ARE YOU LISTENING?

VIOLENCE AND SAFETY THROUGH THE VOICES OF CHILDREN.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
FOR JUSTICE

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Мълчи
Мълчи

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daphne

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VIOLENCE AND SAFETY THROUGH THE VOICES OF CHILDREN.

ANIMUS ASSOCIATION

Believe in children Barnardo's North West

DEFENCE for CHILDREN International

CDI international Child Development Initiatives

BAG FORSA

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KIND EN JEUGDTRAUMACENTRUM, HAARLEM, THE NETHERLANDS

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Enjoy the Book

WE REPRESENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THREE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – BULGARIA, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. SOME OF US ARE VERY YOUNG AND SOME OF US ARE NEARLY ADULTS. SOME OF US HAVE DISABILITIES AND SOME OF US HAVE HAD DIFFICULT LIVES SO FAR. WE ARE FROM ALL SORTS OF BACKGROUNDS, FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES, DIFFERENT RELIGIONS, BLACK AND WHITE.



THIS BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN FOLLOWING WORKSHOPS WITH US. IN THESE WORKSHOPS WE TALKED ABOUT OUR FEELINGS, OUR EXPERIENCES AND WE GAVE OUR OPINIONS ON VIOLENCE AND SAFETY. A LOT OF IT IS SHOWN THROUGH PICTURES.

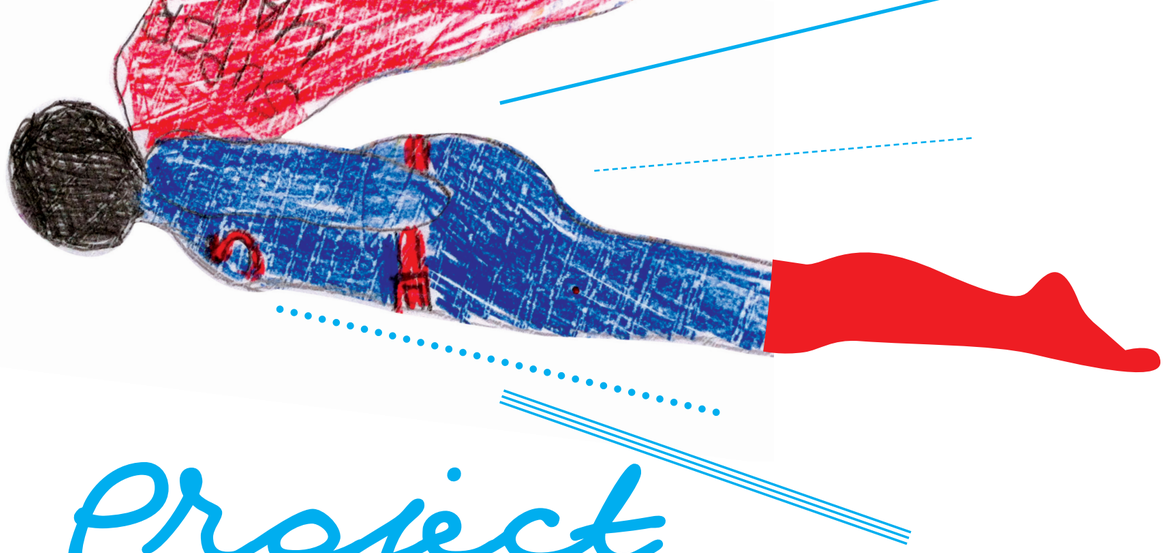
ALTHOUGH THE WORKSHOPS WERE DONE IN THREE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES YOU WILL SEE WE ALL HAVE SIMILAR STORIES.

WE WERE HAPPY TO DO THE WORKSHOPS BECAUSE WE WANTED YOU TO READ THE BOOK AND TO UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE COMING FROM. WE BELIEVE YOU WHEN YOU SAY YOU WANT YOUR WORK WITH CHILDREN TO BE “CHILD-CENTRED”. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT FOR MOST OF YOU IT IS A LONG TIME SINCE YOU WERE CHILDREN YOURSELVES SO YOU COULD MAYBE DO WITH SOME HELP.

BEING CHILD CENTRED IS ABOUT PUTTING THE WISHES AND FEELINGS OF CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR THINKING AND AT THE CENTRE OF ALL YOU DO. WE HOPE THIS HELPS.

...and

Good Luck!



