitation objective, affect the mental health and the self-assertiveness when these are accompanied by a social recognition; then, the employment can be a reorganising factor of life, and part of a new life project for children and adolescents.
- Promoting children's participation in all cycles of projects and researches.
- Promoting public policies that promote the protagonist participation organised by children and adolescents in all social processes and each geographical level.
- Contributing with a positive image of childhood in social common beliefs. A positive view of the youth is important, and also to avoid seeing it as a problem, which stigmatises, discredits and causes a generational block. Young people who feel deprived of positive recognition build the power and identity when seeing fear in others' faces. A positive view of adolescents recognises the contribution of youths and contributes to a positive acceptance of the adolescent life in society; it also makes the effective participation indispensable.
- Not to fraction children's and adolescents' spaces; incorporating children and adolescents into processes of consultancy, decision making and policies, plans, programmes and projects implementation.
- Prioritising the local level as a more appropriate space to promote the youth participation (neighbourhood, small village, block, street, college school, church, organisation, job, sports area, etc). Although the visibility of these spaces is not too large, expressions that contribute to renew social networks and to offer more options for children and adolescents who intend to channel their interests through collective initiatives are important.
- Open direct hotlines to express opinions and make complaints.
- Installing an ombudsman for children with an appropriate order.
- Ensuring the democratic and binding spirit of children and adolescents' participation with special attention to diversity.
- Promoting light, functional, horizontal structures and those with visible participation of youths. The institutional weight of the organisation should not drown the charisma and authenticity of the youth organisation.

136 <http://www.ciudadanet.net/Informacion.aspx?info=ciudadanet>

137 José Alexis Ordóñez. *Los y las jóvenes y la participación ciudadana* (Young People and Citizens' Participation). 2000.

- Prioritising the training of children and adolescents who are representatives of their organisations.¹³⁸
- Provide a sustainable support throughout time by the cooperation, since the cultural transformation process is long.
- Taking children's and adolescents' time into account. On one hand, it is important to guarantee that the citizens' participation is a process that reflects short-term results; on the other hand, it is important to take consider that children and adolescents have many activities that limit the additional time they have. Learning to combine this time with the organisation, training and citizens' time of action; although the best is to turn their usual activities (study, recreation, work, etc.) into real participation spaces.
- Conscientiously changing the power relationships in different participation spaces.
- Promoting the organisation around children's and adolescents' interests: defence and protection of the environment, sexual and reproduction rights, promotion and defence of human rights, support for native causes, etc.
- Using opportunities that offer greater importance to the children's and adolescents' rights than what they currently receive at media, national and international cooperation level.
- Promoting the participation in children's protection services.
- Promoting the participation in community organisations.

II. Interventions found in bibliographic resources to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence

Violence is a key concern of children and adolescents from all over the world. Their participation in actions against violence is necessary in order to create a society that respects their right to protection, supports their resilience and allows them to protect themselves against abuse, violations and injustice.

Participation in a favouring and friendly environment may help the children and adolescents affected by violence to explore past experiences and to recover the confidence in the future. Participation may be also an important instrument to leave the victimisation, passiveness and silence behind.

With the opportunity to participate, children can share their experiences and have more control of their lives; less risk of exploitation, less fear in life situations where strict rules prevail, like in State institutions. Experiences demonstrate that if children and adolescents can have contact with adults who take them seriously, the hidden or ignored situation of violence comes to light and children and adolescents who have access to information about complain procedures or report mechanisms usually look for help to protect themselves.

¹³⁸ Cussiánovich and Márquez. Op. cit., pp. 45-46.

Participation improves children and adolescents' self-confidence and self-esteem before violence situations. When participating, children and adolescents obtain and expand their skills because they know that others share similar experiences; they achieve purposes and competences for their own lives and the belief that they may have a positive influence in their own and others' lives. Children and adolescents who have participated in student bodies, town committees and youth clubs have used these opportunities to express, prevent and end the violence against themselves, their peers and the community.

