

**L'ABUS SEXUEL
DES ENFANTS :
MÉCANISMES DE PROTECTION
ET RÉSILIENCE**

*Congrès International, 20 mai 2015
Collège des Bernardins, Paris*



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***Child sexual abuse:
protection mechanisms and resilience***

**Summary of interventions
and
Recommendations**

Were present (in order of intervention):

- **Mrs Alessandra Aula**, BICE Secretary General
- **Mrs Laurence Rossignol**, Secretary of State for the Family, the Elderly Autonomy and Childhood, France
- **Mrs Geneviève Avenard**, Children's Ombudswoman, France
- **Mr Olivier Duval**, BICE President
- **Rev. Robert Oliver**, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, Holy See
- **Dr Catherine Bonnet**, member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, France
- **Mrs Ninfa Alarcón**, Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala
- **Mrs Anastasia Anthopoulos**, Child Sexual Abuse Programme officer, OAK Foundation, Switzerland
- **Mrs Maria José Castello Branco**, Portuguese expert at the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
- **Dr Jeanne Meyer**, Public health and adolescent medicine, France
- **Mrs Maria Elena Iglesias**, Therapist, in charge of the Violence against Children Prevention Unit, Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones – CESIP, Peru
- **Mrs Martine Nisse**, Director and co-founder of the Buttes-Chaumont Centre, specialised in the care of victims of sexual abuse, France
- **Mrs Senagnon Ayawa Segla**, Programme manager, National Catholic Child Bureau of Togo
- **Mrs Ana Victoria Silva**, Project director, Corporación de Promoción y Apoyo a la Infancia – Paicaibi, Chile
- **Mrs Olga Lotosh**, Project coordinator Doctors to Children, Russian Federation
- **Mrs Tith Davy**, Executive Director, Opération Enfants du Cambodge
- **Mrs Martine Brousse**, President, La Voix de l'Enfant, France
- **Mr Paka Sangare**, Branch manager in Sikasso, National Catholic Child Bureau of Mali
- **Mrs Maria Emilia Filomeno**, Director, Centro de Desarrollo y Asesoría Psicosocial - CEDAPP, Peru
- **Mrs Beata Wojtkowska**, Project coordinator, Nobody's Children Foundation, Poland
- **Dr Norberto Liwski**, Chair on Culture of Peace and Human Rights and Advisor to the Archdiocesan Commission for children and adolescents at risk, Argentina



“No violence against children is justifiable acceptable or bearable and everything that is at stake is to make it avoidable.”
Geneviève Avenard, Children’s ombudswoman, France

Background

The International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE) Congress gathered more than 250 people at the Collège des Bernardins in Paris on May 20th, 2015. The theme of the congress was: *“Child Sexual Abuse: Protection Mechanisms and Resilience”*. Participants came from varied backgrounds; childhood professionals field workers, educators, journalists, private or public child protection bodies, as well as members of the Church and BICE financial partners.

The 29 partners of the BICE programme against sexual abuse were present in order to share their experience in their fight against abuse.¹ Indeed, our present 3 year programme² has been implemented in 18 countries since the end of 2014 to prevent cases of abuses and care for children victims of sexual violence using a rights-based³ and a resilience approach⁴.

The congress has thus enabled:

- To deepen the knowledge on the causes and consequences of sexual abuse,
- To present practices that have been validated and evaluated, especially those centred on child participation,
- To facilitate dialogue and pooling knowledge between field organisations, the academic world and the public authorities, with BICE bringing both a North-South and a South-South dimension,
- To formulate a series of recommendations that the organisations can use in their implementation of a national, regional and international advocacy strategy,
- To contribute to raising awareness of the media and the public, especially in France.

As underlined by Olivier Duval, BICE President, for a meaningful fight against sexual abuse there must be a child prevention and a child protection policy. And if, unfortunately, cases of abuse happen, children must be helped and the law must be implemented with a policy of zero tolerance. This is why BICE focuses on prevention, resilience and the participation of children who must be informed of their rights, of what they can allow or not, and on the authorities to alert in case of danger.

¹ BICE partner organisations for the 2014-2017 programme against child sexual abuse are:

AFRICA: Dignité et Droits pour les Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire - DDE-CI (Abidjan, Ivory Coast), BNCE-Mali, (Bamako, Mali), and BNCE-Togo, (Lome, Togo).

