



Youth Journal

GOOD PRACTICES OF CHILD AND YOUTH INITIATIVES IN THE PREVENTION OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

Youth Journal: Good practices of child and youth initiatives in the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share with you the third edition of the ECPAT Youth Journal. This latest journal is a compilation of articles written by young people from organisations actively involved in the fight against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in different parts of the world. It focuses on sharing good practice examples of child and youth-led prevention against CSEC. Most authors are members of the ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC), while others are representatives of youth coalitions and youth volunteer movements.

The first Youth Journal¹ published in 2008 by ECPAT International contained more than 20 articles written by children and young people, providing valuable insights into youth perspectives and recommendations from around the world for engaging children and youth in advocacy and other initiatives against CSEC. It was presented to participants of the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. The second edition of the Youth Journal,² published in 2012, focused on child and youth-led activities against CSEC within the framework of the Global Youth Partnership Project (YPP) implemented across 15 countries in five regions until 2012.

Since its inception, ECPAT has been committed to child and youth participation, offering opportunities for young people to raise their voices in the fight against CSEC. ECPAT champions the principle that those with first-hand knowledge are in an excellent position to

¹ ECPAT International (2008). *Youth Journal*. Bangkok: ECPAT http://ecpat.net/sites/default/files/Youth%20Journal_FINAL.pdf

² ECPAT International (2012). *Youth Journal. Youth Partnership Programme: Empowering Child Survivors and At-Risk Youth against Commercial Sexual Exploitation*. Bangkok: ECPAT http://ecpat.net/sites/default/files/Youth%20Journal_DEC2008_ENG.pdf

contribute to the design of effective strategies against CSEC, taking into consideration their best interests and evolving capacities. Within this framework, ECPAT offers the opportunity for young people and children to realise their right to be heard through activities in which they are directly involved, such as peer-to-peer activities, youth-led micro projects and children's participation in the governance of ECPAT International.

Micro project schemes and peer-to-peer activities are important mechanisms for providing young people with the opportunities to build their experience and capacity to engage in social action for the protection of children from sexual exploitation. The goal is to encourage creative thinking amongst youth groups and to inspire them to develop advocacy activities and awareness-raising initiatives on the phenomenon of CSEC. Youth-led micro-project schemes have demonstrated how youth capacity building in planning and implementing projects can result in action for social change within communities and at higher levels, while building life skills and access to education to promote their development and future employability.

This journal is a testament to the will and commitment of young people to eradicate CSEC. The articles provide useful recommendations and good practices on innovative actions to tackle CSEC while at the same time boosting young people's self-esteem and enhancing their knowledge on self-protection against CSEC.

EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS A FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT FOR PREVENTING CSEC IN UKRAINE

By Valentyna Mudrik

Youth Representative to ECPAT International Board of Trustees (2011-2014)

Young people and children, while remaining the most vulnerable group to commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and trafficking in human beings (THB), are becoming part of the solution by finding ways to end CSEC.³ Child and youth participation begins with young people recognising the need to be aware of issues that affect their lives, including the right to live free from abuse and exploitation.⁴ By participating, children and youth begin to understand the importance of self-development and decision-making processes to avoid being exploited and to help their peers. Through education, young people learn how to identify and prevent THB, develop empathy for victims of exploitation and are exposed to protection resources. Educated children and youth are important for the development of a responsible civil society that respects human rights and protects against THB.

Strategies for Educating Youth against Trafficking

Many children and youth who are victims or at risk of sexual exploitation are excluded from mainstream services and programmes and may lack peer connections. Because of this, appropriate education and awareness raising strategies must be set in place.

Educating young people on THB and CSEC should be part of a social-pedagogical approach to protect children's rights and must be included in the general educational process of children. To maximise results, education should target children at different stages of intellectual development, various life circumstances and should take into account individual motivations.

When engaging CSEC and THB survivors and at-risk children and youth, it is important to be clear about the proposed activity and what their participation will entail. This will help avoid creating false expectations.⁵ Children and youth should never be identified as sex trafficking

³ UN.GIFT, UN.GIFT and youth, last accessed 26 March 2015 <http://www.ungift.org/knowledgehub/civil-society/youth.html>

⁴ ECPAT International (2009). *Their protection in our hands*, Bangkok:ECPAT

survivors under any circumstances and should never be pressured to discuss their personal experiences. Children and youth who are educated on the specific issues have the ability to identify their peers who may need help and refer them to professional assistance.

Integrating CSEC/THB awareness into school curriculums

CSEC and THB remain trending problems in Ukraine. In 2013, the Ministry of Internal Affairs registered 112 victims of THB including 8 children, and in the first six months of 2014, 54 victims were registered including 5 minors. However, the statistics do not illustrate the actual situation because these crimes are latent. Furthermore, there is a lack of understanding about the problems not only from civil society but also from responsible government authorities due to the absence of a sustainable monitoring and evaluation system. There are limited resources for CSEC victims to receive adequate educational, social and physiological support. There is only one specialised rehabilitation centre for girl victims of sexual exploitation in Ukraine that is managed by an NGO because there are no specialised state rehabilitation programmes for CSEC victims.

At the same time, there is minimal understanding regarding the issue of child and youth participation in Ukraine. At-risk children and victims are not involved in decision-making processes concerning their lives. Most information and education programmes are implemented by civil society organisations.

“La Strada-Ukraine”, a member of the ECPAT Network, has been working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education on preventing the trafficking of children. As a result of this cooperation, a counter-trafficking lesson scheme and guidelines for teachers have been developed and child-friendly educational materials have been disseminated. This work is included in the national counter-trafficking programme and action plan, which holds the Ministry responsible for the prevention of THB. The project also worked with local universities to encourage the inclusion of lessons on combating THB in the curriculum for future teachers.⁶ When child and youth education is part of a national action plan, it will ultimately

⁵ ECPAT International (2009). *Their protection in our hands*, Bangkok:ECPAT

⁶ LA STRADA UKRAINE, last accessed 26 March 2015 <http://la-strada.org.ua/>

reach a wider audience of children.⁷ It ensures that it becomes the State's responsibility to adequately counteract THB and provides appropriate administrative and financial support for educational activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Participants of Global Youth Partnership Project against CSEC in Ukraine organised educational work with their peers in secondary schools, youth shelters, schools for social rehabilitation and youth detention centres.⁸ A 3 year experience proves that such educational peer support programmes may be successfully implemented in different institutions for children. Educated children and youth, who currently hold the role of Peer Supporters, organised informal educational programmes for their peers in children's institutions. The administration provided them with only office facilities while the training programme was developed and implemented by children and youth. The schedule included 2-3 meetings per week after lessons for 1-2 hours. The themes of the trainings included in the programme aimed to help children learn about CSEC in the easiest way starting from child rights education to sharing information about personal experiences of sexual exploitation and violence. During this work, 2,026 children have been directly involved in the programme and 6,793 indirectly. In total, 455 events have been organised.