The following strategies are important:

- Creating State mechanisms whose main purpose is to listen to children and adolescents in order to have them directly involved in the design and implementation of policies that address violence against them and to support the measures proposed by children and adolescents to eradicate violence.
- Documenting, systematising and sharing good protagonist and meaningful participation practices of children and adolescents in prevention activities against violence and the construction of tools to end up violence against them.
- Promoting programmes to include the participation of children and adolescents victims of violence in prevention activities—in a voluntary manner and with competent monitoring as part of their recognition process.
- Guaranteeing children and adolescents' participation in protection processes in accordance with the principle of progressive autonomy.
- Ensuring legal procedures that guarantee the Best Interest of the Child through respectful procedures (videoconference, boards, etc.) preventing secondary victimisation. These processes should prevent the repetition of the victims' stories before the judiciary authorities. In other words, promoting single-story testimonies.
- Ensuring that country reports presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child include recommendations made in consultations with children and adolescents. Likewise, institutional processes should be built to generate the required mobilisation for these consultations, adapted to the particular situation of each country.¹³⁹
- Promoting the participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence from individual in order to reach the public.

¹³⁹ Latin America Regional Secretariat for the UN Study on Violence against children and adolescents. Violence against children and adolescents—Latin America Report in the context of the UN Study. 2006, p79.

III. Interventions for promoting participation according to children and adolescents exposed to the three forms of violence

Physical and humiliating punishment

Committee against Punishment – Lima

- Encouraging interests, skills and imageries.
- Public policies for everyone.
- Methodologies to learn to organise spaces where issues regarding rights are developed.
- Diffusing rights through talks.
- Surveillance in order to avoid mistreatment inside schools and the community where they live.
- Raising children's, adolescents' and adults' awareness.
- Need to be part of an organisation.
- Looking for the participation of children and adolescents who have different ages and abilities.
- Developing children's and adolescents' skills through workshops and bonds of comradeship.
- Generating equal opportunities.
- Sensitising teachers, authorities and family men so they promote several spaces for children's participation.
- Stressing public spaces by exercising protagonist participation.
- Promoting a suitable treatment for the exercise of participation.
- Giving classes dynamically in workshops and theatre about humiliating and physical punishment
- Carrying out information fairs.
- Training parents and giving them non-violent upbringing strategies, and promoting the good education.
- Workshops for teachers, especially for tutors, to sensitise them on the issue.
- Giving workshops about rights to doctors.
- Organising reflection workshops and inviting different important figures.
- Preparing a play about humiliating and physical punishment, and presenting it in several cultural centres.
- Including singers and carrying out concerts against punishment.
- Carrying out passacaglia in different districts to compromise different authorities.
- Promoting children's organisations in schools.
- Demanding children's participation spaces.
- Informing society about the children's rights.
- Expressing opinion in "gained" spaces.
- Being responsible and consistent.

Vichama – Lima

- Plays with empowering messages.
- Making audiovisual tapes with positive messages to increase their self-esteem.

- Sending slides by E-mails to children and adolescents to increase their self-esteem and inviting them to participate in children's organisations.
- Workshops and songs where they demonstrate love.
- Inviting organisations to participate by using the media.
- Carrying out sensitisation campaigns.
- Spots carried out by children that allow capturing more their attention, and giving them more confidence than if those were carried out by adults.
- Talks for boys and girls, but mainly based on images, cartoons, transmitting messages about these issues, since it captures more their attention.
- Passacaglia in which homeless people are invited to participate.
- Promoting poems and songs about violence, and making children and adolescents familiar with them.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Renacer – Bogota

- Information spreading campaigns.
- Using playful strategies for children and adolescents, and parents to decrease risk of CSEC.
- Movements staged by children and adolescents (community and social).
- Personal recognition processes from therapy to empowerment.
- Participation exercises as round tables with specific subject matters.
- Prevention workshops given in educational and district institutions.
- Sensitisation campaigns in the community.
- ECPAT Youth Group - Cartagena and Bogota (managed by young people guided by adults).

Renacer – Cartagena

- Playful-pedagogical and recreation activities for children and adolescents of the society.
- Youth participation forums about social problems that affect children and adolescents.
- Integration encounters of youth organisations that promote the defence of the children's rights.
- Sensitisation campaigns to public and private institutions as well as NGOs at a national and international level that promote the right to children's and adolescents' participation.
- State and international organisations support to adolescents' organisations.

Organised armed violence

Specialists' view

- Dialogue spaces and dialogue with institutions for sustainability.
- Involvement in approaches diagnosis, management and evaluation.
- Art and symbolism to express the fear.
- Sport: discipline, standards, expectative as entry strategy.
- First develop actions and then the theory.