Project Presenta-tion



THIS BOOK WAS DEVELOPED WITHIN THE PROJECT COMBINING FORCES TO ENHANCE THE PREVENTION OF MALTREATMENT AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN IN FOUR EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES. IT AIMS AT MAKING THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN MORE EFFECTIVE BY INCLUDING THE CHILD'S VOICE IN ALL WE DO. THAT MEANS TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW IN ALL OUR PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN. THE PROJECT IS BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY IMPLEMENTED IN BULGARIA, GERMANY, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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THE PROJECT PROVIDES SPACE FOR CHILDREN FROM THREE OF THE PRESENTED COUNTRIES (BULGARIA, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UNITED KINGDOM) TO SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AS WELL AS SAFETY. THROUGH DRAWINGS AND VARIOUS PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES, CHILDREN EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, ANXIETIES AND EXPECTATIONS SO AS TO HELP ADULTS UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS FOR SAFETY AND PROTECTION.

ADULTS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO CREATE SAFETY AND PROVIDE PROTECTION TO THE CHILD. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO DO SO, ADULTS NEED TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND HOW CHILDREN PERCEIVE SAFETY AND PROTECTION. IN ORDER TO CREATE SAFETY AND PROTECTION, ADULTS SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO ACT FROM AN ADULT POINT OF VIEW, BUT NEED TO SEEK A BALANCE BETWEEN A FOCUS ON SAFETY AND BEING CHILD CENTRED. DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, WITH CHILDREN TOGETHER, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THEIR AGE AND EVOLVING CAPACITIES. WE BELIEVE THAT IF ADULTS LISTEN TO WHAT CHILDREN SAY THEY CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES AND WHAT DRIVES SOME OF THEIR BEHAVIOURS.

IN THIS WAY ADULTS WILL NOT HARM THE FEELINGS OF CHILDREN. IN ANY OTHER WAY, CHILDREN COULD FEEL ABUSED AGAIN, OR FEEL EVEN MORE LONELY. THE EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE IS INHERENTLY DISEMPOWERING. THEREFORE A CHILD SENSITIVE APPROACH IS NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT CHILD PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS DO NOT FURTHER DISEMPOWER CHILDREN BUT RATHER CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THEIR RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION.

AS PART OF THE PROJECT, SEMINARS AND TRAINING COURSES AIMED AT CAPACITY-BUILDING, HAVE ALSO BEEN DESIGNED TO DISSEMINATE WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT, TO SPECIALISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING – HEAD TEACHERS, TEACHERS, SOCIAL WORKERS, POLICE OFFICERS. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF INCREASING AWARENESS AMONG PROFESSIONALS ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN. WE HOPE IT WILL IN TURN MOTIVATE THEM TO PROTECT CHILDREN AGAINST VIOLENCE IN WAYS THAT ARE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD, SEEKING A BALANCE BETWEEN PROVIDING SAFETY AND BEING CHILD CENTRED, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE AGE AND EVOLVING CAPACITIES OF THE CHILD.

THIS BOOK IS A COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHTS RELATING TO ABUSE AND VIOLENCE AS WELL AS SAFETY. WE HOPE IT WILL HELP YOU TO FEEL AND UNDERSTAND WHAT CHILDREN DO NOT ALWAYS PUT INTO WORDS.





(p.14) I'm a child and I understand everything!
(p.15 Up) NO!
(p.15 Down) No, please don't!

About the book



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO PROTECTION. THERE HAS BEEN CONSENT ON THIS FOR A LONG TIME. HOWEVER, FOR THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD IT IS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY TO RECEIVE PROTECTION BUT ALSO TO FEEL VALUED AND TO HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE: TO LEARN TO FORM OPINIONS, TO HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO EXPRESS OPINIONS AND ABOVE ALL, TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

Children have a right to protection. There has been consent on this for a long time. However, for the healthy development of the child it is important not only to receive protection but also to feel valued and to have opportunities to participate: to learn to form opinions, to have the confidence to express opinions and above all, to be taken seriously.

This book takes the views expressed by children on violence as the starting point for adults to better understand how to listen and support children more effectively. Central to such a child-centred approach is the right of the child to develop physically as well as mentally, emotionally, cognitively, socially and culturally[1]. In any decision affecting a child it should be determined which outcome is in the best interest of the child and thus protects the development of the child to the fullest extent[2]. To determine this it is very important to take the child's opinion into consideration, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child[3].

