

# Consultation with experts on the prevention of sexual abuse of children

Preparation of the Council of Europe Campaign  
to stop sexual violence against children 2010



child abuse

## Report

10-11 December 2009  
Strasbourg , France

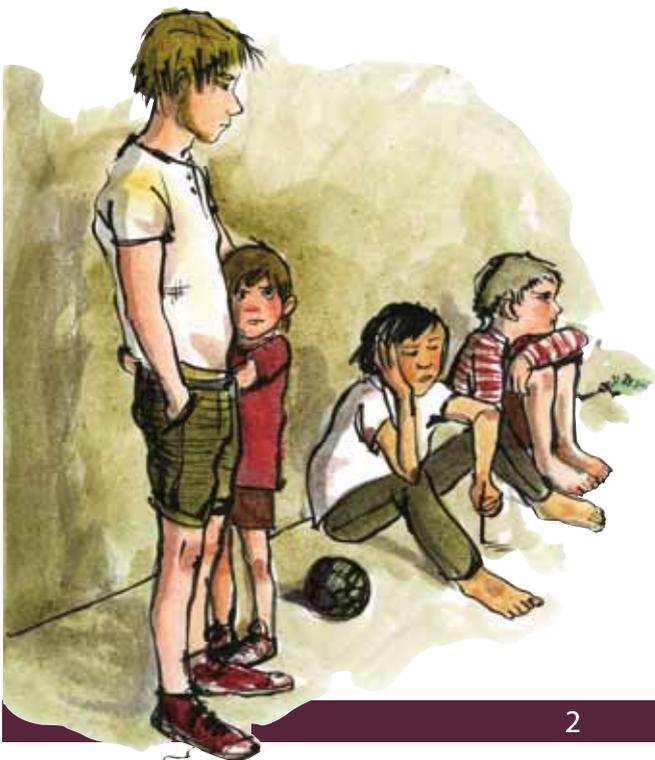
*Rapporteur: Professor J.Pearce,  
Institute of Applied Social Studies,  
University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom  
Jenny.Pearce@beds.ac.uk*





## Contents

A. Introduction.....	3
B. The opening of the meeting.....	4
C. The central objectives of the campaign <i>How to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and young people? .....</i>	5
D. The subsidiary objectives of the campaign.....	5
E. Overarching principles of the campaign.....	9
F. Operative principles of the campaign.....	10
G. Audiences of the campaign .....	11
H. Media and method for the campaign: <i>The range of ways to make the campaign happen! .....</i>	13
I. Providing resources for the campaign.....	14
J. Risks that may hinder the progress of the campaign .....	15
K. Evaluation of the progress of the campaign.....	16
L. Recommendations.....	16



## **A. Introduction**

The Council of Europe Children's Strategy for 2009-2011 'Provision, Protection and Participation in Europe' has, amongst its major focuses, that of eradicating all forms of violence against children.

In particular, it calls upon the organisation to launch comprehensive awareness-raising actions to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. In response to this mandate, the Council of Europe shall in autumn 2010, launch a Europe-wide campaign to stop sexual violence against children.

A call for expressions of interest was addressed to experts wishing to participate in a meeting held in Strasbourg on 10-11 December 2009 to prepare a specific aspect of the coming campaign: the prevention of child sexual abuse within the family and community.

This report summarises the contributions of the participants who attended the meeting in December 2009 and is based on:

- the information given in presentations from the experts at the meeting;  
*and*
- the discussions that followed presentations and took place in plenary summary events.

Experts' contributions were summarised by the rapporteur and presented at the close of proceedings for participants to consider. The result of the discussion that followed is included in this report. The full list of expert contributors and their presentations (where applicable) are available from the Council of Europe.