- Preventive approaches.
- Restoration justice and alternative measures to imprisonment.
- Boost interests, skills and common beliefs. How to give a new meaning to the youth's rebelliousness? Resilient capacity may promote a good leadership. Sometimes it refers to "disempowerment".
- Universal public policies.

Luta pela Paz – Brazil – Children and adolescents

- Continuing the research on the reality of trafficked youths to know their needs.
- Promoting child-led organisations.
- Involving families and, especially women, in the process of changing the view of violence in poor neighbourhoods as something normal. Now, parents want to participate also in citizens' meetings.
- Encouraging the confidence and self-esteem recovery through the citizens; the chaperone should be identified with the group, and young people should have spaces to express themselves.
- Seeking the gift in each child, valuating their qualities / encourage the improvement of self-esteem.
- Considering young people who succeed in quitting organised armed violence as spokespersons because they know the trafficking reality.
- Guaranteeing that children and adolescents are heard during the programmes construction planned to them, because their actual demands are not often met and there is no actual participation of the youth.
- Making T-shirts for the organisation members in order to be recognised in the street and to feel protected.
- Luta pela Paz's promotion as alternative to the violent life of the gang.
- Monitoring of children and adolescents who want to relate to the organisation.
- Offering a life without fear and with rights, since insecurity is one of the most important factors to quit violence. A gang member reaching 22 is considered a survival.

IV. Interventions found in bibliographic resources to promote the participation of children and adolescents exposed to three forms of violence

Physical and humiliating punishment

Strategies

- Children and adolescents can take part in the following activities:
 - Participating in the research and consultations which will be considered as basis for the programme planning.
 - Designing their own campaigns for the media, producing their own newsletter, radio spot, television programme or drama for the development.
 - Being trained as educators and increasing awareness among children about their right to protection against any forms of violence.

- Working with mediators among their peers, helping other children to explore methods to solve conflicts without turning to violence.
 - Receiving support and helping to establish their own organisations for the campaign for the change, for example clubs, unions, parliaments or committees.
 - Participating in the school administration and getting support when forming school councils that work to create a safe environment at school.
 - Calling other children to report teachers who abuse of their authority.
 - Participating in the local government, for example taking part in committee in a community to sensitise population on the magnitude and nature of the problem and to help to find solutions.
 - Discussing and advocating to put an end to physical and humiliating punishment at several stages such child clubs, conferences, government or officials, professionals working with children.
 - Reporting cases of abuse and punishment.
 - Involving community in monitoring the child protection.¹⁴⁰
- Seminars, workshops and debates at domestic level, where children and adolescents are able to present their own views about punishment and abuse, as well as their own suggestions about how adults and children should act to change the situation.
 - Participating in workshops, radio programmes and other activities made and led by children and adolescents.
 - Essay contests on physical punishment so that children and adolescents can express their feelings and thoughts.
 - Dialogue and practices among peer at school, youth centres and projects.
 - Establishing awareness mechanisms, including the rights of the children in the curricula. When children and adolescents do not attend school, awareness should be carried out through caregivers and community organisations. Children and adolescents should participate in awareness about physical punishment and a complaint mechanism whereby they can discreetly report should be established.
 - Debates against physical and humiliating punishment at school.
 - Presenting physical and humiliating punishment in a positive way: good treatment, feeling safe, being heard, etc.
 - Always starting from the children and adolescents' own experience.

¹⁴⁰ Save the Children. *Ending physical and humiliating punishment of children - Manual for Action*. 2005.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Strategies