Generally, THB and CSEC are not included in mainstream education programmes. Nevertheless, this education must be taught through informal methods and followed up with necessary supports to those involved.

Children and youth who were engaged in an educational process gained support, understanding, new social relationships, the respect of their peers and the opportunity to share their experiences. Decisions about future activities were discussed and agreed upon by all participants as part of the process.

⁷ ECPAT International (2009). *Distilling Elements of Good Practice: The Action Programme against Trafficking in Minors for Sexual Purpose*. Bangkok:ECPAT

⁸ ECPAT Youth Partnership Project in South Asia (2009) *Empowering Youth to Fight Trafficking & the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*. Bangkok:ECPAT

At the same time, there are certain downfalls to children and youth taking on the role of peer supporter. They may not fully understand their roles and responsibilities or they may lack experience and knowledge. However, these difficulties may be overcome by possessing a strong personal will to help their peers and by receiving adequate support from professionals.

Several young participants of the project grew up and devoted their careers to child rights protection. This fact proves that in order to create a world without violence, children and youth who are at-risk or survivors of sexual exploitation should be recognised and supported by the global community as active participants in the fight against CSEC and THB.



Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Educational strategies need to ensure that vulnerable children are reached and should focus on engaging them in meaningful ways.
- To ensure the effectiveness of prevention and protection programmes, their impact must be evaluated.
- Educational work with children must be based on a mutual respect and be carried out with the best interests of the child kept in mind.
- Awareness raising and education on THB and CSEC must protect the identity of victims and must include information on reporting and referral systems so that child survivors have access to the professional services they need.
- Educational work with children and youth must be included in national action plans against THB as part of the prevention component.

EDUCATING YOUTH ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SAFETY IN CANADA

By Arly Akerstream

EICYAC Representative for North America (2012-2014)

Technological advances in recent years have given rise to online communication in the form of social networking sites. These websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram, provide users with a means of instant communication and entertainment at any given time.⁹ Engaging in one or more of these websites on a daily basis is commonplace for most children and youth.¹⁰ While these social networking sites have many beneficial aspects, they can also be unhealthy environments.¹¹ Many youth are unaware of the dangers associated with sharing private information online and often follow the trends of their peers. This can cause youth to become more susceptible to risky situations, such as cyberbullying, over-sharing and online predators.¹² Thus, without providing children and youth proper tools for online safety, they can be more vulnerable to the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).¹³

This issue recently gained major media attention across Canada when two teenage girls, Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons, took their lives after incidents of online sexual exploitation and cyberbullying.¹⁴ These tragic events left a lasting impact on parents, teachers and youth, resulting in the commencement of anti-cyberbullying awareness projects.¹⁵

⁹ Gwenn Schurgin O’Keeffe and Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, “The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families.” *Pediatrics* 127 (2011).

¹⁰ Sonia Livingstone and David R. Brake, “On the rapid rise of social networking sites: New findings and policy implications.” *Children & society* 24 (2010).

¹¹ Gwenn Schurgin O’Keeffe and Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, “The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families.” *Pediatrics* 127 (2011).

¹² Sonia Livingstone and David R. Brake “ On the rapid rise of social networking sites: new findings and policy implications” *Children and Society*, 24(1): 75-83.

¹³ ECPAT International, FAQs, last accessed 15 January 2014 <http://www.ecpat.net/faqs#csec>

¹⁴ The Huffington Post British Columbia (2014) Rehtaeh Parsons, Amanda Todd Deaths Share Similarities (Video)

¹⁵ Ctvnews.ca Staff (2014) Mothers of Rehtaeh Parsons, Amanda Todd welcome N.S. cyberbully laws (Video).

Project Details

On November 18th, 2013, Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada held an educational symposium focused on child sexual exploitation in the digital age. The focus of the event was to educate professionals, students and parents on the potential dangers of engaging in social networking sites. The symposium also aimed to provide attendees with the proper tools to keep youth safe online. Tickets for the event were priced at \$30 CAD to offset the costs of flying in the presenters and renting the banquet room. The symposium took the form of a panel discussion with each guest presenting their expertise and answering pressing questions. Guest speakers included: Jonathan Rosenthal, a defence attorney and children's rights advocate; Brian Bowman, a member of Pitblado Law and a nationally recognised privacy and social media law expert; Richard Guerry, the founder of the Institute for Responsible Online and Cell-Phone Communication; the mother of Amanda Todd, Carol Todd; and the father of Rehtaeh Parsons, Glenn Canning.¹⁶



¹⁶ Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada. Symposium at Beyond Borders. Last accessed January 2014. <http://www.beyondborders.org/wp/media-awards/symposium-2/>

The North American EICYAC micro-project entailed sending 55 high school and university students to the symposium. Teachers, professors and students were contacted with details of the event via email and telephone. High school students were selected by their teachers based on interest in the subject. University and college professors teaching in relevant faculties (such as social work, criminology, family social sciences and education) discussed the symposium in class and put forth interested participants to attend the event.

In order to receive a funded ticket to the event, interested students had to share an article, statistic or social media post related to CSEC or the symposium. The symposium committee felt this was an excellent approach for students (and their peers) to learn more about CSEC. The selected high school students posted an article in their school newsletter and plan on incorporating the material they learned into their bullying awareness week.

Outcomes

The feedback I received from the event was immensely positive. Professors and teachers were very pleased to learn about the opportunity for their students to attend; consequently, tickets ran out quickly. The speakers were engaging and impactful, and many audience members found the material informative and astounding. The students that attended became more aware of the dangers of over-sharing personal information and photos online and the consequences that these actions can pose in the future. One student in attendance wrote, “I was very moved by the presentation and also felt like I had gained an immense amount of insight into some of the specific consequences of social media and technology for young people (and all people) today. The lack of privacy and protection from this type of social media and technology is and was shocking for me. It really made me think about what role or involvement schools can or should play in situations that occur for students outside of school hours”. These youth increased their awareness of online safety for their own gain, and they will be able to pass on the information to their peers and utilise it in their future careers.