According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, securing and promoting children's fundamental rights to respect for their human dignity and physical and psychological integrity, through the prevention of all forms of violence, is essential for promoting the full set of child rights in the Convention on the Rights of the Child[4].

The experience of violence is inherently disempowering for children, when their rights have been violated in their family environment, the place where they should feel safe and secured. Children, who experienced abuse, have a right to be supported in their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration[5], to be supported to rebuild their capacity to trust in their relationship with their family members.

The opinions of children on abuse and violence as well as safety are expressed freely in the chapters that follow. The child-centred approach has been the guiding principle in the development of this book. Children were invited to express their vision, ideas, concerns, attitudes and feelings on violence and neglect which enabled them to exercise their fundamental right to participate.

Interactive work sessions were held with children between 10 and 18 years old in Bulgaria, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands. All children were given information about the aims of the project. Their consent was a precondition for participation.

Children in residential care school and college took part in small group workshops. Children who had experienced violence contributed through individual sessions.

1. Art. 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Art. 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
3. Art. 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
4. General Comment No. 13 (2011), The right of the child to freedom of all forms of violence, Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN
5. Art. 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child



EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

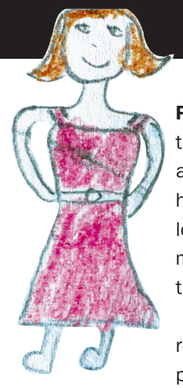
MOST CHILDREN WHO PROVIDED MATERIAL FOR THIS BOOK HAVE SUFFERED A FORM OR VARIOUS FORMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT.

SOME OF THEM HAD EXPERIENCED AND WITNESSED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. CHRONIC VIOLENCE AT HOME DESTROYS THE CHILD'S CAPACITY TO TRUST AND LOVE. IT OCCURS IN SITUATIONS OF INTIMACY, DEPENDENCE AND ATTACHMENT AS DOES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A PARENT AND A CHILD.

THE CHILD HAS TO ACCEPT THE ADULTS' VERSION OF THE WORLD TO SURVIVE. INSTEAD OF THE ADULT SUPPORTING THE CHILD TO DEVELOP TO THEIR POTENTIAL, THE CHILD ENDS UP HAVING TO MEET THE ADULT'S NEEDS.



Mom



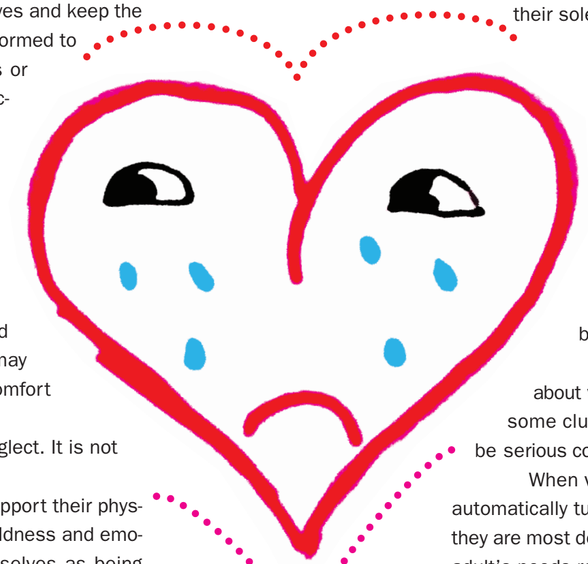
CHILDREN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN THE HOME ARE DEPENDANT ON THEIR PARENTS. They must seek help and rescue from the same person who may also frighten and harm them. To survive, such children often need to keep the delusion that the offending parent is actually a good parent. They find an explanation for the parent's violence by blaming themselves and keep the hope that if they correct their behaviour one day the terror and the pain will be transformed to love. Some children learn to use aggression as a social strategy to solve conflicts or manage overwhelming feelings; others may be passive victims who may become victims in other situations as well, such as being bullied by peers at school.

Many times children become victims of physical abuse at home. It often results from inappropriate or excessive physical discipline or lack of maturity of parents or caretakers and lack of parenting skills. It mostly occurs in the name of "the good of the child" and in the form of punishment. Physical abuse can take many forms – slapping, hitting with hand or another object, kicking, shaking the child, pulling hair etc. There are not only physical indicators of the abuse that are visible. The invisible emotional pain for the child is as strong as the physical pain and the emotional impacts are long-lasting. Children who are victims of physical abuse may display withdrawn or aggressive behavioural extremes, soreness, lack of trust, discomfort with physical contact or become chronic runaways.