- Providing children with training on life skills, children's rights, gender equity and conflict management, at schools as well as in communities.
- Encouraging adults to provide children with knowledge and necessary abilities so they can organise themselves, have access to information and resources, and understand the political, economic and socio-cultural structures.
- Encouraging young people to transform the negative images they have of themselves and changing adverse public perceptions, focusing on their positive roles as advisers, informants and community leaders.
- Providing theatre, poetry and puppet workshops that allow survivors to express themselves through the art and other creative means that give them confidence through public representations in other organisations, schools and local communities. There is no protagonism without art, aesthetics and games because protagonism is autonomy; permanent creativity; and the creativity, personal marks and existence of individuals are fused in art. If something may allow understanding the right to the protagonist participation, it must be shrouded in art, imagination and sensitivity, which are elements that are lost in a society that is tired of the daily survival and the circus and buffoonery the social media offer. Protagonism expressed through art and creativity represents a counterculture of the deteriorated way of humour that today our mediocre television offers.
- Creating opportunities for young people so they interact with other surviving young people and realise they are not alone, and may develop new and positive relationships.
- Creating attitudes for the leadership, trusting young people the responsibility to plan and implement projects, and providing them at the same time with support and training.
- Including cultural activities that develop young people's talent so they may present information effectively during initiatives of public awareness, in the most attractive ways for local communities.
- Working with young people who live in shelters to identify methods that can have a positive impact in their nearest environment, including the creation of libraries, recreation areas and youth clubs.
- Offering opportunities to young people so they may participate directly to projects management and activities implementation by creating attitudes or abilities for their future life.
- Training young people so they may help workers in shelters or reception centres by advising the new ones, and helping them get used to and settle in their new environment.

- Encouraging young people to create positive relationships based on friendship and confidence through activities based on cooperation and achievement of objectives.
- Creating, through the theatre, a play, creation and beauty space that will contrast with traumatic and harmful experiences lived by adolescents who are victims of this infringement. A path of search, learning, surprises, study and some dosage of magic was started.
- Ensuring an association amongst adults and children so that children's participation may go beyond the dimension of occasional consultation or their participation in some aspects of the programmes, and enter into the environment of a transforming process which determines the process as well as the result.
- Creating opportunities for young people to volunteer in community awareness campaigns, by offering peer support to other children in need. Many youths involved in the project have expressed their interests in becoming teachers, counsellors and social workers in the future.
- Building positive partnerships with trusted police officers and governmental leaders through joint meetings designed to share ideas about how to better combat CSEC and help to reduce fear of authority figures.
- Where appropriated and safe, provide identity cards or other materials, which associate youth with projects when performing activities in the community.
- Work with youths to design effective and appropriate local, national and international advocacy campaigns that promote the children and adolescents protection to local communities and national level policy-makers.
- Ensuring that all programmes and activities are based on principles for good care and protection.
- Promoting the participation of children and adolescents in the research, planning, development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes.
- Including children's participation in programmes and initiatives aimed at improving children's lives.
- Favouring opportunities for children so that they can organise and express their views in all settings.

Organised armed violence

Strategies

- Using the potential of the young people involved in drug trafficking to change their life and to contribute to their community, becoming a leader and a model for the rest. It is the best way to quit armed violence.
- As models for other peers, young people should also participate in the programme design and implementation.
- Developing strategies for each existing sub-group among “young people in risk situation”.
- Using leaders of the same community to dialogue with adolescents who are involved in crime.
- Promoting interaction between people who were involved in trafficking and the whole community, thus reducing stigmas and prejudices.
- Offering advice and psychological support to families.
- Having precaution measures for special people who need to leave their homes due to threat against their lives.
- Including financial compensation as a way of ensuring school attendance.
- Objectives of programmes should go beyond insertion in work market. Apart from training participants to get an employment, the programme should develop their skills for changing the community.
- Involving other duty bearers such as authorities, business men, police offices, etc.

APPENDIX 8:

Good practice for promoting participation of children and adolescents exposed to violence in general and to the three forms of violence

Good practices of children and adolescents' participation exposed to violence

- Zambia Civic Education Association seeks to promote and protect the rights of the child through civic education. Its children's participation programme supports children's rights clubs that empower children and adolescents, by sensitising them about their rights under the Convention, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other instruments. At least, 300 clubs in primary and secondary schools are operating in the whole country.
- In Mexico City, more than 1.500 schools and 450.000 students are participating in a project called "Fighting Violence: Education for Peace – For me, you and the whole world." The project organises training workshops for school administrators, teachers, students and parents to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner.
- The UN Study on Violence against Children mentions a list of good practices, considering the school as an ideal space for fighting violence in general.
- In the Republic of Moldova, local youth councils have been installed to empower young people for a responsible participation in the community life.
- In Azerbaijan, youth councils have been installed in areas with a high concentration of displaced national people, and a dialogue amongst ethnic groups and a wider community has been organised.
- The Government of Kenya stimulates young people's participation in the promotion of social attitudes through the National Youth Service development, created to train young citizens in order to get involved in "works of national importance" as well as in homeless children reception centres. The idea is to promote the youth potential to contribute to the political debate, and assume a modernist role in the construction of a safe society.
- UNICEF Programme in Somalia through which young people participate in the training on citizenship, and give the example of renouncing violence.
- XChange programme– creating a culture of non-violence in the English speaking Caribbean: This project seeks to create safe and protective environments for children and adolescents at home, in school and the community where they can live and reach their full potential. The campaign uses music, sports, and various forms of arts to reach and empower adolescents to adopt a positive lifestyle. XChange is a youth-led movement, and is multilevel, including parenting and