LATIN AMERICA: Opción-por los derechos de niñas y niños (Santiago, Chile), Vicaría Pastoral y Social de los Trabajadores (Santiago, Chile), Paicabi-Corporación de Promoción y Apoyo a la Infancia (Viña del Mar, Chile), Mesa pro BICE – Chile (Santiago, Chile), Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala), Base Educativa y Comunitaria de Apoyo (Asunción, Paraguay), Centro de Desarrollo y Asesoría Psicosocial (Lima, Peru), Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (Lima, Peru), Centro Cultural Poveda (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic), Red BICE Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina), and Juventud para Cristo (Montevideo, Uruguay).

ASIA: Opération Enfants du Cambodge (Sihanoukville, Cambodia).

EASTERN EUROPE - COMMUNITY OF INDEPENDANT STATES: Arevamanuk (Gumri, Armenia), Public Health Foundation of Georgia (Tbilisi, Georgia), Social Rehabilitation Centre "Otradnoïe" (Moscow, Russian Federation), Caritas SPB (Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation), Doctors to Children (Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation), Civic Initiative (Zlatoust, Russian Federation), Children Support Center (Vilnius, Lithuania), Nobody's Children Foundation (Warsaw, Poland), Save the Children (Bucharest, Romania), Women's Consortium of Ukraine (Kiev, Ukraine).

WESTERN EUROPE : La Voix de l'Enfant (Paris, France), Centre des Buttes Chaumont (Paris, France), Accompagnement Lieu d'Accueil (Nice, France), Interprofessional agency for care and prevention of sexual abuse (Saint-Etienne, France).

² For more information: <http://www.bice.org/fr/abus-sexuel>

³ Articles 19 and 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provide for States to commit to protect children against all forms of sexual exploitation and violence, including of course sexual abuse.

⁴ Please, refer in particular to Vanistendael, Stefan, *The Rights of the Child and Resilience*, BICE, Paris, 2014.

Foreword: definition

Sexual abuse can be defined as⁵ :

- the act of engaging in sexual activities with a child⁶ who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age to have such activities;
- the act of engaging in sexual activities with a child:
 - o using incitement, coercion, force or threats; or
 - o taking advantage of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or
 - o taking advantage of a child's situation of vulnerability, in particular because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence;
- exploiting a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- exploiting a child for the production and dissemination of sexual abusive images or pornographic material.

Summary of interventions

Editor's note: This chapter presents a summary of the main remarks presented during BICE Congress, without linking any to a particular contributor. Therefore, this does not constitute the day's proceedings. Most interventions are however available upon request, by emailing us at communication@bice.org

Seeking awareness in the face of unbearable statistics

All contributors gave the same reminder: sexual abuse is an infinitely complex phenomenon and it touches much more children than we think. While underlying the generalised lack of "adequate data and the lack of consistency in the way we collect data on violence against children", UNICEF⁷, estimates that at least one in ten girls, in other words around 120 million girls, has been a victim of sexual violence somewhere in the world. The Council of Europe *One in Five Campaign*⁸ considers that in its 43 member States, at least one in five children is a victim of sexual violence.

However, these numbers are probably under-estimated, especially because of the taboo surrounding the issue and of the fact that nearly 50% of sexual violence during childhood cause denial or traumatic amnesia for quite long periods of time.⁹ It is considered that in 70-85% of cases, sexual abuse is perpetrated by a member of the family or a relative in the child's circle of trust,¹⁰ making interfamilial abuse the most widespread, but also the most dissimulated and least accessible penal offence. Even in countries where social services are operational, identifying children who have been victims is complicated.

Mobilising non-profit networks is thus crucial to ensure an effective prevention and adequate care for these extremely weakened children. This is also why it is important to strengthen the inter-institutional training of civil and penal actors as well as to coordinate their actions to fight against this form of violence.

⁵ It is Article 18 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse which gives, for the first time, a comprehensive definition of child sexual abuse.

⁶ Article 1 of the UNCRC defines a child as "a person below the age of 18."

⁷ See: UNICEF, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*, 2014

⁸ http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/default_FR.asp

⁹ PUTNAM, F., *Ten-Year Research Update Review : Child Sexual Abuse*, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, March 2003.