Social networking sites have become a great way for both adults and youth to communicate and engage with their friends and family internationally. Given this societal shift, it is important to introduce children and youth to the risks associated with social networking sites, primarily the lack of privacy associated with sharing information and photos and the permanence of these actions. By recognising these concerns, youth can protect themselves from risks of cyberbullying and CSEC.



Future Considerations

- The micro-project was very successful and received excellent feedback; I believe this was due to the timely implementation of the symposium and the riveting speakers. Given the newness of the topic, I believe this project can be successfully implemented in other countries because many children and youth are uninformed of safe methods of using social networking sites.
- One difficulty with the project was verifying the completion of social media posts that the youth were asked to create about the symposium or their experience given different privacy settings on social media accounts. If this project were to be implemented again, I would recommend bringing one or two large groups of students to the event as opposed to small numbers of students from many different schools/faculties. Full class discussions or projects to engage youth would likely be more meaningful than small tasks given to individual youth participants.
- While this project worked well with both high school and post-secondary school students, I believe it would have a greater benefit with high school students, especially if the presentation is engaging and age appropriate. Youth begin using social media sites at a young age, and therefore should be aware of safe practices early on.

THE THEATRE CARAVAN AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Sali Ka Bata Team

With the support of Valentina Vitali (ECPAT International CYP Programme Intern)



The Theatre Caravan against commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) was a four-month project implemented in the Philippines by the Sali Ka Bata youth organisation in collaboration with ECPAT. Sali Ka Bata is a mobile community theatre advocacy group composed of young people trained as peer leaders and utilises a child-friendly theatre advocacy to raise awareness of the issue of CSEC in local communities.

The Theatre Caravan project aimed to heighten the awareness of children and young people about the importance of personal safety and the dangers of sexual exploitation. It also intended to enhance the capacity and participation of children, especially new members of Sali Ka Bata, in advocacy through theatre performances. The show, designed by the children, consisted of a dance and musical production depicting three stories involving cases of trafficking and sexual exploitation in the context of online sexual abuse. The subject of the performance was chosen by taking into account the increasing problem of cyber-child pornography reported by various communities.

The twenty active members of Sali Ka Bata coordinated all the activities for successful implementation of the project. They sent the invitation and coordination letters to community leaders, organised rehearsal, prepared costumes and props, and arranged preparatory meetings. The Caravan Theatre



conducted activities in ten communities; a total of 824 people directly participated (439 children and 384 adults) and an estimated 1,200 people were reached during the public performances.

The programme consisted of a community education session running for three hours, a twenty minute theatre production, and open discussions and workshops on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) facilitated by young people themselves. Moreover, if the community agreed, awareness raising materials were developed and distributed.

The project has been perceived by the communities as really useful and interesting. Most local authorities requested another performance and follow-up activities. Furthermore, feedback from the audience confirmed that commercial sexual exploitation of children is a reality in the area, and the show has been a starting point for other initiatives to be planned and implemented on the issue.



The Theatre Caravan provided a great opportunity and a valuable learning experience to the young people of ECPAT and to the participating communities. It enabled youth to participate and engage in a project directly affecting them and to develop their capacities and creativity at the same time. It is also worth noting that two CSEC survivors sheltered at the ECPAT home became active members of Sali Ka Bata.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LED CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD PROSTITUTION AND PORNOGRAPHY IN UGANDA

By Jonathan Ssembajwe

*Children and Youth Participation Coordinator, Rights of Young Foundation –Uganda
Youth Representative to ECPAT International Board of Trustees (2010-2011)*

Following the increased commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) through child prostitution and pornography in Uganda, with an estimated 20,000 children involved, ECPAT and Rights of Young Foundation peer supporters implemented a campaign to eradicate the problem.

The micro-project was planned and implemented by nine children and youth peer supporters who worked in two districts of Uganda, namely Kampala and Mukono, which were selected because of their higher rates of child prostitution and pornography compared to other areas.

The micro-project targeted schoolchildren, teachers and parents through an awareness raising campaign in schools; it involved media and celebrating Universal Children's Day. The objective of the project was to inform the community of the growing problem of child prostitution and pornography in Uganda while providing sustainable solutions.



During the two month micro-project, which started in September 2013, 15,000 schoolchildren and young people, and about two million members of the community, were reached through three radio talk shows held by the most popular radio station in Uganda.

The campaign, which started with capacity building meetings in schools and a media partnership, was successful. Through the work of the peer supporters, the following goals were achieved:

- The problem of child prostitution and pornography has been acknowledged as a serious problem affecting children and young people in communities.
- Children and young people enhanced their knowledge on self-protection from child prostitution and pornography.
- Child and youth participation against CSEC was promoted, and more children and young people joined the peer supporters in the fight against child prostitution and pornography.
- New best practices in the fight against child prostitution and pornography were presented. For example, teachers suggested that the private sector producing scholastic materials should be involved, and the materials should incorporate messages aimed at eradicating CSEC. In this way, a broader audience will be reached, including many children, teachers, parents, and the whole community.
- Parents improved their knowledge and skills to fight against child prostitution and pornography in communities through the protection of children and the reporting of crimes against CSEC.
- The active role of ECPAT and Rights of Young Foundation in the fight against child prostitution and pornography was recognised.



The success of this micro-project is attributed to the commitment and passion the peer educators have towards eradicating CSEC in Uganda, good preparation before the awareness sessions, campaign materials produced like posters and stickers which made the information flow easy, discipline, good leadership, as well as to the cooperation and support of schoolteachers, ECPAT International and Rights of Young Foundation.

The most important lesson learnt was that the involvement of children and young people in the discussion of what directly affects them can cause a lasting change in the society. This is why a lot of attention was given to them in their campaign against child prostitution and pornography.