building protective environments in homes, providing health and family life education, peace-building and child-friendly school initiatives; building protective communities with adolescents and young people, improving quality and access of service delivery in relevant institutions, policy development and legislative reform, and advocacy and social mobilisation.

- Teatro Efímero in Colombia is a social and political action initiative that arises as a collective response to violence against young people, and the demand of a control authoritarian model in urban popular sectors. It is based on the following principles: collective action, nonviolence, active neutrality and non-collaboration with barbarity, death and authoritarianism.

Physical and humiliating punishment

- Children and adolescents have established a Commission against Punishment and have presented a Campaign against physical and humiliating punishment to the media and Peruvian politicians.
- Children and adolescents address through the media to the Parliament's members and Congresspersons.
- Participation of the Children's Council Working Committee in a meeting to end violence against children and adolescents in partnership with an NGO in Hong Kong and in a radio programme to promote non-violent ways of teaching children and adolescents.
- Child clubs at schools as part of a project of the Child Protection Unit at the National Centre against Violence and participation of children and adolescents in a media campaign against violence towards children in Mongolia.
- Research project called "Insights: Children and young people speak out on physical discipline", is aimed at increasing awareness of children and adolescents' views about physical punishment. The idea is to explore how children accommodate their views about punishment actions from adult people. The research considered possible impact and implications of such actions and developed educational resources both for adult and children, including the children and adolescents' views. Outcomes were shared with the country government in order to become them in public policies in New Zealand.
- Children and adolescents transmit a non-violent message to their peers at school, in youth organisations, and in local clubs. Also, they organised inter-community dialogue among children and adolescents who would otherwise be unlikely to meet.
- Child rights clubs, girls' clubs, media clubs at schools.
- Participation of a commission of children for their rights in the production of a documentary which objective is to awareness to end practices of physical punishment and to transmit the commission's vision through television in Uruguay.

- Campaign against physical punishment and abuse (Central America and Mexico 1996-2000). Campaign of Central America and Mexico has commendably incorporated the topic of children's participation.
- The Central American Summit was held in 1998, there children's representatives of different countries met to discuss problems and drew up suggestions and demands about how to stop physical punishment and abuse.
- Sweden's example shows that children are now more aware of the fact that they cannot be beaten by their parents and that are capable of defending their rights.
- Child rights clubs at schools organise activities, including making the school community aware of punishment used at school, advising students and talking to abusive parents and reporting punishment case at school in Ethiopia.
- Contest "My favourite adult", "Educate, Don't hit" (Save the Children Spain).
- Committee of child representatives for the implementation, protection and advocacy (Save the Children UK) in Kampala, Uganda.
- Children can negotiate their rights with local authorities, caregivers and employers.

Sexual abuse and exploitation

Empowerment experiences

During workshops carried out in the study framework, children and adolescents specified what they have achieved in terms of empowerment through participation in the organisation.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Bogota

- Self-knowledge (drama techniques).
- Self-acceptance.
- Multipliers training process.
- Speak in public.
- Thematic knowledge, appropriation of it and spreading of sexual exploitation and abuse with peers and adults (parents, teachers, etc.).
- Self-esteem increasing (love and value oneself).
- Creation of new improvement techniques for the daily life.
- Learning of drama techniques to reach others.
- Capacity building for leadership.
- Feel oneself safe of one's views.
- Prevention mechanisms appropriation.

- Learning about the value of the word to transform.
- Knowledge about rights and make them be respected.
- Appropriation of language for the speech.
- Learn to leave shyness and present ideas and suggestions to society in favour of children.
- Construction of a common mission.
- Maintain a structure where each one has a role.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Cartagena

- Better knowledge about rights, power relations and personal improvement.
- Changes produced in children and adolescents before society, the way of advocacy, youth and the same children and adolescents.
- At the beginning, egoistic thinking, then more equitable.
- Youth thoughts; disseminate, demand with right and share the rights they have as children and adolescents.
- Know the rights of the child and adolescents.
- Values as respect, responsibility, commitment, perseverance.
- Leadership and team working in peers.
- Capacity to report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Changes in inter-personal relationships.
- Associability.
- Empathy.

