

CHILDREN'S INSIGHTS:

# SHAPING ECPAT'S CHILD PARTICIPATION STRATEGY



This Report was compiled by Tatyana Gribanova, Daniel Mulati and Sendrine Constant with the support of all colleagues at ECPAT International Secretariat and Claire Cody, external consultant.

ECPAT International would like to thank all the children who participated in the consultations and provided valuable insights that are not only captured in this report but also informed the development of the Child Participation Strategy.

**Special thanks to ECPAT members who convened and facilitated the consultations;**

Fundación Quitu Raymi – Ecuador, Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) -Nepal, Uganda Youth Development Link –Uganda, Kiota Women’s Health and Development (KIWOHEDE) - Tanzania and Hıntalóvan Foundation - ECPAT Hungary.

**ECPAT International acknowledges**

the core funding support for its overall organisational objectives from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Oak Foundation. The opinions expressed in this document belong solely to ECPAT International. Support from these donors does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed.

**Designed by:** Manida Naebklang

**Suggested citation:**

ECPAT International. (2024) Children’s Insights: Shaping ECPAT’s Child Participation Strategy. Bangkok, ECPAT International

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Published by:

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# INTRODUCTION

ECPAT is a network of organisations working together to stop the sexual exploitation of children around the world. ECPAT International has 126 members in 105 countries all around the world!

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. Sexual exploitation is different from sexual abuse of a child because it involves some kind of exchange.



**Exploitation means someone benefits from or gets something by taking advantage of someone else in an unfair way.**



**The ECPAT Child Participation Strategy** is a plan to make sure children take part in our work on stopping sexual exploitation of children. We know that you, children and young people, know your lives and the ones of your peers better than adults do often. We as adults have the responsibility to ask you about your views as this is your **RIGHT** to be heard on things that concern you, and we commit to listening to your perspectives and taking them seriously. Listening to you help us at ECPAT International, to understand what you are going through, your hopes, your strengths but also some of your fears and what makes you feel unsafe, so we can find solutions together to make this world safer and happier for all children around the world.

So, we have asked ECPAT member organisations who work with children and young people to ask you what you think. 71 girls and boys aged 10 to 21 from five countries – **Nepal, Tanzania, Ecuador, Uganda, and Hungary** shared their ideas on what they think ECPAT International should do to better listen to children, their lives and concerns, and what they recommend us to do in the future to stop the sexual exploitation of children.



**71 girls and boys aged 10 to 21 from five countries**



# CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Here's what they shared:

**IN WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK CHILDREN WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?**



## **Informing children about the problem:**

They think children should be engaged in leading activities like group discussions, classes about this issue, and organize peer-led sessions.

A peer-led session is when one or more children teach other children about something important. It's usually a friend or someone your age who knows a lot about a topic and shares it with the group.

“ Participation in events - it's better if there is a child there, as peers find it easier to talk to peers. ”

*Participant from Hungary*

## Learning together while having fun:

Children are excited about joining clubs, learning new things together, and going to special events where they can have fun together while discussing the problem.

“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.”

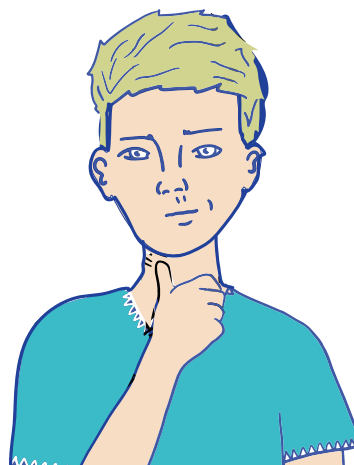
*Participant from Ecuador*

## Organizing fun and creative activities to talk about the issue:

Children really enjoy being part of activities like sports games, going to events with famous people, and doing plays on the streets to talk about child sexual exploitation! Children also recommended that ECPAT should organize discussions about the sensitive topics of sexual exploitation, with children, but also in schools and with families.

“It is important to talk about healthy and respectful relationships as well!”

## WHO ARE THE CHILDREN ECPAT SHOULD TRY HARDER TO ENGAGE?



“

We all deserve to be heard, but there are also other groups of children and adolescents who do not have the opportunity to be heard

”

*Afroecuatorialian participant, Ecuador*

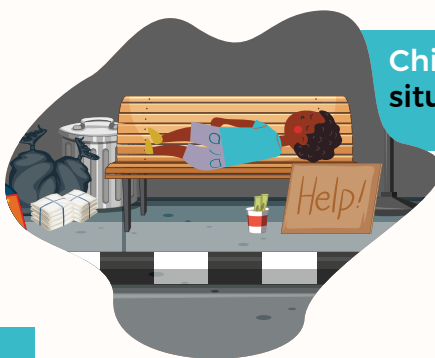
In particular, children think ECPAT should engage with children who are often not heard enough;

- ▶ Children in street situations
- ▶ Orphans
- ▶ Children with disabilities
- ▶ Children exploited in prostitution
- ▶ Children forced to work
- ▶ Children who have had tough experiences.
- ▶ Children on the move

Children on the move are children travelling because of serious reasons like conflict, poverty, violence, natural disasters, or discrimination. They might be travelling with their family or alone.

- ▶ Children who belong to native or ethnic minorities
- ▶ Children who live in areas a bit far from the city

# HOW CHILDREN THINK ECPAT SHOULD ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE OFTEN NOT HEARD ENOUGH



Children in street situations



Children with disabilities



Children in Orphans



Children on the Move



Children in tough experiences



Children forced to work



Children exploited in prostitution



## WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN TO GET INVOLVED?



### Feeling that you don't know enough:

Children think their peers don't know enough about sexual exploitation and their rights.