## B. The opening of the meeting

Opening address: Ms Irma Ertman, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the Council of Europe, Thematic Co-ordinator on Children, Council of Europe Committee of Ministers

Ms Ertman welcomed all participating experts. She drew attention to the successful work of the programme "Building a Europe for and with children", which is a response to the mandate given to the Council of Europe by the Warsaw Summit (2006). She noted the importance of protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, clarifying that sexual violence against children is one of the most damaging forms of violence and a direct violation of Articles 19, 32 and 34 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. She referred to the Council of Europe "Stockholm Strategy (2009-2011)", which aims to work towards the eradication of all forms of violence against children; developing child friendly public services including the justice system, promoting child participation and placing a particular focus on participation and rights of vulnerable children.

Ms Ertman noted that to stop sexual violence against children we need:

- Society's awareness of the full extent of sexual violence and access to the knowledge and tools to prevent it;
- commitment from public bodies to identify and protect victims with professionals trained to protect children most at risk;
- effective justice systems to prosecute perpetrators;  
*and essentially,*
- to listen to the voices of children and the concerns of parents and carers.

These issues will be at the core of a campaign to stop sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

Ms Elda Moreno: Head of Division, Children's Rights and Family Policies, Council of Europe then introduced the background to the campaign and outlined the structure of the meeting.

Ms Moreno noted that the aim of the proposed campaign was to stop sexual violence against children and young people in particular by promoting the ratification and implementation of the Lanzarote Convention (2007).

Ms Moreno confirmed that the Council of Europe can support interventions against the sexual violence against children by:

- a) Developing legal standards;
- b) developing policies;
- c) monitoring progress of implementation;
- d) providing assistance to the development of policies and legislation;
- e) developing awareness raising campaigns.

Ms Moreno confirmed that, where appropriate, the participation of children and young people is to be embraced as significant for all interventions, both in helping identify what needs to be done and in putting policies and actions into practice.

## **C. The central objectives of the campaign**

### *How to prevent the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and young people?*

Experts agreed that the campaign would have an overarching objective and a number of consequential, subsidiary objectives.

Previous experiences of running campaigns showed that it was possible for one campaign to achieve an overarching objective by embracing a number of subsidiary objectives, reaching wide and often diverse audiences through different media. The important, central concern is that all aspects of the campaign work to achieve its overarching objective.

**The meeting agreed that the overarching objective of the campaign** is, as defined by the Council of Europe:

'To stop sexual violence against children through the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention) as well as the Cybercrime Convention and the Convention on Human Trafficking under "Building a Europe for and with children' 2009-2011 Stockholm Strategy (Consultation with experts on the prevention of sexual abuse of children: Strasbourg, 10-11 December 2009)

**This was to be achieved by encouraging and facilitating ratification of the convention on the Protection of children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention).** The Council of Europe has an important role to play in working with lead politicians and policy makers to introduce the campaign and monitor the progress of its ratification throughout Europe.

## **D. The subsidiary objectives of the campaign**

Under this overarching objective noted above, experts explored the full range of objectives of the campaign. Target audiences are identified for particular purposes where appropriate.

**To engage children and young people as participants in the campaign, empowering them to play an active role in preventing sexual violence.**

The participation of children and young people in the development and fulfillment of the campaign is essential. It is a core principle within the Council of Europe programme 'Building a Europe for and with children' and is stated as a principle within this proposed campaign to stop sexual violence against children. The consultation meeting endorsed this principle. Experts noted that the participation of children and young people in the development and enactment of a campaign needs careful consideration, time and resources (see section E).

**To educate children, young people and their families/carers** of the risk of the different forms of sexual violence. It was recognised that there are various forms of sexual violence against children and young people and that the majority of child sexual abuse takes place within the home. The campaign should not assume that children, young people and their families are familiar with the range of forms of sexual violence and of the harm that they cause. It will need to convey information about what sexual violence is and where it may occur (see meeting presentation from McElvaney, Dublin Institute of Social Science, Ireland, Dec 2009)

Target audience: children, young people and their families and carers; including children and families/carers from different ethnic and racial origins, with different levels of learning abilities and language skills, and from different religious and cultural backgrounds

**To raise adults' awareness of the risk of sexual violence against children from adults that children know and rely upon: in their family or care home and community.**

The campaign can encourage adults to take responsibility to identify the possible risk of sexual violence against children from (a) family members or carers and (b) from those in positions of authority and leadership in the local community e.g. people holding authority in the religious communities, faith communities, the school, local health service and judicial services. (See awareness raising by Africans Unite Against Child Abuse ([www.AFRUCA.org](http://www.AFRUCA.org))).

