

## **Youth Recommendations**

### **for the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents**

The youth aged 19-25 participating at the World Congress III (WCIII) against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, representing all regions of the world, gathered in a preparatory meeting to agree on joint recommendations to be brought forward at the WCIII.

We the youth of several countries and different world regions, see the participation of youth above the age of 18 as important especially because we see ourselves as key stakeholders of social transformation in the fight against the Sexual Exploitation of Children.

We understand youth as rights holders and duty bearers with distinct needs, different from adolescents and are therefore urging for the recognition of our participatory role. This should be given a separate space at the WCIII. We point out that we believe in the direct and joint participation of children and youth in the fight against sexual exploitation of children; this should be a partnership between children, youth and adults. We do not want to focus on the differences of these specific groups, but see the need for the specific recognition of the role of youth above the age of 18. We see ourselves as stakeholders constituting an important “bridge function” between adults and children, as we are close to both of these stakeholder groups. Further, the important role of being a role model for all our peers who look to us for guidance needs to be recognized. Another important role is being mentors for those younger friends we have close and trusting relationships with.

We understand that the WCIII is a privileged space for exchange of experiences, political propositions and expression of different stakeholders. We urge for the roles of youth to be recognized and hope to be equally heard and given the possibilities to influence the principal outcomes of this congress.

The following recommendations are thought to complement the recommendations of children and adolescents and include global and region-specific proposals.

### **Participatory Recommendations**

- Governments must promote, recognize and encourage child and youth participation at different levels in policy/programs, monitoring and campaigns related to commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC). Youth representatives, survivors of CSEC and children and youth at risk should be involved in the formulation of laws, reporting and monitoring of international treaties and laws (e.g. CRC and its Optional Protocol on CSEC) and participate in all meetings at different levels related to CSEC. Youth should be invited to debates and roundtables with the government, to offer their perspective regarding the combat of CSEC, which will make policy more efficient
- More resources are needed to strengthen and expand the child and youth networks building on already existing structures at a local, national, regional and international level.
- Youth must be supported to work and advocate in partnership with governments and members of parliaments to ensure that the reduction of poverty and social protection for the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and adolescences are taken into account.
- Counteraction, prevention programs, rehabilitation mechanisms and child protection systems should be developed jointly by all stakeholders; Governments, NGOs, private sector and children and youth by implementing frequent (annual) meetings.

### **Education and Prevention**

#### **Schools and Trainings:**

- Governments must ensure that all children have access to compulsory, quality and free education, especially for children and youth at risk so as to support children to access information and become aware of CSEC. Sexual education, sexual and reproductive rights as well as information on CSEC,

Gender and HIV/Aids must be included in the school curriculum as a compulsory subject to be taught from primary/elementary school onwards as a strategy to prevent sexual exploitation and other issues such as teenage pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Children should get to know their rights from an early age, through intense training at school and in leisure time activities. Best practice models should be replicated. We also recommend that youth has to be addressed in a "peer-to-peer" way, in order to guarantee efficiency, teachers and parents must be involved and encouraged to discuss the phenomenon with their students/children.

- Establishing awareness raising on the topic of CSEC especially in the education of the tourism, medicine, police and legal sector.

#### **Media:**

- There is need for more education on prevention of CSEC via adequate media. Key topics such as prevention of CSEC and information on aid organizations as well as gender education - perspectives and roles of boys/men and girls/women in society- need to be the focus.
- On behalf of combating child pornography it is necessary to establish a debate on the dangers and the misuse of new media, such as internet, computer games and mobile phones. The possibility of self- victimization must further be discussed. It is important to target parents, children, teachers as well as political decision makers and engage in dialogue.
- Allocate funds for youth broadcasting in order to organize and participate in any mass media. Campaigns created by youth to combat CSEC should be promoted and publicized. We recommend drafting a Code of Conduct for the media (television, press, virtual media...) in order to end and avoid further sexualisation of children in mass media. It is necessary to create guidelines, in form of a Code of Conduct for media, which ensures the ban of disclosure of identities of the affected to avoid stigmatization and discrimination in their communities.
- There should be international, tollfree hotlines with several instruments and institutions to guarantee the support of affected children and youth as well as those at risk.
- Internet filters to block harmful content to children should be enhanced and made available for parents. Internet Service Providers must work together to block sites which contain child pornography.

#### **Rehabilitation and Protection of Revictimization**

- Child friendly systems should be set up where affected of CSEC can report cases of abuse without being afraid of (government) authorities. Exploited children must not be treated as criminals and need access to counseling and recovery programs. Support programs for young offenders must be promoted.
- Government programs must ensure the provision of appropriate vocational training and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth and survivors of CSEC and trafficking.
- Youth participation in all shelters, homes and rehabilitation centers run by governments or NGOs for CSEC survivors and children at risk should be used to ensure standards of care and protection using methods of peer to peer support.

#### **Regional:**

- There is need for better access to education for girls that are vulnerable to child marriage as a preventive measure.
- Governments must ensure that all survivors of CSEC and trafficking have legal identity documents to ensure citizenship rights. Destination countries must enhance support for them, such as providing child and youth friendly shelters, free education and rehabilitation programs.
- Carry out large-scale evaluation programmes in the fight against sex-specific violence in situations of conflicts and post-conflicts; spread the lessons learnt in order to promote the most promising approaches.