The most difficult part of the project was experienced during the last weeks of the campaign, when schools had final examinations and could only allocate little time to the peer supporters. Due to good planning, that little time was used effectively.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE GAMBIA

By Amie Jobe

EICYAC Representative for Africa (2011-2014)

Children with disabilities live a very isolated life in The Gambia. Due to powerlessness, social isolation and highly ingrained cultural prejudices, they are highly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, especially physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Therefore, these children need special protection and raised awareness. Very few individuals or institutions think of ways to raise awareness and empower children with disabilities on these themes. Even though there are laws and policies in The Gambia that protect people with disabilities against abuse and exploitation, there is still a major need to ensure that children with disabilities are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are familiar with child protection issues in order to safeguard their lives and be able to report any sexual abuse and exploitation.

The menace of sexual exploitation of children prompted the initiation of the project called “Training Children with Disabilities in The Gambia on Sexual Abuse and CSEC.” The project was planned and implemented by EICYAC representatives from Africa, youth coordinators of The Child Protection Alliance (CPA) and representatives from Voice of the Young. The project targeted 50 children and 24 teachers from three disability schools. It focused on three different types of disabilities: the deaf and hard of hearing; the visually impaired; and those with learning difficulties. It aimed to fully empower these children on sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. It provided them with basic tips on child protection issues to defend themselves as well as boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Training children with disabilities requires proper planning, good preparation and a practical learning and teaching method because they live with a form of disability that does not enable them to fully perform actions like other children.

For every category of disability, a different method of learning was used according to their needs.

The deaf and hard of hearing children, who have normal IQs, need a sign language interpreter and visual learning aids (posters, stickers, etc). These children have a very high level of understanding and interact very well.

Children with visual impairment are a challenging group because they cannot use visual aids and their understanding depends on audio, vocal and Braille material.

Children with learning difficulties, who have low IQs or are mentally challenged, need all necessary teaching aids, support and guidance to improve their knowledge and understanding.

The project was very important and useful. It brought out the misconceptions and beliefs of the participants about CSEC and child protection issues, which taught them how to intervene and protect themselves in cases of abuse. The project was really successful since it reached 74 beneficiaries (50 students and 24 teachers) directly and 500 students indirectly through assemblies, which shows that children with disabilities are very good in disseminating information and raising awareness among themselves.

Moreover, the project evaluation underlined the necessity of stronger moral support for children with learning difficulties, especially on child protection issues. It also highlighted the expensive cost of undertaking learning activities with children with disabilities because of the special teaching materials required to be used.



From the participant side, some suggestions to improve the project have been made. In particular, they recommended involving parents, guardians and more teachers in trainings on child rights and child protection issues; increasing the activities of awareness raising among children living with disabilities; and producing informative materials in Braille and the language of song. Training for children with disabilities need proper planning,

good preparation and a practical learning and teaching method as they live with a form of disability that does not enable them to fully perform actions like other children.

For every category of disability, a different method of learning has been used according to their needs.

The deaf and hard of hearing children which have the normal development and IQ need a sign language interpreter and visual learning aids (posters, stickers, etc). These children have a very high level of understanding and interact very well.

The children with visual impairment represent a more challenging group as they cannot use visual aid and their understanding depends on audio, voicing and Braille¹⁵ material.

Children with learning difficulties whose IQ level is low because of mental problems need all necessary teaching aid, support and guidance to improve their knowledge and understanding.

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WE ARE SPECIAL IN OUR OWN WAY: SO TREAT US SPECIAL

is the slogan chosen by the children for the trainings.

ART CAMP FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THAILAND

By YPP Team Thailand

With the support of Valentina Vitali (ECPAT International CYP Programme Intern)



In June, the ECPAT Foundation in Thailand organised a three-day art camp for peer supporters of the Youth Partnership Project (YPP) to increase understanding among children and youth of their rights and the risks posed by commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The activities were held at Nattipon Resort, Maejan District. Approximately 45-50 children and youth between the ages of 13-20 years participated. The participants came

from 11 partner organisations, which included schools and shelter homes in the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phayao.

The art camp aimed to provide opportunities for children and young people to learn about and implement awareness raising campaigns through the use of creative arts. The goal was to empower some of the most vulnerable children to improve their lives and influence change.

The camp program was developed and implemented with the support of special resource professionals. For example, a psychiatrist, specialised in art therapies, took active part in the camp to teach child victims and survivors of sexual exploitation how to release emotional pain and psychological damage deriving from bad experiences.

The first day of the camp started with an ice breaker group activity for children and young people to get to know each other and to provide them with basic knowledge and useful techniques on how to develop artwork. Children and young people were then invited and encouraged to practice art in different techniques, such as drawing with crayons, using rubber to make prints and drawing pictures according to storytelling and handicrafts.

During the second day, three forms of creative arts were utilised to equip the children and young people with tools to educate their communities on the perils of CSEC. These forms included visual arts, drama and T-shirt screen printing. The young participants were divided into three groups to learn about art techniques from the special resource person and to produce artwork. Drawing and painting have been identified as processes that stimulate emotions, feeling and imagination, while T-shirt screen printing has been recognised as a skill that could be reused in a future career.

On the last day of camp, the participants gained information and expertise on how to conduct a presentation for an awareness raising campaign. They learned about the concept of creative visual art and theatre performance to raise awareness about CSEC.



At the Camp, children learned how to use art as a language of communication, how to express their feelings and be engaged with their peers and facilitators. They improved their life skills, such as self-esteem, and acquired knowledge on child protection, awareness raising and advocacy against CSEC. Moreover, high achievements in art are considered a good tool to improve personal learning skills.

The project also provided assistance and support to children and youth to design and implement their own awareness raising activities within their communities after the Art Camp. The following are some of the quotes from young people on the benefits of this art camp:

"I feel happy and proud of my artwork, I promised to do more awareness campaign against CSEC and help other children in need."

"I realised that art works are not too difficult, the different art activities helped me to enjoy the moment and relax from stress and problems."

INVOLVEMENT OF AT-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE IN ACTIVITIES ON PREVENTION OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN RUSSIA: YOUTH VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT “DO YOU KNOW THE WAY? DO IT YOUR OWN WAY...”

By Dr. Olga Kolpakova

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Project manager, Regional NGO Stellit

Leader of the Youth Volunteer Movement “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way...”