The campaign needs to educate adults who hold positions of trust within communities, encouraging them to be mindful of their responsibility to identify those who disregard the child's right to freedom from sexual violence. This means that adults who hold authority and trust in local communities (be they faith, religious, education or health communities) share the burden of responsibility for identification of potential abusers. It does not leave the onus on the child to identify and report (see National Federation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ([www.nfccc.ru](http://www.nfccc.ru)) and the Observatory for the fight against paedophilia and child pornography, Rome).

Target audience: community leaders, religious leaders, health service leaders, heads of educational establishments

**To train professionals who are in direct contact with children (teachers, educators, medical and social care)** about the risk of sexual violence: giving them information and training on prevention and empowering them to play an active role on how to react and help when situations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse arise.

Target audience: national education policy makers, school head teachers and leaders of educational establishments, teachers' networks and teacher training institutions



**To challenge the stereotype of 'male stranger danger': challenging the image of a 'typical' perpetrator of sexual violence against children and young people.** Experts noted that a 'typical' image of a perpetrator of sexual violence may be a 'male' and a 'stranger'. However, research evidence shows that most sexual violence occurs within the home and is perpetrated by someone known by the child. This can include female perpetrators, and can include sexual violence between same sex perpetrators and victims. It is also essential that a 'typical' image does not preclude the possibility of children and young people themselves being perpetrators of sexual offences.

Target audience: children, young people and their families and carers

**To embrace the full range of children and young people who might be vulnerable to sexual violence, including teenagers (14-18) who maybe particularly vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation.**

This point addresses the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child which notes childhood extending to the age of 18.

Research shows that most sexual abuse against children taking place within the family or care home is perpetrated by carers and adults known to the child. However, children are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation and/or trafficking for sexual exploitation from older 'peers' or from adults from outside the family or community. It was noted that the trafficking of children and young people for the purpose of sexual exploitation can take place both within and between countries (see ECPAT, Netherlands [www.ecpat.org.nl](http://www.ecpat.org.nl) and [www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk](http://www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk))

Whilst it is important to remember that sexual exploitation is a form of sexual violence that can affect all children, irrespective of age, research shows that most children who are sexually exploited (including those who are trafficked for sexual exploitation) are older teenagers (see [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)). The sexual exploitation of children and young people is sometimes referred to as 'children involved in prostitution'. Research evidence has shown that children's involvement in prostitution, or in being trafficked for prostitution results from abuse, coercion, violence, intimidation and manipulation by abusive adults. It also suggests that children and young people living in poverty are more vulnerable to this form of abuse (see Pearce et al 2009 'Breaking the wall of Silence' available from [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)). Children and young people cannot be given responsibility for consenting to sexual exploitation or to being trafficked. Neither can they be given responsibility for their involvement in prostitution. These children are victims of sexual exploitation by adults who are perpetrating crimes of sexual violence against children.

The campaign can effectively include training materials and information sharing that aims to prevent sexual exploitation and trafficking (see ECPAT and [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk) and presentation Montgomery-Devlin, Safe Choices, Northern Ireland, Dec 2009).

Target audience: older teenagers (14 to 18 age groups); youth services; education services and health services: particularly sexual and mental health services; police services and law enforcement agencies.

**To advocate for improved statutory and voluntary services to:**

- work on the prevention of sexual violence against children and young people;
- support those who have been harmed from sexual violence.