¹⁰ Protecting children from sexual violence – A comprehensive approach, Council of Europe, <http://coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/Source/PublicationSexualViolence/Lalor-McElvaney.pdf>

Towards a holistic approach in the consideration of child sexual abuse

Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches are crucial to deal with the issue of sexual abuse as a whole. Indeed, although it is necessary to influence national legislations and public policies on sexual abuse, as well as detection, reporting and support mechanisms, these initiatives only make sense when they take into account the necessity to increase the potential of resilience in each child at risk or victim of sexual abuse. A kind attention, adapted and multiform care, are vital to help the child recover and reintegrate society durably.

Numerous initiatives are being developed to ensure that the testimony of the child is being heard simultaneously by medical and legal staff. For example, in the Orléans hospital which our partners visited the day before the congress started, a medical-legal unit for minors had been put into place to record testimonies of child victims so that they do not have to repeat themselves. This unit works directly with the police and legal authorities, social workers and therapists, thus allowing holistic support and care for the child. In order for the voice of children to be adequately heard, it would also be important that the third Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees to children or their guardians the right to file a complaint to the Committee of the Rights of the Child, would come into effect in most countries in the world.¹¹

In order for children victims of sexual abuse to recover, it is necessary that States accept to face the issue. Abuse, even when it was perpetrated in the circle of the child's trust, remains a crime. Because of this denigration, number of paedophiles act in virtual impunity.

Besides, it is important to show pragmatism in the care and support given to child victims. The child can be dramatically attached to his/her aggressor especially when the aggressor is a member of the child's family, which makes denunciation especially difficult. It is also crucial that abused children and adolescents are not considered only by their status as victims. Resilience, which is the capacity in each child to rebuild him/herself in spite of difficulties, must also be encouraged from an ethical point of view while avoiding any exploitation of this approach.

The commitment from the Catholic Church against child sexual abuse has also been mentioned, including the creation in March 2014 by Pope Francis of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, which aims at the implementation of good-treating policies adapted to different cultures. Through the contribution from Monsignor Robert Oliver, Secretary of this organism, the Church reaffirmed its willingness from now on and in the long term to fight for the prevention and the detection of sexual abuse, while providing the necessary support and care to children victims of inappropriate touching or rape from ecclesiastics.

Good practices in the framework of the care and support of children victims of sexual abuse

Contributors took many opportunities to stress out that the attention given to the child's recounting is crucial. They must be able to confide in someone but it is often difficult for them to identify the person of trust who will be able to listen and appease their suffering. Listening structures are thus being implemented for young victims to confide freely. For example, in the region of Saint-Petersburg, the NGO *Doctors to Children* provides confidential online therapeutic support and works with an investigation committee to put into place adapted listening spaces for each child.

In the different intervention areas where our partners work, it is necessary to adapt the care given to a child depending on family and cultural specificities. Indeed, the family sphere plays a fundamental role in

¹¹ The Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure, which will allow individual children to submit complaints regarding specific violations of their rights was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2011, but to date has only received 17 ratifications.

the child's healing process. Some NGOs have as an objective to train families so that they can better protect children and to avoid the recurrence of abuse. For example, the NGO Paicaibi (*Corporación de Promoción y Apoyo a la Infancia*) in Chile has come up with the function of the *protecting adult*. This person can be a family member or a relative of the child who maintains a close dialogue with the organisation and ensures, through awareness raising activities, that the child's surroundings better trust the child and avoid doubting his/her words - today 90% of mothers still do not believe that their daughter were abused by their partners.

Beyond the family circle, local communities can also be actors on the fight against sexual abuse or other forms of violence. In Togo, local protection committees have been put into place to detect cases of ill-treatment and to communicate them to competent authorities. These committees are a way to integrate local populations in the child protection initiatives, making interventions very effective as they are a deterrent for potential abusers. Emotional and sexual education must also be a priority so that children learn to respect their bodies and that of others. In addition, children should not witness their parents' or other adults' sexual activity. While this seems obvious in Western Europe, this is far from being the case in other parts of the world, resulting in tragic consequences, including the risk that children reproduce these sexual behaviours with their pairs.

Finally, in order to fight against sexual abuse it is vital that childhood professionals are completely aware of this phenomenon and that they know how to recognise signs of sexual violence to react in such cases. As a result, BICE organises training sessions for childhood professionals in the countries involved in its programme in order to: (i) train them to the identification of clinical signs of abuse and to the reporting of such cases; (ii) inform them on the nature and consequences of child sexual abuse and (iii) promote interdisciplinary cooperation and exchanges between different actors involved in child protection.