Traditionally, youth volunteer movements in Russia and in many other countries involve active, successful young people, who study at high school or at university, speak English fluently, have pro-active lifestyles and would like to make life around them better. Young people with difficult backgrounds are barely regarded as equal partners in planning and implementing prevention activities. This article describes the experience of the regional NGO “Stellit” in the involvement of young people with difficult backgrounds in peer-to-peer activities on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

The Youth Volunteer Movement “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way...” was founded by the regional NGO Stellit in St. Petersburg in 2009. Its mission is to support people with difficult backgrounds to change their lives for the better. It involves vocational school students of 16–24 years old. In most cases, these young people have been brought up in “problematic” family situations where parents have alcohol addiction, could be



imprisoned, have low income or, for some reason, do not put enough effort into raising their children in a proper way. Some of them have been raised by older brothers, sisters, grandparents or even at orphanages. During their studies in school, they used to belong to a group of “difficult” adolescents, labelled by teachers as “hooligans”, and hardly ever felt successful in social situations. As a result, they have low self-esteem, lack communication skills and do not believe that they can change their own lives or their communities.

Taking into account the characteristics of young people involved in the movement, the activities have been divided into two equal blocks:

- 1) Activities aimed at supporting successful socialisation of volunteers:** trainings to inform young people on different types of risky behaviour; trainings aimed at team building, development of communication skills and self-confident behaviour; and joint activities such as watching and discussing movies, theatre lessons, and celebrations of the New Year, Halloween and the Movement Birthday.
- 2) Peer-to-peer activities implemented by young people themselves:** station and floor games; theatre performances; city-wide awareness raising campaigns; thematic exhibitions aimed at raising awareness on how everyone could protect himself/herself; and activities aimed at supporting children in social and rehabilitation centres and shelters (e.g. New Year parties).

In the field of combating commercial sexual exploitation of children, the first type of activity includes training volunteers on the issues, while the second type of activity includes station and floor games on Internet safety issues, theatre performances and thematic exhibitions on the prevention of trafficking for sexual purposes. Young people took an active role in the development of all these activities.

The Youth Volunteer Movement “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way...” has a double social effect. On the one hand, it leads to raised awareness for children and young people on how to protect themselves from being involved in different forms of risky behaviour, including commercial sexual exploitation of children. In many ways, volunteers with difficult backgrounds could be more effective in raising awareness among their peers compared to their “successful” counterparts because they know their needs better. From 2009 to the present, volunteers have organised more than 50 events on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation reaching more than 6,000 people. According to the feedback from



participants, the activities were very interesting and intellectually stimulating. These activities also got very positive feedback from stakeholders working with children and young people, as well as from the St. Petersburg's Government.

On the other hand, the Youth Volunteer Movement “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way” contributes to successful socialisation of volunteers. Since

2009, it has involved more than 200 volunteers; among them, 30% entered universities, all found a good job, 80% developed successful relationships with boys/girls and some formed their own families (and are happy). All of them have acquired a pro-active attitude towards life and have understood that they can better their own lives and the lives of people around them.

Funds for the Youth Volunteer Movement's maintenance and development are raised from foundations, the local and federal government, private companies and via social entrepreneurs' programmes. The Movement partners with one of the biggest vocational schools in St. Petersburg – Lyceum of Services and Professional Technologies – which provides room for volunteer meetings and trainings, the hall for theatre performances and administrative support. At the moment, the Movement is financially sustainable.

The experience of the Youth Volunteer Movement, “Do you know the way? Do it Your Own Way...” shows that young people with difficult backgrounds can be very effective in preventing different risks related to the commercial sexual exploitation among their peers. This experience could be successfully transferred to other countries. We are looking forward to developing cooperation and exchanging best practices in this field.

MAKE-IT-SAFE PEER EDUCATION PROJECT IN THE NETHERLANDS

By Celine Verheijen

Project Coordinator, ECPAT Netherlands

Traditionally, youth volunteer movements in Russia and in many other countries involve active, successful young people, who study at high school or at university, speak English fluently, have pro-active lifestyles and would like to make life around them better. Young people with difficult backgrounds are barely regarded as equal partners in planning and implementing prevention activities. This article describes the experience of the regional NGO “Stellit” in the involvement of young people with difficult backgrounds in peer-to-peer activities on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

The Youth Volunteer Movement “Do You Know the Way? Do it Your Own Way...” was founded by the regional NGO Stellit in St. Petersburg in 2009. Its mission is to support people with difficult backgrounds to change their lives for the better. It involves vocational school students of 16–24 years old. In most cases, these young people have been brought up in “problematic” family situations where parents have alcohol addiction, could be imprisoned, have low income or, for some reason, do not put enough effort into raising their children in a proper way. Some of them have been raised by older brothers, sisters, grandparents or even at orphanages. During their studies in school, they used to belong to a group of “difficult”



Online risks for children in the Netherlands

Cyberbullying, sexting and grooming are serious problems in the Netherlands. Estimates of cyberbullying vary widely, depending on the research methods, from 3.3% to 72%. A recent study into sexting shows that it happens very frequently in the Netherlands. For example, a study of Sense (2014) covering 1,062 students stated that 1/3 of them have received a request to send nude photos or explicit films of themselves (sexting). The requests were usually from a stranger on the Internet (34%) or from their partner (21%). Almost 60% of the respondents received a nude picture or film. About 1/4 experienced this as annoying or weird. Furthermore, 20% had forwarded a nude picture or film to someone else and, out of these, 14% regretted sending it afterwards.

The youth participation project

On 5 February 2013, ECPAT Belgium launched the project called “Make-IT-Safe” on the occasion of Safer Internet Day. The Make-IT-Safe peer education project was implemented in five EU countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, UK and Netherlands) during 2013 and 2014. The aim of the project was to enhance the knowledge of youth on safe and responsible use of the Internet and new online technologies in order to protect themselves against the potential risks of sexual exploitation and abuse online. Materials were translated in several other European languages, such as Romanian and Polish, and also in the languages of migrants living in the EU, such as Arabic and Russian.

Implementation of the project

The project is unique because young people themselves are responsible for their own prevention through the “peer-2-peer” methodology.

Each group involved in the project included two young people who were trained to become “peer experts” in online safety, becoming a focal point to offer supportive listening, guidance and information to their “peers”.