This includes preventative education for children and young people to:

- a) identify warning signs of abuse and exploitation;
- b) be encouraged and facilitated to report abuse and exploitation;
- c) provide appropriate interventions to remove children and young people from harm if necessary; to prosecute alleged offenders and to encourage sustained support to address the harm caused by sexual violence to the child, their family/care home and community.

Target audience: national policy leads in education and children's social services, including health services; national leads in law enforcement and judicial services.

### **To enable young people who may be potential and actual abusers to approach agencies for support**

Experts drew on research evidence which shows that children or young people can perpetrate sexual violence against others, often as a result of their own sexual victimisation or sexual abuse. That is, abusers may themselves be vulnerable children/ young people who are 'acting out' responses to their own experience of sexual victimisation and sexual abuse.

Work with children who are potential and actual abusers can reduce sexual violence against child victims (see [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org) and work of Save the Children, Denmark). This work with child abusers can help potential and actual abusers to address their problems and to change their behaviour.

It was appreciated that this can be a difficult and contentious issue. The campaign's purpose is not to condone sexual violence, whoever the perpetrator may be. Reaching out to young people who may perpetrate sexual violence is not the same as condoning sexual violence. It is to extend understanding of the reasons for sexual violence, particularly if it takes place within the family between siblings or between children's own peer groups.

Similarly, experts noted programmes where parents who are concerned about their own, or their children's potential to sexually abuse others can attend child protection training courses without being stigmatized or labeled as abusers. See for example: The Triple P Parenting Programme: WHO 2006.

Target audience: Sexual violence prevention programmes; Policy leads in family services, community service providers and in Children's services (including health, education and youth work)

**To encourage support for professionals who are working to a) prevent sexual violence against children and young people and b) support or treat victims of sexual violence.** These professionals will need help in managing the emotional burden of working with sexual abuse. Training and supervision are essential elements to providing and sustaining adequate professional intervention.



## E. Overarching principles of the campaign

The campaign will be working to principles outlined in the **UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989**. As noted by one expert: this is the 'mother document'. The campaign will work to some 'overarching' principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and some 'operational' principles (see section F).

In particular, the campaign needs to link with the work of the 'United Nations Study on Violence against Children' which analyses violence against children in five settings: the home and family; schools and educational settings; care and justice institutions; the work-place; and the community. It contains 12 overarching recommendations and a number of setting specific recommendations that represent a comprehensive framework for follow-up action. It also resulted in a more detailed *World Report on Violence against Children* provided in child friendly publications. ([www.unviolencestudy.org](http://www.unviolencestudy.org)). See also other related campaign leads in the Council of Europe, UNICEF, UNESCO, ECPAT and the UN.

**Children's participation** is an essential part of children exercising their rights. Wherever possible children and young people should be encouraged to participate in the development and enactment of the campaign. The meeting noted a range of issues that need considering when developing participation from children and young people.

- **Children and young people can participate at a local, national and a Council of Europe level.** The Council of Europe can provide models of good practice for the development of child participation in the campaign, but is restricted in practical delivery at a local and national level.
- **The 'ladder of participation' (Hart 1997) shows that there are different levels of children's participation.** At the bottom of the ladder, participation is tokenistic; with children attending adult's meetings as 'decoration' to illustrate children's attendance. This level is not genuine participation as the children and young people are not involved in setting the agenda. At the top levels of the ladder where genuine participation is taking place, adults and children and young people are working together to agree aims, objectives and processes for achieving them.
- **A targeted approach to recruitment outlining the support that can be offered to participants may be appropriate.** This targeted approach may be necessary as an 'open' invitation to children and young people to participate may not reach those who are most experienced in the area of child sexual violence. A range of suggestions for different forms of participation can be offered: e.g. experts demonstrated how teenagers who have been sexually abused can write and prepare messages for children and how young people can run training sessions using child friendly language. A targeted approach will also be needed to ensure that the full range of children and young people are offered the opportunity to participate, irrespective of learning ability, physical ability, sexuality and sexual orientation and of previous experiences of abuse.
- It was noted that **different children and young people need varying levels of support to enable them to participate.** Children and young people who have experienced sexual violence may have important experience to contribute and may feel highly motivated to participate. However, to enable this to happen they may need therapeutic

support from trained and specialist practitioners to manage the emotional burden involved. They may also need practical support to enable them to access resources and attend meetings.