Prevention and detection of sexual abuse on the Internet

It is estimated that on average one child out of three has had access to the Internet in the last five years and while numbers vary from one region to another, the global trend indicates that more and more children use information and communication technologies. These, particularly Internet, provide wonderful opportunities for learning and information. However, by exposing children to some harmful and violent content, they present risks which can directly threaten children's rights. Paedophiles can create fake profiles to attract their victims. Personal information is less protected and harassment can spread on the net.

These dangers had not yet been identified at the time of the UNCRC in 1989 and even if legal instruments have since been put into place to fill these gaps, cyber bullying of children still often falls in a legal loophole. In addition, identifying and measuring offences has been made harder by the possibility that the Internet provides for perpetrators to hide their illegal activities.

Besides, the Web weakens the child's capacity to symbolise. Children find it difficult to express their emotions through words or drawings and this frustration transforms itself into violence. In addition, the trivialization of pornography undermines their mental development and weakens their learning of moral values. Parents and educators must therefore control the constant influx of information conveyed by the new technologies, and the awareness on the risks of cyber-bullying should be extended to children and to parents.

Social networks can be devastating for adolescents who are often unaware of the risks they take when they share pictures of themselves almost naked by SMS, Snapchat or Facebook. The tragic story of Amanda Todd, a Canadian teenager who took her life after suffering months of cyber-bullying, is a sad illustration of this phenomenon. The young girl had taken her clothes off in front of her webcam under the pressure of a paedophile who then disseminated the images on social networks. Amanda was also a victim of sexting: sending sexually explicit, erotic or pornographic messages between mobile phones. To fight against

this recent phenomenon, the Polish NGO *Nobody's Children Foundation* gives educational tools to parents, educators and youth to inform them on the dangers of sexting.¹²

By way of conclusion

The 2015 congress gave the possibility to share a multidisciplinary vision of the effects of child sexual abuse. Following this, and echoing BICE and its partner's expertise on this subject for many years, a final declaration was made public.

Addressed to States, civil society organisations and the media, the declaration aims to include all aspects of child sexual abuse in public policies, from prevention to the conviction of aggressors. This text will also serve as a basis for BICE in its future advocacy and awareness-raising work on child sexual abuse at the national, regional and international level.

Final declaration

Pursuing its commitment to fight violence against children, especially against child sexual abuse, the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE) held an international congress entitled "Child Sexual Abuse: Protection Mechanisms and Resilience" on May 20, 2015 in Paris. The congress was attended by the 29 partners involved in BICE three-year programme (2015-2017) on the sexual abuse of children, which is implemented in 19 countries worldwide and by representatives of States, international and national experts and practitioners in the field of child rights and sexual abuse.

Defining sexual abuse, as the act of:

- engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age to have such relations;
- engaging in sexual activities with a child where:
 - o use is made of incitement, coercion, force or threats; or
 - o abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or
 - o abuse is made of a particular vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence;
- exploiting a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- exploiting a child for the production and dissemination of sexual abusive images or pornographic material.

¹² Regarding this, the working group which has just been created within the Council of Europe's Lanzarote Committee (body in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse) has identified 7 trends in child sexual abuse and exploitation:

- Self-generated images and material;
- Sexual coercion and extortion;
- Live distant child abuse and exploitation;
- Sex chatting / sexting;
- Bad hosting;
- Anonymity and encryption of data/ use of darknet;
- Commercial child sexual exploitation.

Considering that child sexual abuse:

- is a global scourge that affects all States throughout the world, regardless of their level of political, social or economic development;
- is most common in circles of trust and perpetrated by people whom the victim trusts, or by people who have a certain power or authority over the victim, aggravating his/her inability to defend him/herself;
- causes profound long-lasting and concealed trauma, affects both the integrity and the physical, psychological and mental health of the victim, and requires specific and multidisciplinary interventions;
- has an insidious and hidden character and assumes varied and pernicious forms, thus limiting the availability of reliable quantitative and qualitative data structured according to age, sex and geographic areas;
- rarely leaves tangible or lasting evidence beyond the word of the child and possible witnesses, which has an impact on the victim's access to justice and his/her recovery in dignity and rights .