Advocacy experiences

During workshops carried out in the study framework, children and adolescents specified what they have achieved in terms of advocacy through participation in the organisation.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Bogota

School

- From coordination and principal's office give support to the process, validate the story, open spaces for spreading and carry out advocacy in other schools of the Partnership (posters against CSEC).
- Inter-institutional contacts with advocacy in other places (not only in the same place), by spreading Renacer's vision and mission.
- Ways by which young people can reach others (they tell participation experiences) about common topics and expectations at schools of the Suba community to prevent sexual exploitation; clarify topics about sexuality.
- Interest about the issue of CSEC is awoken with groups of peers. Cases of CSEC to generate awareness are reported and children provide guidelines to prevent it.
- Change myths referred to sexuality and handling of sexual behaviours with the support of young people.

- Arrangements for the march against CSEC: calls for the event were made in several schools; promotion of dissemination campaigns (banners and slogans) against CSEC.

Family

- Awaken interest of the family's members about commercial sexual exploitation of children until participants' brothers and sisters stress directly prevention processes and identification of cases (chain reaction).
- Awaken interests of parents, who receive the interventions positively.

Community

- Participation in local and district spaces with playful strategies.
- Mural painting against CSEC made in group by young people.
- National meeting of multipliers to share participation experiences and unify action criteria.
- Mothers of the community against child ill treatment. Link with Renacer.

Sexual exploitation and abuse – Renacer Cartagena

- Youth forum against CSEC.
- Regional and national youth meetings of ECPAT groups in Colombia; they promote and defend the right of the child.
- Training and workshops for parents, children and adolescents in prevention of and sensitisation on CSEC and the defence of the rights of the child.
- Opening of spaces in public policies with public bodies and NGO.
- Playful and recreational workshops with students.
- Creation of radio spots against CSEC.
- Sensitise population through marches.
- Participation in political spaces at international and national level.
- Contribution to the preparation of action and attention plans at legal level.
- Participation at national level: I Legislative Forum of Laws against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.
- Establishment of hotbeds in several entities: four councils, two communities of the city, five schools.
- At cultural level, creation of a dancing group against commercial sexual exploitation of children and connections with local singers in the II Forum.
- Partnership with a member of the Youth Council.
- Network of representatives (school mayors).
- Partnerships with NGO and public entities.

- Good practices in providing space and listening to children:¹⁴¹
 - Healing and empowerment of sexually abused children begin with the real option of being heard. Children should have access to an interactive, reliable and empowering setting before being able to listen to voices of survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation in Bangladesh.
 - Children as project managers in Bangladesh.
 - Dialogue between adults and children on how to prevent child sexual abuse and how to best support children in disclosing abuse, expressing their feelings, fears and problems. Discuss discrimination faced by girls. Formation of child clubs and a column in one of the national dailies with possibilities of reaction in Nepal.
 - Children identify unsafe places and seek emotional support and protection from elders to create safety in neighbourhoods. Core group of girls in several ethnic groups realised the need to include boys to change their attitude towards girls. If children ask for support, adults are there for supporting them and helping in dealing with the authorities. Children and adolescents have established rules and regulations for group behaviour, including maintaining confidentiality. Interactive sessions with community stakeholders to change the attitude. Street drama, wall magazines, publications, quiz and oratory contests, and documentaries and videos about the problems. Negotiation with different stakeholders. They asked the local authorities to police the unsafe areas. Girls' attitude to report. Boxes for reporting harassment, messages against harassment at the cinema. Girls have also succeeded in prohibiting several early marriages in the community. Participation of girls in all these activities has empowered them to self-protect. Brothers of girls have been involved in actions, what has opened their brothers' mind about the problem and they not only stopped to upset but also started to protect girls in Nepal.
 - First organisation for survivors of child prostitution by facing stigma from people who work in rescue and recovery. In the organisation, survivors of trafficking are empowered from a rights-based approach; they are given moral and economic support. Also, prevention of trafficking in marginal areal and promotion of an attitude change in community before survivors are dealt with in India.
 - Children who have experienced sexual abuse consider that look for and ask for help, not having fear, and reporting abuse to authorities are good practices. This allows them to have resilience, including their capacity for affection, the goodness of their hearts, sociability and joy. Trust in somebody is a key requirement to have support in Brazil.
 - Children carried out actions to prevent or escape from the situation of abuse as a good practice. Family, professionals, friends, and peers are sources of support in Colombia.