Within the project, 68 peer experts were trained (of which 8 were ECPAT Youth), and they conducted peer education activities with more than 1,000 peers at 8 schools and 5 youth groups. Furthermore, more than 1,000 parents received a presentation about online risks and approximately 8,000 flyers were distributed with tips for parents on how to discuss online behaviour with their child(ren).

Peer educators received 3 trainings from ECPAT Youth members and an experienced ECPAT trainer. The peer educators were trained on online topics such as cyber bullying and sexting. The training also focused on different learning techniques and how to reach participants with different learning styles, as well as how to lead discussion sessions amongst youngsters.

In the Netherlands, an easy to implement peer education project was implemented in schools and youth clubs to make youngsters think about their own online behaviour and how to stay safe online; it also educated teachers and parents on how to assist children and young people to be safe online. The project reached migrant children and parents, mainly from Turkey, Morocco and Somalia, and also children with behavioural problems.

Lecture of peer educators

Anniko and Rosa (peer educators) gave a lecture at their high school. They started with a short movie about bullying through social media to introduce the topic and start a discussion with their peers. Afterwards, every participant received two cards with 'like' and 'unlike' on them. Anniko asked a student to stand in front of the class and then asked everyone to show the



'like' card towards the person standing. Thereafter, the students had to show the 'unlike' cards. The pupil in front of the class looked very depressed. "On the Internet, it is easy for someone to 'unlike' something or someone, but how does it feel to do it to someone's face?" asked Anniko. Then, based on some of the students' statements, the class discussed the difference between teasing and bullying and the consequences of bullying. Rosa concluded with tips for being safe on the Internet. She urged that everyone who experienced bullying should talk to someone.

The session proceeded with Rosa asking who is on Facebook. She pointed to a boy and asked what kind of information he posts on Facebook. Then Anniko divided the school board into three parts: “not on the Internet/ only visible for friends/ visible for everyone” and she read out loud different types of information such as “telephone number, beach pictures, name of sport club attended, and age,” asking the students if they would put them on the Internet, and if so, would they make it public or private. Rosa explained, “Be careful with placing your age on the Internet publicly because there are online groomers searching specifically for young ages. When you place too much private information of yourself online, such as your sports club, people can figure out where you live or where you spend your time. You have to wonder if it can be risky if strangers know that.” She then showed her peers how to set private profiles on Facebook.

The third part of the peer-2-peer session ended with a short movie about a girl who has been bullied by her class after a photo of her breasts was dispersed. Rosa started a discussion in the class asking the students if they think it was the girl’s fault. One student replied, “Bullying is never good, but it is also unwise to send a naked picture of yourself”. Another said, “If it is your boyfriend and you trust him and send a picture of yourself, he should not forward it. You should blame him, not the girl”. Anniko handed out flyers about ‘Meldknop.nl’ and explained that youngsters can receive help or submit a report on this website.

Finally, another case study was brought to the attention of the class. The situation described a girl (15 years old) who met a guy (21 years old) on the Internet. After a while she fell in love with him and they had sex. He then asked her for a nude picture and she sent it to him. Now the guy is threatening to make the photo public if she does not work for him as a prostitute. The groups talked about what the girl can do to get out of this situation. Several options were mentioned: “How hard it is; she must tell her parents because she is in danger”, said one student; another suggested, “She can go to the website www.meldknop.nl or directly to the police and bring chat messages as evidence.”

The lecture closed with a summary of the main points of cyberbullying, sexting and grooming and how to stay safe on the Internet.

Difficulties

Some peer experts could have difficulties with keeping order in the classroom. There was one female peer expert who felt really bad after a peer education class because a boy did not participate in the activities. ECPAT staff and a coach within the school assisted the girl. Furthermore, didactic training has been included for the peer experts to be prepared to handle difficult classroom situations, and clear agreements with the teachers present during the peer education classes have been made on when and how to interfere.

Public Awareness

Two articles about the project were published in the child rights magazine Right! which is also used as an instrument to lobby the government. Also, two news items were published in the e-newsletter of Defence for Children reaching 2,000 professionals in children's rights, including teachers and policymakers. Parents were reached at informative events at participating schools.

Evaluation of project

The peer education part of the project proved to be very successful in discussing online behaviour, since youngsters use the Internet differently than adults and understand more about the online world and behaviour. The project provided schools with a method to implement internet safety within their school curricula, and all the participating schools and youth clubs are willing to implement the project in the future.

Evaluation forms and interviews during the mid-term and final evaluation of the project showed that the peer experts and the peers enjoyed the peer education activities and it significantly increased the knowledge of young people on online risks, such as cyberbullying, sexting and grooming, and how they can be protected against these potential risks. The project significantly increased the awareness amongst youngsters about the reporting website 'Meldknop.nl', where youngsters can receive help when unwanted images are distributed through the Internet or social media, report online abuse and receive counselling.

Lessons learnt

- The issues of cyberbullying, sexting and grooming are very topical; all teens recognise situations from direct or indirect experience and have an opinion about it.
- Teens appreciate information from peers and interact easily by sharing opinions and experiences.
- It is important to also inform teachers and youth workers about online risks, punishable issues and how to act appropriately in situations so they can act fast when needed.
- The inspiration guide for peer experts was a welcome and much used reference when preparing for lessons.
- The integration of parents in the project was experienced as very positive.

Available materials

All the developed materials for coaches, peer experts and parents are translated in several languages and are available on: www.make-it-safe.net.



YOUTH PARTICIPATION, “AS A MOBILISATION STRATEGY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN LATIN AMERICA”

By Yefry Castro Rodríguez

ECPAT Colombia Youth Network

EICYAC Representative for Latin America (2008-2011)

In order to approach the concept of participation, we make reference to every human being's right to be heard, to vote and elect our representatives and leaders, and to exercise the freedom of speech, as well as allowing the incidence of debate and social development within these spaces.

At present, there is a lot of talk about participation as an axis to promote human rights, especially child and youth participation as a process that shapes and empowers adolescents and youth to become subjects of rights and to act as multiplying agents in their communities.



the context of Travel and Tourism called “*La Muralla Soy Yo*” (“*I am the Wall*”) since 2009.