BICE recommends:

to States:

Legal framework

1. To recognise and **criminalise sexual abuse, attempted abuse, active or passive complicity of abuse against children** and effectively apply these legal provisions to acts or omissions committed in the country and abroad by people living under their jurisdiction;
2. To ensure that the definition of sexual abuse, including the components and the means used, is wide enough and exclude incriminating evidence such as the non-resistance of the victim¹³ to avoid the **risk of impunity** of certain acts or omissions which would evade the hold of positive law;
3. To consider that the **trust** inspired by the author, his/her position of authority or other means to **invalidate the consent** of the victim and to **weaken or destroy** his/her defences, are aggravating circumstances;
4. To provide **protective measures** to preserve the child by removing him/her from the risk and supposed risks of abuse and the possible aggravation of the inherent consequences;
5. To determine a **reasonable minimum age** below which any activity of a sexual nature between adults and children would be covered by the law, to ensure the protection of children beyond the foreseen minimum age, and apply dissuasive sanctions;
6. To extend the **limitation period** for sexual abuse from the age of **majority of the victim**, or when the victim overcomes denial or traumatic amnesia or when facts are revealed due to investigations, witnesses or other.

Prevention, protection and assistance

1. To follow a child rights-based approach complemented by a social welfare-based approach:
 - a. develop prevention public policies with a holistic perspective, taking into account the protective resources and capabilities of adults, families and communities as well as institutional mechanisms for promoting human rights, prevention and effective protection of victims;
 - b. provide these policies with adequate resources and articulate them around the fight against the silence, attitudes and practices which perpetuate sexual abuse, and around interventions oriented

¹³ The circumstances of sexual abuse, including tricks, ploys, coercion, authority, are likely to destroy the victim's defenses and to expose him/her to the perpetrator's actions. Therefore, resisting or not to abuse cannot reasonably constitute an element of evidence against the victim when the perpetrator's intention of abusing exists.

towards **detection** to identify risk factors and alarming signs, **reporting** to facilitate filing and the objective **investigation** of complaints;

2. To treat cases of sexual abuse with multidisciplinary **methods and approaches** to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of the victim, and ensure **monitoring** to fully restore the child's dignity and his rights through judicial pathways.
3. To provide protection structures and caregivers¹⁴ with support and training on an **internal child protection policy**¹⁵ designed to promote or create a protective environment for child rights in circles of trust;
4. To build the capacity of state and non-state professionals on their **duty of care** towards the children they are responsible for, on prevention of abuse, on the outright **ban** of any sexual activity with these children, on the **detection** of signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, and on reporting and **referrals** to appropriate **support** services;
5. To establish or strengthen a **free, accessible and permanently operational helpline**, to **listen, assist and refer** children at risk, victims or witnesses to **psychological** and forensic care and support. Children should be able to speak with **confidence** and with the guarantee of **confidentiality**;
6. To develop a policy for assistance and protection for **families**. In particular, there should be policies to **raise awareness and train parents** in **positive parenting, detection** of symptoms and the use of support helplines services;
7. To create **coordination focal points** among state services for interventions in the area of **prevention, protection and assistance** to victims and families in order to facilitate liaison and collaboration between services providing complementary care;
8. To integrate working levers in the State support and practices, based on the **potential of resilience**¹⁶ of the child victim or at risk of abuse, which could inspire public policies for prevention and therapeutic measures, but without replacing them;
9. To institutionalize **cooperation** among States and between States, including the exchange and **sharing of data, cross-border investigations**, facilitating the **extradition** of (alleged) perpetrators of sexual abuse as well as **filing** sentenced or suspected perpetrators;
10. To integrate **training modules** in the **school curricula** for an informed, reasoned and respectful use of the internet and social networks as well as the opportunity for children themselves as victims or witnesses to report to referral services cases of sexual abuse, while raising their awareness on the negative effects of being silent on the victim and potential victims;
11. To set up measures adapted to the **active listening** of the child at risk, victim or witness, so that testimony collection be done using adapted methods and procedures with professionals specifically trained on this;
12. To promote the **access** of child victims or witnesses **to justice**, particularly through **legal assistance** and **evidence collection**, and by ensuring the **best interests of the child** as a determining factor in any final decision;
13. To implement the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children¹⁷ in order to curb the **risk factors** for children¹⁸ and favour the **identification of signs** for prompt and more adequate intervention and targeted preventive measures.

¹⁴According to the Committee of the Rights of the Child's interpretation of article 19. 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, care providers are defined as parents or one of them, his/her or their legal representatives or any other person to whom the child is entrusted; they are the people who have a clear and recognised legal, professional, ethical and/or cultural responsibility, with regard to the safety, health, development and well-being of the child, namely primarily: parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, people welcoming a child as part of the *kafalah* of Islamic law, guardians, extended family and community members; educational and school staff and personnel responsible for early childhood; persons employed by parents to keep the child; team leaders and sports coaches - including youth group supervisors; employers or supervisors in the workplace; staff of institutions (governmental or nongovernmental) which are given responsibility for the child, such as for example staff in health care, juvenile justice or child care facilities. In the case of non-accompanied minors, the State has *de facto* custody. CRC/C/GC/13, § 33 General Comment n°13 (2011) on The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.