Other children who provided material for this book have suffered chronic neglect. It is not only physical and psychological abuses that damage a child's psyche.

Children need love and warmth, adults who make them feel valuable and support their physical and emotional growth. If a child lives with systemic indifference, detachment, coldness and emotional neglect, they are deprived of the joy and satisfaction of experiencing themselves as being emotionally important to their parents. Neglected children have to find strategies to survive and get their needs met. In the child-parent relationship, it is crucial for the parent to accept that the child has his/her own feelings, thoughts and desires. Children experience themselves as important if their intrinsic worth is reflected in the way their parents relate to them. The constant neglect, the impossibility for one's voice to be heard harms a child's soul in an invisible way. The child loses the capacity to demonstrate free will and individuality.

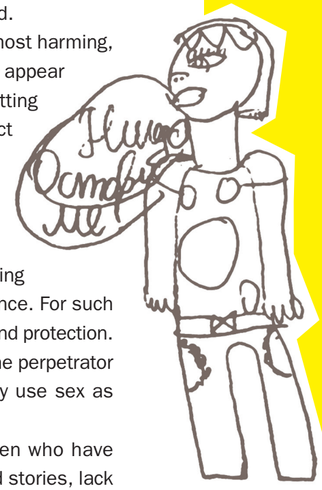




Mom Daddy

We know also that some of the children that worked with us to compile this book had experienced sexual violence. Sexual violence has long-term effects on children's emotional development. It is particularly confusing for children because it links sexuality with aggression. As well as physical violence there are also emotional impacts; the child's body and mind are abused simultaneously. The physical body can recover if the violence ends but the child's psyche remains deeply traumatized.

In order to deal with the emotions deriving from those forms of abuse that are most harming, like sexual violence, some children may "turn off" their ability to feel. Some children may appear to be clever and seem to cope really well but inside, they can be afraid of trusting and getting close to people. Emotional bonding may provoke tension and anxiety and children can act those out through violence or self-destructive behaviour. Other children "turn off" their ability to think because of the trauma they have experienced. Sometimes children's development can be affected and children may be misdiagnosed, such as having attention deficit disorder, learning difficulties or other psychological or behavioural problems, when their behaviour is really a symptom of their experiences. Still other children continue living with the confusion between love, sexuality, and aggression provoked by the sexual violence. For such children, closeness goes only with sex, and the sexuality remains the only way to find love and protection. Sexual behavioural problems are another sequence of this. Older boys can identify with the perpetrator in their pursuit to overcome the confusion regarding their sexual orientation. Girls may use sex as their sole "currency", the only worth they possess.



Nevermind, leave me alone!

Sometimes professionals do not know how to respond to children who have experienced sexual violence. It is commonly shrouded in secrecy, untold stories, lack of clarity, and feelings of guilt. Children do not always recall things in a coherent sequence of events. There are often no witnesses and so professionals often have to consider if a case is "probable" or "possible". For many children, sexual violence is something they have to deal with on their own. Sometimes responding in a sensitive way can have a huge impact for the child and can be the start of the process of developing trust and feeling valued which are crucial to their recovery. Children tell us they want to be listened to and believed; to understand what happened, to name it with simple words, to take away the child's guilt. This can be a chance for the child to head for the road of recovery.

It has not been possible to get the views of very young children (under 3 years old) about violence for this book as they are often not able to express them, although we may get some clues from their behaviours if we choose to look. However, we do know that there can be serious consequences for very young children living in violent and unpredictable environments.

When very young children are faced with unpredictable and frightening environments they automatically turn to the adults closest to them for comfort. When the fear is created by the person they are most dependent on, they quickly learn how to organise their emotional life to comply with the adult's needs rather than to have their own needs held central. This is a surviving strategy that sets a template for how children will perceive others. These children learn that it is not always safe to signal a need, they know how to avoid conflicts and conform, they know adults are not trustful and they learn not to have expectations.

Children who observe and experience aggression from early in their life develop aggressive and anxious behaviours themselves.