- **Experience of participation will vary** between countries in Europe. Similarly, participation may be 'easier' for some professional disciplines than for others. For example, youth work may be more familiar with the principles behind empowerment and user involvement than some law enforcement agencies. The development of the participation agenda needs to be proactive to encourage all countries and all agencies to develop children's participation in decisions that affect them.
- As well as setting and enacting agenda items, **children and young people can participate in developing and delivering research, training and evaluation** that will be essential components to the campaign. The Council of Europe will work with appropriate NGOs, statutory children's services, schools and universities with established record in child participation to advance this aim.
- It was suggested that **campaign should link with other Council of Europe initiatives of work involving child participation**. This will help to develop co-ordination between young people campaigning on similar and related issues.

## F. Operative principles of the campaign

**It was agreed that it is important that boundaries are constructed around the campaign.** There may be some 'fixed' boundaries: for example the length of time of a campaign, the extent of children's and young people's participation, and the resource allocation available to sustain the campaign. On the other hand, there may be some flexible and extendable boundaries: for example the campaign's developing capacity to 'reach' new and different audiences and the extending range of media available to convey the messages of the campaign. It was felt that it was important to identify the 'fixed' boundaries in advance of the launch of the campaign.

**The campaign needs to be sustainable so that it is not a one-off event but an ongoing, rolling programme.** This means that the message is repeated in a number of locations (for example school, place of worship, youth service facility, health service clinic) and through a number of media (for example books and leaflets, media, internet) over a sustained period of time.

**The campaign needs to deliver negative and positive messages:** The negative impact of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation on both children, their families /carers and community need to be made clear in the campaign. It is also important that the campaign convey some positive messages. For example it needs to highlight the advantages of preventative work and of support for those who have been harmed or who demonstrate harmful behavior.

**The campaign's different levels of purpose need to be realistic and recognise diversity of provision and of resources within and between European countries.** As the campaign becomes successful in achieving its purposes, children and young people, their families and professionals will expect improved provision to prevent sexual violence against children and young people. That is, a campaign can raise expectations and create a higher rate of disclosure and expectation for support.

Different countries within Europe are working with different levels of experience and resource capacities to identify and respond to sexual violence against children. For example, not all countries have the infrastructure, with welfare and law enforcement agencies, to respond to a raised level of demand, both in terms of protecting children and young people and in prosecuting and treating perpetrators of the offences. Not all children, families or communities have unlimited access to computer facilities.

Without undermining its sense of purpose, the campaign needs to be mindful of the different levels of resource, the varying media for communication in different countries and of the changing experience and expertise in this area of work. There needs to be a contingency position developed to work with countries where there may be no services to meet the increase in need from a campaign (see the work of UNESCO, Education Sector, Division for the Coordination of UN priorities in Education for example).

**It is important that the campaign link with other campaigns and initiatives** that hold a similar purpose upholding the principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989 (campaigns against child trafficking, campaigns to improve sexual health and improve emotional wellbeing).

**Collaboration between different campaigns needs to include:**

- **Content:** that the same overarching purpose of stopping sexual violence against children is conveyed and;
- **Process:** that web based internet links are used between campaigns, and that addresses and contacts for further information about related matters are agreed for core publicity material.

## **G. Audiences of the campaign**

The meeting noted the full range of purposes of the campaign and clarified that there are different related audiences. Expert contributions noted that **a campaign can work at a number of different levels for different audiences**, reached through different media. That is, there can be many arms to the body of a campaign.

