Recommendations from the Regional Consultation with children and young people regarding children's protection from bullying and cyberbullying.

May 2016, Montevideo

Legislation

One of the dimensions highlighted by children that is of particular concern to them is the fact that while many countries have laws regarding the issue, in many cases these are not implemented or enforced. This shows that countries fulfill the requirement to adapt their legislation to international standards but that this has no impact on children's daily life, thus compromising respect for the protection of their fundamental rights.

Public Policy and Community

There are few places and means to report instances of violence such as telephone hotlines which are easily accessible to children. This leads to serious situations in which children and adolescents are prevented from having access to justice. With regards to institutions in the community that interact with children and adolescents, the main concern is the passive attitude that adults often adopt regarding different situations of violence.

Children further expressed their concern that there is no curriculum training either in school or at university or at the professional level regarding violence prevention and on how to prepare professionals to deal with children when violence has occurred.
Often, teachers, educators, judges, the police, doctors and nurses do not listen to children when they express their concerns and file complaints regarding violence, and these concerns are not taken into account.

Investing in children

There are no public policies, especially policies for prevention and intervention regarding violence against children, in countries where no investment is made in them. In this regard , children expressed concern that resources are not being secured for offices addressing the protection of children rights, which leads to very weak protection systems.

There is also no budget allocated with which to work and raise awareness regarding violence against children and adolescents, both at an educational and social level. Furthermore, no investment is made in training and education on the subject of violence. Many countries invest more in weapons than in children and there is no support or investment to put an end to situations of children living or working on the streets, which is another major concern.

Participation

All the above mentioned achievements could not happen without having spaces for the active participation of children. They have therefore expressed their concern regarding the lack of adequate and sufficient facilities which promote the right to participation. They stated that this is worsened by the fact that in many countries and regions there are no consultative councils through which to build and strengthen their right to participate, thus limiting their active participation at different levels.

Discipline and Cultural Practices

Within different spaces in their communities, and especially within their families, children and adolescents express great concern about communication not being encouraged within families and the cultural acceptance of the use of violence as a means to educate them, which should be brought to an end. Violence within families is a concern that affects them directly.

Raising awareness and the role of Social Media

Often, offensive news regarding children and teenagers are published, leading to increased stigmatization and violence. Media applying these policies do not demonstrate respect towards the rights of children in their reporting, which can affect the protection of children's rights. Also they are concerned regarding the fact that they do not feel the media support awareness and information campaigns which are carried out by children or by organizations defending their rights.

There are no advertising campaigns that help raise awareness among parents and adults in general leading them to become motivated and get involved in preventing and addressing bullying and cyberbullying. In this regard, children expressed concern at the handling and use of social media due to a lack of information, and at the way social networks are used by children, which in many cases leads to misuse and unwanted exposure to risks.

Regional Research

In order to assist in the preparation of the report by the Secretary-General on the protection of children from bullying, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children collaborated with the government of Uruguay, under the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Standing Committee Initiative Niñ@sur of MERCO-SUR, and with the Global Movement for Children of Latin America and the Caribbean (MMI LAC) and the Regional Network of Girls, Boys and Teenagers, REDNNYAS, with the goal of organizing a regional consultation with children and adolescents to ensure that their voices are an integral part of the report.

Thus, 28 girls, boys and adolescents, delegates from organizations from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, were involved in the consultation in Montevideo

The Latin American consultation with children and adolescents made a decisive contribution to the overall preparatory process of the Report on Protection of children from bullying, highlighting issues of major concern for children, as well as identifying strategic recommendations to guarantee progress in the protection of children against this form of violence.

We thank the OAK Foundation for its financial support.

Report by the United Nations' Secretary-General on the Protection of Children from Bullying

2016 provides a strategic opportunity for progress in strengthening the protection of children against violence. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the UN Study on Violence Against Children and the first year of the implementation of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development - Agenda 2030, which includes in its 16.2 goal, a call for the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

As highlighted in the resolution of the General Assembly A/RES/69/158 on the protection of children from bullying, adopted in December 2014, bullying, including cyberbullying, compromises children's rights and has a negative and lasting impact on their development, education and well-being. The children and teenagers affected by or involved in situations of bullying, whether as harassers, victims, or witnesses, suffer a dramatic impact that often impacts upon their adult life.

Be it verbal, psychological or physical, at school or outside educational establishments, bullying is frequently associated with discrimination and stereotypes, which affect children in vulnerable situations. As information and communications technology continues its rapid development and its use increases in all regions of the world, the opportunities for children to benefit from greater protection and to learn about their rights are also multiplied. At the same time, the chances of becoming exposed to and being victims of cyberbullying also increase.

Regional Consultation with children and adolescents on protection of children from bullying and cyberbullying

It is time to end violence against children.

24 May 2016
Montevideo, Uruguay

OFICINA DEL REPRESENTANTE ESPECIAL DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL SOBRE
LA VIOLENCIA CONTRA LOS NIÑOS

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REDNNyAs

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Infancia de Latinoamérica
y El Caribe