### Hard to talk about these issues:

It's tough to discuss sensitive topics and it makes them feel uncomfortable.

“

Sensitive topic, so it's not appealing to many people.

”

*Participant from Hungary*

### External influences make it hard for children to engage:

They are worried about what family and friends may think about them if they engage in programmes about these problems. There is a lot of shame around this topic and children are worried about being judged.

“

Embarrassed that it could be associated with their name.

”

*Participant from Hungary*

### **Children don't feel safe:**

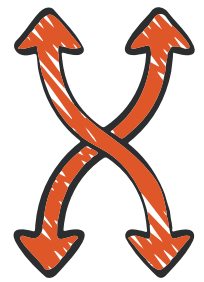
Some children might feel nervous around adults and are worried because they don't have safe places where they can talk freely and confidentially about what's on their minds and where they can seek help.

### **Parents' rules:**

Sometimes children find it hard when they can't get permission from their parents, or when adults think they always know what's best.

### **But also:**

sometimes they feel like they don't get enough support; they feel left out and excluded if they're different from others; and sometimes the logistics of being involved are difficult such as not having time, living too far away, feeling like they don't have much to say, and that it's not easy when you speak a different language.



## WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE YOU GET MORE INVOLVED?

*Children told us what we could do differently to help them get more involved:*

### **Really listen to children:**

they want adults to listen to what they say and take their ideas seriously.

### **Let everyone know:**

it's important to tell people about keeping children safe, children's rights, and the risks of child sexual exploitation. Use online games and social media – it is a great way to share this information.

### **Organise fun events and special campaigns:**

celebrating children's days and creating fun events, like an Olympics-themed campaign, to keep children interested and informed.

### **Make sure children are there to plan the activities from the beginning:**

involve them in planning projects and really want that children's ideas are listened to.



### **Role Models:**

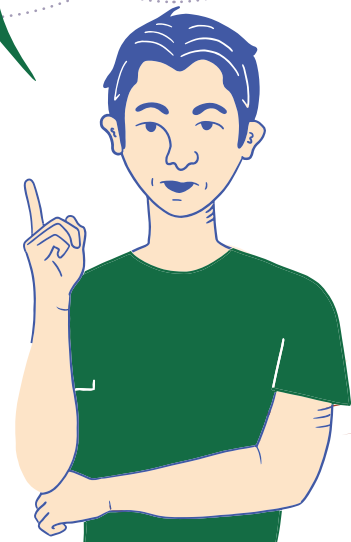
it's a good idea to encourage children and teenagers to be good examples for others.

### **Children leading the way:**

they should lead in spreading information and fighting for their rights.

### **Children take part in research:**

it's important for children to be part of researching issues that affect them.



WHAT CAN WE DO  
TO MAKE IT SAFE  
FOR YOU TO  
PARTICIPATE?

It's important to make sure  
they're safe when they join in



# HERE'S HOW CHILDREN THINK WE CAN DO IT AT ECPAT:

## Teaching children how to stay safe:

more people have to know about child sexual abuse and exploitation, and they need to have ways that are easy to report it.

## Doing the 'right' activities:

activities should be interesting and meet the needs of children. There should be up-to-date safety rules, developed with children.

## Keep it anonymous:

keep children's names and images confidential to protect them.

Ensuring that the identities of those who applied are not revealed – for example, they could present an affected person's message at school.

*Participant from Hungary*

## Make children feel safe:

Children want all places, from where they meet with groups to online spaces like games and social networks, to be friendly and safe! Children also say that speaking kindly and openly and understanding each other is key.

## Listening to everyone:

Children are different - it's very important to listen to all of them.

## WHAT ECPAT CAN DO TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

### **Giving children a platform:**

Children want their own special place where they can share their thoughts and be involved in every part of projects.

### **Joining in at school and in the community:**

Children say schools and community gatherings are perfect for listening to what they have to say.

### **Worldwide campaigns and connect with others from around the world:**

Children believe it's important to start big movements against sexual exploitation and use the internet to make friends all over the world.

### **Doing research and training members:**

ECPAT should involve children in research and teach its members how to keep children safe when doing so.

### **Staying safe online:**

Teaching children how to use the internet and social media safely is important.

### **Local support:**

Having friendly counselors nearby, creating jobs, and making sure there are strict rules to protect children.

### **Online Help:**

Children think online psychological support would be helpful.

# WHAT ECPAT CAN DO TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:



## Giving children a platform

Children want their own special place where they can share their thoughts and be involved in every part of projects.

## ONLINE

- **Staying safe :**  
Teaching children how to use the internet and social media safely is important.
- **Help :**  
Children think online psychological support would be helpful.



## Joining in at school and in the community:

Children say schools and community gatherings are perfect for listening to what they have to say.

## Being part of research and training members:

ECPAT should involve children in research and teach its members how to keep children safe when doing so.



- **Worldwide campaigns and connect with others from around the world:**  
Children believe it's important to start big movements against sexual exploitation and use the internet to make friends all over the world.

## WHAT DO ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW?

### **Explain things in easy ways:**

it's important to use clear, simple language that can be easily understood.

### **Show that you really care and respect children's choices:**

adults should show they are really interested in their ideas and trust them to make their own choices.

### **Think about children's feelings:**

taking care of children's emotions, feelings and wellbeing is very important.







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