The campaign is directed at **local, national and international policy makers:** noting concern that different countries will have different levels of expertise, resource capacity and media available for transmitting information.

**National and local professionals and practitioners** working with children, young people, their families, care homes and communities are a specific target audience.

**The range of children and young people in families and in care homes** (including private foster care, local authority foster care or group residential care) are a specific audience for the campaign needing conveyance of child friendly messages.



**Learning disabled children and children with a range of disabilities** must be considered. It was noted that providing images of children with disabilities was not enough to justify 'inclusion'. There are specific issues about identifying and reporting abuse for children with learning difficulties or other disabilities. For example, a child with a learning disability may find it difficult to distinguish between affection and covert abuse. A child who is wheelchair bound may experience restricted access to child care services and be more reliant upon home based facilities and internet resources. Children with disabilities should be consulted and encouraged to participate in the development of the campaign wherever possible and appropriate (see section E).

**Children of all ages constitute the audience:**

- a) **The campaign can reach to young children under five** by developing materials appropriate to nurseries and pre-school provisions. These can illustrate basic principles of 'right' and 'wrong' about touch and behaviour in sensitive and child friendly messages. Television and other media accessing pre-school children can also reach this age group with appropriate messages (see the whole child, family and community approach to work: [www.devoncap.org.uk](http://www.devoncap.org.uk)).

The campaign can also convey simple messages of how young children can report harm. While the meeting recognised that this may be difficult material for work with younger children, examples were given of successful campaigns that were targeted to young children using cartoon and other child friendly imagery. Again, discussion noted the need for such campaign material to facilitate discussion rather than to shock or scare children as opposition to a campaign grows from mistrust, fear and discomfort.

- b) **Older young people** who, while still under the age of 18 may face situations of abuse and exploitation. These young people may be homeless, in temporary accommodation and / or disassociated from family, carers, education and health services.

**The audience includes both victims and perpetrators:** Children and young people may be victims and/or perpetrators of sexual violence.

**Parents and carers in families and care homes** need to be targeted to prevent children and young people carrying the 'burden' of reporting sexual violence. Parents, including partners of those who demonstrate sexually harmful behaviour, extended family members and carers in care homes need to be encouraged to identify and to report sexual violence against children and young people.

**Adults who hold positions of authority and trust within communities**, including leaders in faith communities, religious communities and voluntary youth and community groups can perpetrate sexual offences against children and young people. Their colleagues, co-practitioners, congregation, friends and family have a role in identifying and reporting this abuse.

## H. Media and method for the campaign

*The range of ways to make the campaign happen!*

**Experts drew on experience of using a range of different media to convey the messages of the campaign.** It was considered advantageous to use as many different media as possible, accepting that not all citizens, communities or countries will have access to the same level of equipment or resource.

**The press was seen to play an important role in launching and sustaining the campaign.** It was considered appropriate to hold a press conference at the launch of the campaign, encouraging duplicate broadcasting on news, current affairs, education and children's programmes through TV, radio and internet providers. Information of the scale of the problem, the rights of the child and what can be done to prevent sexual violence against children should be key messages in a press conference. Engaging dedicated journalists to support the campaign through its lifetime was suggested as beneficial.

**Children and young people themselves could advertise the campaign.** The methods of working with young people to achieve the aim of the campaign while simultaneously being sensitive to, and meeting, their needs are explored in section E.

Examples of children supporting campaigns whilst learning new skills and knowledge themselves were given by experts, drawing on art, drama and theatre activities (for example, a street theatre in Ukraine involved young people in a national campaign about safety and the internet (Make IT safe ([www.make-it-safe.net](http://www.make-it-safe.net)))). Children and Young people can participate in making films and videos and CDs, can take part in sport and adventure activities (e.g. sponsored runs, swims, etc), producing materials for websites, creating posters, and producing a song or piece of music that could be associated with the campaign.

**Television, radio, video and Compact Disc** was identified as of central importance in conveying the messages of the campaign. Onus was placed on these media being used to access both children and young people and their parents and carers. Examples were given of children friendly materials and of complex messages being conveyed in a sixty second story.

