

ECPAT INTERNATIONAL'S CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2024 - 2029

What is Participation?

At ECPAT International, we know how important it is to involve you by listening to and hearing your voices. When you are involved with our work, we call this – Child Participation.

We believe that when we work together with you, we are able to come up with better solutions for effective protection from sexual exploitation. You know best about your life and experience, so we're here to listen.

Sexual exploitation of children happens when a child is used sexually by an adult (or another child) and the child victim is promised or given money, gifts or favours. (A gift could be food or clothes. A favour could be a promise of good grades, shelter or protection etc)

We want your genuine thoughts, feelings and opinions about our work. That's why we have developed the Child Participation Strategy that outlines our promise and vision to protect you and all children. We value your views and opinions and want you involved.

A strategy/strategic plan allows an organisation to map out who they are and what they want to achieve.

What is the purpose of the Strategy?

Our aims of the Strategy are:

- To bring to reality your right to participate and to be protected
- To ensure the voices of children inform ECPAT's work
- To ensure we always collaborate with you
- To create more opportunities for you to participate in our work together

How did we develop the Strategy?

- We had extensive conversations with young people
- We looked back at all of our work in the past to learn what works best
- We looked at ways other organisations talk to and involve young people



WE NEED YOU

This strategy is for you – the children and young people we serve. It holds us accountable to our commitments.

Being accountable means being completely responsible for what you do and giving a justifiable and reasonable reason for your actions.

Why is Child and Youth Participation Important?

Imagine you want to buy a new outfit and hire us to help, and then we choose everything for you without checking if you even like it! Wouldn't it be better to involve you in the process?

Often youth voices are lost to 'adulthood'. Adulthood is the discrimination experienced by children and young people from adults because they are young. Together we can make your voice heard!

- Nobody knows your life like you do. You should be able to voice and request what you need to feel safe and protected.
- When you participate in important decisions with ECPAT it helps to improve your self-esteem, confidence and skills.
- We need you! Your unique voice can lead us to tailored solutions and answers.

"As girls, boys and adolescents we like to learn, and when it comes to our rights it is more interesting. However, the lack of information and few spaces for participation that are fun means that there is not much interest on the part of children and adolescents."

Nobody knows your life like you do. You should be able to voice and request what you need to feel safe and protected.

Some adults see us, as young people, as incapable of giving them advice about sexual exploitation." Consultation with children, ECPAT

 **Space:** We need to give you safe, equal opportunities to express your views.

 **Voice:** We need to give you, space, time and the methods to have your voice heard by all

 **Audience:** We (ECPAT, your community and leaders) must be ready to attentively listen to you

 **Influence:** We need to take action and make changes based on your views, as much as we possibly can.



ECPAT COMMITMENT



1

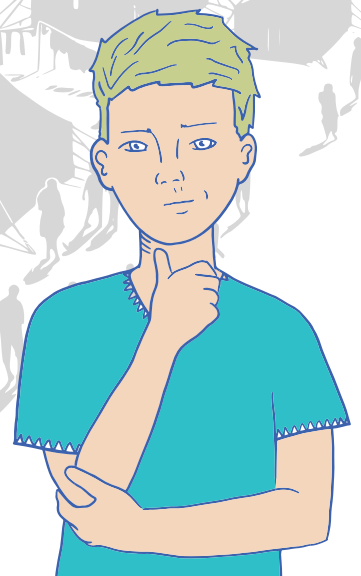
Making Participation Easy:

- **Ending Adultism:** We will focus on understanding and ending attitudes that stop you from being involved.
- **Adults Learning:** We will train staff and our network members to allow you to participate in an effective and positive way.
- **Investing in You:** We will invest time and money to make sure you can participate.

2

Getting Everyone Involved:

- **Learning and Sharing:** We will work with ECPAT members to create new approaches and share experiences to ensure everyone learns how to involve children and youth in a way that matters.
- **Mentoring Youth:** We will pilot mentorship programs to support young people who are 'changemakers', who are involved in championing for the rights of children.
- **Connecting Everyone:** We will work with other organisations to create new and safe connections between you and others like you so you can learn and grow together.
- **Train the Community:** We will offer training and support to spread a culture of child and youth Participation to the wider community of ECPAT members.



3

Standing up for Change:

- **Influence and Voice:** We will amplify your voice and make sure you're included at every step of the way during decision-making processes.
- **Train Adults in Your Life:** We will help children and youth like you, including survivors, by supporting people who are in contact with you how to listen to and value your needs.
- **Survivors** are people who have suffered harm and victimisation.
- **Safe Participation:** We will work to put better platforms in place to make sure you're protected when you participate.



4

Develop and Test New Approaches:

- **Test New Approaches:** We will work with you and ECPAT members, to create and test new approaches to solving problems and protecting you.
- **Develop Partnerships to Find Solutions:** We will facilitate and support spaces where you can co-create ideas for addressing child sexual exploitation for children and young people.
- **Facilitate** means to make something easier, or to help forward an action or process. Example: ECPAT can bring together young people for discussions and help them connect to each other, which facilitates connections
- **Include Children Who May Face Barriers:** We will launch and test projects that focus on collaborating with, and supporting children and young people who may face exclusion from participation due to various factors, including disability, being out of school, migration, etc.