Our work to become a stronger Youth Network has been taxing and has involved a long process. First, we motivate and attract participants through the identification of adolescents

In Colombia, Renacer Foundation has been promoting these formative processes in children, adolescents and youth since 2001. This is how ECPAT Colombia's Youth Group – now known as *ECPAT Colombia's Youth Network* – was conceived. It has been strengthened by the Project to Prevent the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in

and youth from schools in vulnerable communities to raise their awareness so that they will be attracted to the strategy. Then follows a training process through which we seek to provide tools for self-protection against CSE for *boys and girls (youth and adolescents)* and to promote their rights. Later, by exercising their right to participation, they will feel empowered and participate actively in the ECPAT Youth Network in their cities by generating solutions and working for their communities. In the city of Cartagena, three youth groups have been established in three different neighbourhoods (the town of La Boquilla, Barrio España and Barrio Fredonia) and together they are ECPAT Colombia's Youth Network (Cartagena).

Over the last few years, the ECPAT Colombia Youth Network has developed a series of activities to prevent and eradicate this problem in the city of Cartagena de Indias, which include:

Consolidating the Network through an internal training process and by organising two Youth Assemblies to give direction to the organisation, establish plans of action and define organisational structures.

Training adolescents and youth from 12 schools and 7 youth organisations in the city, working with more than 600 youth and adolescents over the last 3 years to offer them self-protection tools against sexual exploitation, and an understanding of their rights.

Incidence of and participation in forums and discussion groups where we have taken the voice of youth and adolescents from our city, to fight CSE. One of the most noteworthy events was a Discussion Group with the Puerto Rican band "Calle 13" in the city of Barranquilla, Colombia, when we had the opportunity to chat with band leader René Pérez, whose stage name is "Residente", and who is leading a campaign against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Latin America with MTV Exit and UNICEF. Another important event that we participated in was the Forum against Sexual Exploitation in the Context of Travel and Tourism, which was organised and presided over by Colombia's Vice Minister of Tourism and



ICBF (The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare), allowing for the exchange of successful experiences in the country and articulating them to continue engaging in the fight against this issue.

Collaborating with other youth movements to perform joint actions. As part of this process we organised a Cultural Demonstration in the city centre to show that we stand against Trafficking and the Sexual Exploitation of Children. The Calle 13 Revolutionary Movement (referred to as MRC13 in Spanish) is one of the Colombian organisations that have joined the clamor against sexual exploitation.

Finally, we discuss the use of ICT's to give visibility to our mission by creating a Facebook fan page where we post all of our actions and the activities that we organise in our country.

Colombian youth and adolescents wish and seek to make participation processes real and effective, so that they may gain significance as an alternative to propel change and social development. We invite ECPAT groups and different civil society organisations to join our movement and promote adolescent and youth participation in their plans and programmes.

JOIN US!!!



ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS TO FIGHT AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN RAJSHAHI, BANGLADESH - THE STORY OF ROBIUL

By Robiul

Community Facilitator, ACD – Association for Community Development and Sharmin Subrina

Programme Coordinator, ACD – Association for Community Development

Beyond the root causes of violence against children such as poverty and socio-cultural practices, the causes of commercial sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking are related to awareness, sensitization and proactive roles of the caregivers and duty-bearers in response to the effects of violence against children. Since children have little awareness and life skills to protect themselves, the Association for Community Development (ACD) has piloted a project called “Allies for Change: Engaging Men and Boys to Combat Gender Based Violence in Rajshahi” in the northern part of Bangladesh.



The project aims to reduce the incidence of gender based violence against women and girls through the promotion of norms, values and attitudes of gender equality in alliance with men and boys. It does so by raising awareness among the population and promoting social movements and the participation of men and boys in the process of challenging the hegemonic forms of masculinity.

The geographic areas chosen for the project represent some of the most remote and vulnerable areas in which physical and social infrastructure are most underdeveloped. In the community, people are marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable. The major problems in the area are poverty, illiteracy and various malpractices among boys and young men. Most of the families, especially the males, are day labourers, and male members are usually the only income earners in the family. The children are in more of a backwards position in terms of education as they are not encouraged by the family to undertake education. Society is extremely confined by social customs and norms, which profoundly affect the youths and contributes to discrimination, abuses and rights violations. In the familial context, they are confined by decisions of parents or families. The eradication of child marriage is slowly occurring. However, the rates are still high, and girls are commonly married at the age of 14 or 15. Legally, the minimum age of marriage is 21 for boys and 18 for girls.

A young gender equality champion's story in addressing CSEC

Robiul has four sisters and one brother. He lives with his parents in Bijoy Nagar area of Godagari of Rajshahi district in Bangladesh. His family lives in a small house nearby a river named the Mohananda. His father is a day labourer, and his mother is a housewife. Robiul is an innocent and calm boy who is not very talkative among friends. His family is very poor, but he managed to complete his Secondary School Certificate (SSC) from Rajabari Hat High School in Godagari, Rajshahi. Presently, he is studying science in Grade 12 at Rajabari Degree College, also in Godagari, Rajshahi. The community where Robiul lives is a multi-cultural place, and the people residing there have migrated from various parts of Bangladesh due to insufficient job opportunities.

The story of Robiul and the Kaktas Youth Group

I am a founding member of the Kaktas Youth Group. It was the 15th of March 2011 when a meeting with ACD's representative and other community members was held at my house. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage me and other young people to form a youth group to fight against sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in Rajabari, Godagari and Rajshahi. During the meeting, we spoke about the negative impacts of child marriage, sexual

harassment, SGBV and more. Before that meeting, I had no idea about these issues, and I believed that everything that was happening in my society was fine. I thought that it was practical that my parents arranged the marriage of my sisters at an early age. My sisters were married at an early age. They are handling their families well, though sometimes they get sick. I did not realise that maybe there was a connection between sickness and child marriage.

After the meeting I agreed to form the Kaktas Youth Group with 20 young men. During the first months, we received trainings from ACD on life skills, peer techniques, facilitation, gender, child protection and masculinity. After receiving the training, I had a clear understanding of gender, masculinity, femininity, gender equality and discrimination. We were aware that we could ensure men and women equality, but we needed to change our negative mindset. Social stigma is one of the main barriers for these issues. We also understood it was important to involve girls in the group because they have the perception of vulnerabilities and working together could ensure the reduction of SGBV amongst the community.