**The internet is a powerful medium for a range of different forums for the campaign.** Although it must not be assumed that all children, young people and their families have access to the internet, it should be one of the central platforms for a sustained campaign. It includes opportunities for running a campaign website, for advertising the campaign on existing websites, for using web posters and banners and for linking with initiatives run by internet providers. For example, it was explained that contacts with Google and Microsoft have been established to support particular initiatives in the past (e.g. [www.internetbezpeka.org.ua](http://www.internetbezpeka.org.ua)).

**Statutory central and local government and Non Government Agency offices and bureaus** can be locations for advertising the campaign, both inside physical spaces such as offices, health centres, community centres and schools and in virtual spaces such as official websites and WebPages.

**Phone in's, help lines, web based 'q and a' information services** were considered important medium for the campaign. Evidence was presented of successful 'phone in' and 'help lines' that support victims of abuse. Such services were also accessible to those who felt concerned about their abusive behaviour. (see [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).

**Identifying a piece of jewelry or a badge that can be worn as a fashion item to advertise the campaign.** The widespread use of coloured bracelets or lapel ribbons to depict support for a particular campaign was noted. It was agreed that an item of jewelry could be associated with the campaign.

**Involving celebrities was advantageous, providing they are fully supportive of the aims and aware of the need to demonstrate this through modelling appropriate behaviour.** Examples were given of celebrities playing important roles in successfully supporting campaigns through advertising and awareness raising.

**Policy seminars can be used to hear positive outcomes from countries and organisations that have already supported the campaign.** For example, countries that are in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007) can be drawn upon to give feedback on progress and outcomes to encourage other countries to begin the process of ratification. For example, Italy is currently ratifying the convention and could be approached to offer information about 'lessons learnt'.

**Academic conferences can be convened by universities committed to protecting children from sexual violence, to showcase research findings, examples of good work and to advocate for future developments.** The role of academics in a campaign can be considered to:

- collate and disseminate data about sexual violence against children at a local, national and international level;
- involve and train young people as peer researchers, trainers and evaluators to advance the child participation agenda outlined within the campaign;
- publish data about the content of the campaign, its progress and outcomes;
- ensure rigorous evaluation of progress of the campaign;
- work with policy makers to develop sustainable education and training materials drawing on the above.

## **I. Providing resources for the campaign**

The work involved in developing and running a campaign needs resourcing. An ongoing campaign does need financial support. The cost of the campaign can be set against the cost to individuals and communities of not running a campaign. Research evidence shows that experience of sexual violence can cause long term mental and physical health problems, including alcohol and drug misuse, disrupted family and care home experiences and offending behavior. Each of these have negative costs for the individuals, their families and communities (see McElvaney presentation to this meeting, Dec 2009).

Some funding bodies take a proactive role in offering support to projects that aim to prevent sexual violence against children. They can be approached for support (see the work of the Oak Foundation: [www.oakfnd.org](http://www.oakfnd.org)).

The business community, the media and celebrities can each have a role to play in contributing time and resources to preventing sexual violence against children and young people.

## **J. Risks that may hinder the campaign's progress**

**It is essential that potential risks to the development and implementation of the campaign are considered in advance. In summary, these include being mindful that :**

- the campaign does not alienate or 'scare' its designated audience. Experience has shown that a campaign that aims to 'shock' can alienate audiences and be counterproductive. There is a delicate line between capturing attention and shocking an audience. While it was recognised that the campaign wants to explain the damage caused by sexual violence against children, it must embrace, rather than alienate its different audiences. Education and prevention needs to be sensitive, accessible and engaging to children and young people, their families and communities and to those who hold positions of responsibility and authority.
- the campaign challenges stereotypes of a 'typical abuser'. While research suggests that most child sexual abuse takes place in the home involving the male parent or carer, there is also evidence of female perpetrators, of children and young people perpetrating offences and of abuse taking place in outdoor spaces, in places of worship religious places and through the internet (see sections D & G). In short, there is no one 'typical' perpetrator or victim of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. This means that the campaign needs to ensure that it addresses the possibility of children and young people themselves being perpetrators of sexual abuse, raising awareness of the need for support and treatment without condoning unacceptable behavior.
- the campaign has sufficient resources to sustain it throughout its life, through the stages of evaluation and to support children's and young people's participation. Those involved with implementing the campaign will need to ensure that they are adequately supported to fulfill the objectives.