¹⁵"Developing and Implementing an Internal Child Protection Policy - A Guide for Organizations Working with Children", BICE, Paris 2014. In particular, please, refer to fact-sheet No 12.

¹⁶ Please, refer to the bibliography thereafter.

¹⁷ Doc. ONU, A/RES/64/142(2009), These Guidelines are mainly intended for children deprived of parental care and protection.

¹⁸ The most vulnerable and therefore most exposed children are: unaccompanied children, children living in touristy areas where sex tourism is common, children accessing the Internet and social networks in an unprotected way, children with physical or mental

to civil society organisations:

1. To adopt a **multidisciplinary approach** including in the teams' composition and **methods inspired by the concept of resilience** and in the light of the principle of the **best interests of the child**.
2. To contribute to **breaking the silence** on the issue of sexual abuse through awareness-raising campaigns, **documented research** on the different manifestations of sexual abuse, and **action programmes** with different types of media;
3. To get involved at all levels in **advocacy**, particularly through **alternative reports** monitoring the relevant recommendations made by national, regional and international mechanisms for supervision of children's rights;
4. To develop **multiform partnerships** and organise **capacity building training modules** to be given in the professionals' workplace, such as protection centres, courts, police offices, schools, hospitals, counselling centres, and media offices¹⁹;
5. To give priority to **awareness-raising** with the active **participation of children** as subjects and rights-holders in order to guarantee respect for their opinions and in decisions concerning them;
6. To implement **community activities** targeting **community intermediaries** (leaders of community centres , religious leaders, elders and traditional leaders, etc.), **families**, about their responsibility to protect, to monitor and their role as whistleblowers in cases of abuse, as well as their support, care and benevolence;
7. To use **information, training and awareness** raising to fight against sexual abuse through internet and social networks, places where connections between people and child-pornographic website, cyber-harassment, and the production, storage and dissemination of **child-pornographic** material and different types of enticement, feed **paedophiles, sexual tourists** and people who take advantage of children and adolescents' ingenuity.
8. To try to strengthen the **potential of resilience** and the **protective factors** of children at risk and victims by giving them supporting and caring attention and **positive guidance**, by working with their **inherent resources**, and by developing a social environment conducive to their **inner growth** in order to support their rehabilitation and socio-professional reintegration.

to medias:

1. To contribute, through the **dissemination of publications** on sexual abuse, TV and radio programmes and other spaces for **educational and pedagogical content**, to promoting awareness and **behaviour** change and to fighting against **practices** that are likely to encourage, by omission or action, acts of sexual abuse against children;
2. To ensure that cases of sexual abuse are treated with respect for the **dignity and the rights** of the child and in accordance with the principles of **confidentiality, non-discrimination and non-stigmatization, physical and moral integrity and the child privacy**;
3. To develop **self-regulatory guidelines** for the treatment and dissemination of information that promotes expression of opinions and children's expectations and which avoid erroneous and stereotypical content that would effectively re-victimize the child.

disabilities, children affected by conflict, children living in fragile or vulnerable families or in families experiencing extreme poverty, children socially excluded or estranged from their families, children deprived of liberty, victim of debt bondage, of human trafficking and forced labor and other worst forms of child labor, institutionalised or isolated children lacking parental affection, orphaned children without alternative care, children victims of social exclusion and discrimination, children from minorities and indigenous peoples, and children from families with a strong dependence on alcohol and drug.

¹⁹ By media, we mean print press, digital media (web sites, blogs, and social networks), TV and radio, including when broadcasted on the internet.

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About BICE

Founded in 1948, BICE is an international NGO under French law (1901). The association is present in 4 continents and it implements projects in 25 countries in order to protect the dignity and the rights of the child according to a Christian perspective.

BICE develops child prevention, protection and rehabilitation projects together with local organizations and concerned actors. BICE enjoys consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is in operational relations with UNESCO and it has a status with the Council of Europe, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance
70, boulevard Magenta – 75010 Paris
01 53 35 01 00 – contact@bice.org
www.bice.org