Within nine months, the group was really engaged at the community level. I was involved in stopping four child marriages, and I succeeded in two. My family was also very supportive, and the balances in the house changed a lot because I started to help with the household chores like cleaning and cooking. One year later I got involved with the “Theatre for Development (TfD).” The aim of it was to reduce gender based violence through theatre performances. I was able to identify the common problems of our community like child marriage, sexual harassment and dowry payments. I prepared a script for the theatre. After receiving training on TfD, I performed six shows at the community level.

During that period, the Kaktas Youth Group conducted 2 trainings on child protection, gender and masculinity at the Rajabarihat High School in Godagari, Rajshahi. We also engaged in ensuring birth registration and in readmitting dropout children in schools. At the same time, the Youth Group connected with teachers, community leaders, local government officials and religious leaders to fight against SGBV in our community. After two years, the Kaktas Youth Group and I are now more aware of masculinity, child protection, human rights, national and international law and reproductive health and rights. We are always involved in initiatives to stop child marriage, sexual harassment, reduce sexual gender based violence, trafficking, unsafe migration, identifying vulnerable children, readmitting children who dropped out of school through door to door visits and Theatre for Development (TfD) shows.



Now I am working with ACD as a Community Facilitator and together with the Kaktas Youth Group, we are trying to solve any incidents happening in our community with the involvement of Parents Groups, Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC), Village Court and religious leaders. Our parents and local guardians are also helpful and sometimes they support us. I realized that positive change is happening

in our society day by day. People are more aware of child protection and CSEC. Local people are interested in ensuring education to the children as education is the backbone of a nation. If we are properly educated, then positive social change will occur.

Key messages to describe the main lessons arising from the story

- Child and youth participation can work to fight against CSEC, unsafe migration and trafficking;
- Children and young people need the support of adults in order to ensure their access and to participation in decision-making process;
- Children and young people can raise their voices at open forums if they have positive social environments;
- Children and young people can identify their problems and challenges and take necessary initiatives to solve them.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR EMPOWERING YOUTH TO TAKE THE LEAD AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE USA

By Genna Goldsobel

Youth Outreach Manager, ECPAT-USA

Young people can end the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of human beings. Prevention comes through education, and with education, there is empowerment. They are the ones, individually and collectively, that can prevent this injustice from occurring. There is research that shows survivors of trafficking would rather tell their peers about their exploitation than an adult, thus proving that youth are on the frontline of this issue. But the question remains, how do we get young people involved in this fight? How can we get them engaged?

At ECPAT-USA, the best way we have found to engage students is by introducing schools to our *'Empowering Youth to Take the Lead'* Toolkit. The Toolkit is designed to involve our primary stakeholders, America's children, in advocating against commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking by training them to be the foremost advocates in their communities. We developed the Toolkit for students to employ, since we have found that it is much more effective for students to learn from peer-to-peer engagement rather than have us, a non-profit organisation, speak to and teach them about trafficking roughly once a year. We wanted to get students involved, but we also recognised that involvement has varying degrees of commitment.

Saint Joseph High School (SJHS) located in Brooklyn, New York, is the first school in the nation to partner with ECPAT-USA and pilot ECPAT-USA's *'Empowering Youth to Take the Lead'* Toolkit. SJHS adopted ECPAT-USA's Toolkit and used it as the premise to create the Girls against Trafficking Club at their school. The creation of a club in collaboration with ECPAT-USA's Toolkit is a two-tiered approach: not only does the creation and implementation of the club generate a solid community of individuals in the high school who are interested and educated about child sex trafficking, but it also creates a sanctuary of togetherness which fosters comfort, confidence, growth and empowerment within the school.



To this extent, empowerment is achieved dually—not only are the students empowered, but the school personnel become empowered as well. With the students knowledgeable about the issue, the teachers also become knowledgeable. Through the Girls against Trafficking Club at SJHS, the students have organised several assemblies, presentations and advocacy opportunities for the

club members, their school and their community at large. To date, the club members have organised a petition for New York's Governor Cuomo to sign a provision to the New York Safe Harbour for Sexually Exploited Youth Act, which recognises anybody under the age of 18 who is involved in commercial sex as a victim of trafficking, rather than a criminal. Through this petition effort, they gathered over 300 signatures that resulted in Governor Cuomo signing the provision into law in January of 2014. The Girls against Trafficking Club at St. Joseph High School also organised three assemblies during the month of January, Human Trafficking Awareness Month, to educate their entire school on the issue of child sex trafficking in the United States and abroad. In March 2015, two youth from the Girls against Trafficking Club will be speaking on a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) parallel event panel at the United Nations.

If we can each educate one person about the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and trafficking of children, they will be equipped with knowledge that puts them at the forefront of recognising the warning signs of CSEC. In addition, it allows for the spread of knowledge—awareness in particular—to occur by way of peer education.

Our Toolkit is adaptable and flexible; several teachers from middle schools and high schools in the NYC metro area have taken pieces of our Toolkit and incorporated it into their curriculum. ECPAT-USA has presented several components of our Toolkit at over 50 assemblies in different schools in 2014. While implementing the Toolkit, two youth came forward and self-identified as current victims of human trafficking. Throughout assemblies and presentations, without fail, at least one youth from each school raised their hand and said they knew someone who is currently being exploited.

As Antonia Ugochukwu, a ninth grade member of the Girls against Trafficking Club at SJHS stated, “The topic of human trafficking is very important and it should be taken seriously. I joined the human trafficking club because I felt inspired to make a change in the world I live in... because of this, I am calling out to the teens all over the world who read this article, that you should be inspired to make a change in the world, and a very good way to make a change in the world is by joining or starting a human trafficking club in your school. By doing this, you can also prevent girls and boys of your age from being trafficked, because you will be educating them”.



To this effect, we will become a world of educated and empowered individuals, ready to fight this injustice collectively.

Tips for getting youth involved in the fight against trafficking

- 1) Identify individuals in your community or school that possess a passion for human rights and are ready and able to spring into action.
- 2) Develop an action plan. Individuals look for action-oriented, hands-on assignments; things that they can do right then and now. Whether it be signing a petition, sharing a document or picture on social media, or writing an article and submitting it to a local newspaper.
- 3) Start a club at your school- identify teachers who can assist you in the creation of the club, and identify members of the club. A free helpful resource available is ECPAT-USA’s ‘Campus Club Guide.’ Download our Toolkit here: <http://www.ecpatusa.org/empowering-youth>.

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