## **K. Evaluation of the progress of the campaign**

**Prior to its launch, preparation for the campaign needs to consider successes and failures of previous and current campaigns.** This is a) to learn from previous evidence of 'what works', b) to ensure that resources are not wasted: i.e. no two campaigns are the same.

**Once underway, the campaign needs to be evaluated at local, national and international levels.** This will allow opportunity to build on successful outcomes and to share examples of good practice. Children and young people can be involved in evaluating the programmes at each of these levels.

**Ongoing, as well as final evaluations** are needed to maintain outputs according to the agreed timetable and to provide evidence of good practice that can be shared. This means ensuring that evaluations are made to assess progress against the campaign objectives at regular intervals throughout the campaign. These evaluations need to be comprehensive and co-ordinated so that they feed information between those working across Europe at a local, national and international level.

**Evaluations can take place through a range of different methods**, including academic literature searches and reviews; web based reviews; on line surveys; media events; local project feedback; and through direct fact to face contact with children, young people and their families at a local level using focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. The meeting recognized the possibility of using Google and other internet providers to identify the use of internet based aspects of the campaign.

**Evaluations should include children and young people wherever possible.** Evaluations can be developed in consultation with children and young people so that they participate in the development of methods; of outcomes to be assessed; and in the dissemination of findings. The participation of children and young people needs to follow principles as outlined in section E.

## **L. Recommendations**

The experts' consultation meeting was a productive and innovative event, identifying lessons from research, practice and policy experience. A range of recommendations follow from the above. The below are the selected core recommendations that emerged from the meeting.

The momentum for the campaign should continue, with discussion between different campaign leads in the Council of Europe and related organisations (Eurochild, UNICEF, UNESCO, ECPAT, UN) to maximize resources and integrate materials. Liaison is also important to prevent overlap or duplication.

Information from the experts' consultation meeting 10th to 11th December 2009 can be shared on the Council of Europe WebPages to encourage involvement and participation from interested parties and to a network of organisations working in Europe to achieve this common goal of preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

The Council of Europe could develop a data base of lead NGOs and statutory bodies in Europe who are working to a genuine child participation agenda to prevent sexual violence against children and young people.

An assessment of the range of children and young people involved through these agencies could be undertaken to ensure that different age groups, racial and ethnic origins and abilities are represented.

An evaluation of key messages arising from the child participation work of these NGOs and statutory bodies could be undertaken to provide key themes for the campaign and to encourage child participation in its implementation.

Consultation with the full range of media, internet providers and educational establishments who may be able to contribute to the distribution of the campaign should be established.

A timetable with action points for the development of the campaign could be shared for consultation to develop plans for the launch of the campaign.

A core group of interested practitioners and academics working on child participation in interventions to prevent sexual violence could be convened to a) plan evaluation of the campaign with the Council of Europe so that children's views are considered; b) support the launch of the campaign and; c) develop networks that can develop and sustain the campaign throughout Europe over time.





BUILDING A EUROPE FOR AND WITH CHILDREN



## About the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an international organisation founded in 1949 which now has 47 member states. Its role is to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It establishes common democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other conventions and recommendations on the protection of persons, which of course includes Europe's 150 million children.

“Building a Europe for and with children”  
Council of Europe  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
[www.coe.int/children](http://www.coe.int/children)  
[children@coe.int](mailto:children@coe.int)