¹⁴¹ Save the Children. *10 essential learning points- Listen and Speak out against Sexual Abuse of Boys and Girls – examples of good practices*. Pp. 61-66.

- ECPAT¹⁴² promote international networks of youth participation where boys and girls organise themselves to express their views and help to prevent CSEC.
- Empowering children and adolescents through children's theatre to break the silence surrounding sexual abuse and exploitation has had a great success in indigenous communities located in rural areas. The programme power is focused on the support and visibility of the community that is given to children in Bangladesh.
- Increasing the participation in schools by Student Unions, and in communities with other existing ways of children's organisation in Nicaragua.
- Supporting the Youth Leaders' Committees organised by the Nicaraguan Police Offense Prevention Programme to promote the adolescents' participation.
- Reflection and analysis for action in the face of trafficking in Nicaragua (NATRAS, MILAVF, Network of Children Communicators).
- Raíces NGO in Chile has experienced theatre techniques with children and adolescents who are victims of CSEC that have gone beyond the therapeutic assistance. It has also explored other ways of participation through the art. The interesting thing is that the theatre technique has been not only an important weapon for the psychological recovery, but also a training tool in which children themselves learnt to talk about the issue.
- The National Network of Children Promoters in Mexico is aimed at spreading the rights of the child in order to avoid violence, abuse and ill treatment. This Network is made up of 33,000 children promoters in the whole country. In order to eradicate abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children and spread the children and adolescents' rights, the National Agency for Family Development (DIF – Spanish acronym) promotes the National Network of Children Promoters in the country. 25 child networks are currently working in the Mexican Republic with the participation of 1,233 municipal diffusers, 4,138 in rural settlements and 33,960 trained children.
- Moreover, the school prosecutors (fiscales escolares) programme is a project considered in the goals set in the Plan of Action for Peruvian Children and Adolescents of Peru developed by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Callao. The student prosecutor is democratically elected by his/her peers of 5th grade of secondary school and will have a work team made up of a deputy prosecutor, a secretary and a board of students. The student prosecutor is invested with authority and works in coordination with provincial criminal prosecutors, family prosecutors and crime prevention prosecutors of Callao in order to act against any signs of crime against children or adolescents. Prosecutors trained student prosecutors and gave them a training handbook containing important information on main topics and problems like paedophilia and child pornography that must be monitored by them; those aforementioned problems become important since these are activities which are attracting a greater number of adolescents through the chat.

142 www.ecpat.net

- In Nicaragua the National Movement of Working Children and Adolescents (NATRAS) began in 2003 to work on preventing sexual abuse of children and adolescents, especially of working children. 18 NATRAS member organisations have participated in a variety of activities (surveys to direct lobbying with municipal officials) aimed at reducing sexual abuse in 13 targeted municipalities and at increasing awareness of the issue in society and the State. In all these activities, the role of the adults is limited to being facilitators.
- Theatre, drama and role plays performed by children have been used with great success as vehicles for advocacy. Thus, messages can be directly transferred and actors can feel free to show incidents of abuse that they would be unlikely to mention in an interview.

Organised armed violence

- Creation of a Youth Service policy as a learning and education alternative, which integrates the community service into education, teaches civic responsibilities, and strengthens the community.
- Incorporate gangs into dialogue wherever possible; this is a way of ensuring groups have a meaningful participation. When possible, especially in less violent and armed cases¹⁴³, group leaders should be contacted and encouraged to participate in the design of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes for their members. A number of projects have successfully engaged armed youth actors in social projects and reintegration programmes, and in El Salvador and Guatemala, for example, gangs have even requested meetings with government representatives, and vice-versa. Including those youths in the discussion about how to reduce their participation in armed violence greatly contributes to improve the effect of programmes with that objective. Different methods of negotiation and dialogue may be needed for more violent and armed groups.¹⁴⁴ These may be similar to conflict resolution tactics with armed groups in situations of armed conflict, and these techniques need to be learned, adapted and evaluated by those working with organised armed violence for their use in non-war situations. Conflict resolution between groups should also be focused on by the authorities in order to limit gun violence.¹⁴⁵
- The Youth Council in Luta pela Paz and citizenship classes: capoeira, boxing, education and access to work. These are several elements which combined give the children better possibilities to get a space in the society from which they have been excluded.
- The Weapon-Free Municipalities project of UNDP in El Salvador organises cultural and sport activities as a way of social prevention addressed to youth of the communities with high levels of violence.

143 Type 1 and type 2.

144 Type 3.

145 *Neither War nor Peace* by Luke Dowdney, 2005, p. 304.

APPENDIX 9:

Gathering document

Secondary resources gathering on participation of children and adolescents in the face of situations of physical and humiliating punishment, sexual exploitation and abuse and organised armed violence is described in a spreadsheet (Excel file) with browsing options by themes.

APPENDIX 10:

Resources for the study and methodology

The study was prepared using different instruments. A team of thematic specialists was set up in Save the Children Sweden for following up the study; such team met four times to review progress and make suggestions.

Participation: Gina Solari

Physical and humiliating punishment: Mónica Alcedo

Sexual exploitation and abuse: Gaby Reyes

Organised armed violence: Ricardo Souza

For the compilation work, we looked for publications in different libraries that are accessible on the Internet and in the regional offices of Save the Children Sweden. All the information is available in a spreadsheet (Excel file) with browsing options by issues.

We consulted several specialists regarding participation and the three forms of violence. Some people were contacted during the study, and most of them for the validation of the final document. Useful contacts and specialists in different issues are listed below:

Physical and humiliating punishment

- Milena Grillo (Fundación Paniamor en Costa Rica): milena@paniamor.or.cr, programas@paniamor.or.cr
- Rosana Acosta (ARCOIRIS in Uruguay): racosta@adinet.com.uy
- Marianna Olinger and Tatiana Araujo (Instituto Promundo in Brazil): m.olinger@promundo.org.br
t.araujo@promundo.org.br

Sexual exploitation and abuse

- Luz Estella Cárdenas (Fundación Renacer-Colombia): renacerbgt@etb.net.co
- Carlos Ivan García (Independent consultant-Colombia): ivangarciaok@tutopia.com
- Euclisia Ferreira (ILO-Regional Office, Tejiendo Redes project-Peru): ferreirae@oit.org.pe
- María Esther Artiles (Honduras): mariaartilesmilla@yahoo.es
- Ernesto Gálmez (responsible for ECPAT-Latin America): galmeze@ecpat.net
- Iria Retuerto and Denise Araya (Raíces Chile): raices@tie.cl

Organised armed violence

- Martín Appiolazza: martinappiolaza@ciudad.com.ar
- Lucía Losoviz: argentina@savethechildren.es
- Clare Feinstein: clarefeinstein@wanadoo.nl
- Leriana Figueiredo, Luke Dowdney (Luta pela Paz): luke@fightforpeace.net
- Clarissa Huguet (Viva Rio): clarissa@vivario.org.br
- Iván Torres (Rayuela): funrayuela@yahoo.com
- Daniel Carsana: daniel.carsana@undp.org

Participation

- Alejandro Cussiánovich (Peru): ifejant2@amauta.rcp.net.pe
- Patricia Horna (Peru): patricia.horna@consultor.scslat.org
- Milagros Castillo (Peru) milicastillo29@yahoo.com
- Fernando Pereira (Venezuela): fpereira@cecodap.org.ve
- Jorge Freyre (Uruguay): gurises@gurisesunidos.org.uy
- Renato Roseno (Brazil): renatoroseno@gmail.com

Throughout the study, we realised that there was little information about participation in the three forms of violence, and decided to carry out some workshops to gather information from primary sources, especially from children and adolescents exposed to violence instead of consulting referential groups. We carried out workshops with children, adolescents and chaperones in Peru on the issue of physical and humiliating punishment; in Colombia on sexual exploitation and abuse; and in Peru with international participants on organised armed violence.

Children and adolescents have had the opportunity to exchange opinions and correct this final document. However, we have decided not to publish those participants' names to protect their identity, taking into account the nature of the problems that are tackled here.



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