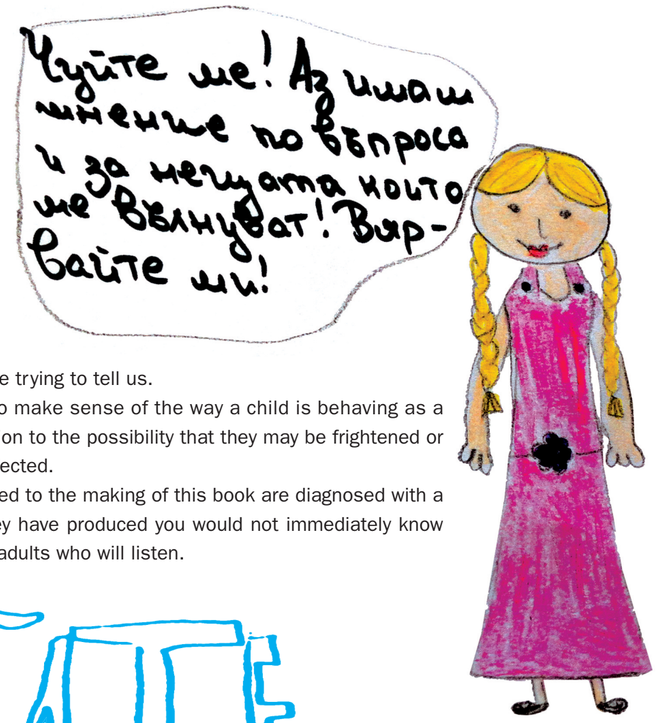
(p.18) Please don't hurt me.
(p.19 Up) Hear me out, I have an opinion too and I know what's good for me too. Trust me!
(p.19 Down) Listen to us! We do have opinions!

Aggression becomes their preferred social strategy. They learn that relationship difficulties are resolved by threat or violence. Some of these young people will be the ones accessing mental health services in the future. Should this be their legacy?

A significant number of the children who contributed to this book had a variety of disabilities. Children with learning and physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable to harm. This can be because their mobility is restricted, or their method of communication is unfamiliar to us, or because we do not properly listen to what they are trying to tell us.

We know that professionals are likely to make sense of the way a child is behaving as a function of their disability than to give consideration to the possibility that they may be frightened or need help because they are being abused or neglected.

Some of the children who have contributed to the making of this book are diagnosed with a learning disability, yet when you look at what they have produced you would not immediately know that. All of the children give similar messages to adults who will listen.







EXERCISES TO SHOW WHAT VIOLENCE MEANS TO CHILDREN

THE FACILITATORS IN ALL COUNTRIES USED SIMILAR EXERCISES THROUGH WHICH CHILDREN CAN SHOW WHAT VIOLENCE MEANS TO THEM, WHAT A CHILD NEEDS TO FEEL SAFE AND WHAT A CHILD EXPECTS FROM ADULTS. AMONGST OTHERS, THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES WERE USED:

- **DRAWING OF WORD WEBS ON ASSOCIATIONS WITH VIOLENCE;**
- **DRAWING OF A SAFETY SHIELD THROUGH WHICH CHILDREN SHOW WHAT THEIR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE SHIELD WOULD LOOK LIKE;**
- **FINISHING OF SENTENCES;**
- **DRAWING STORIES ON VIOLENCE.**



I feel heard when...
People understand what is the matter with me and really listen

WHAT CHILDREN NEED AND WISH

ALL CHILDREN NEED ADULTS TO KEEP THEM FROM HARM'S WAY.

This means that adults first of all should not behave in any way that puts children at risk of harm. Put another way it means that we as adults bear a responsibility to keep children safe. For those of us who have some/a professional responsibility to children these basic precepts signal a need to listen to what children tell us, not just verbally but by how they behave, their demeanour, and through whatever medium children communicate with us.

What children say provides us with a timely reminder that there can be many blocks and barriers to adults listening to children and hearing what they try to tell us. To overcome those blocks and barriers requires effort on our part. If we make that effort children will help us to understand and we will be in a far better place to work together, to take them seriously, and to help keep them safe.

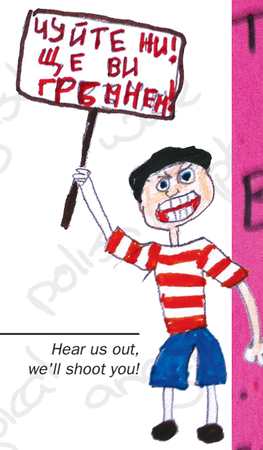
Ik voel me gehoord als...

Mensen begrijpen waar ik mee zit en echt naar me luisteren.

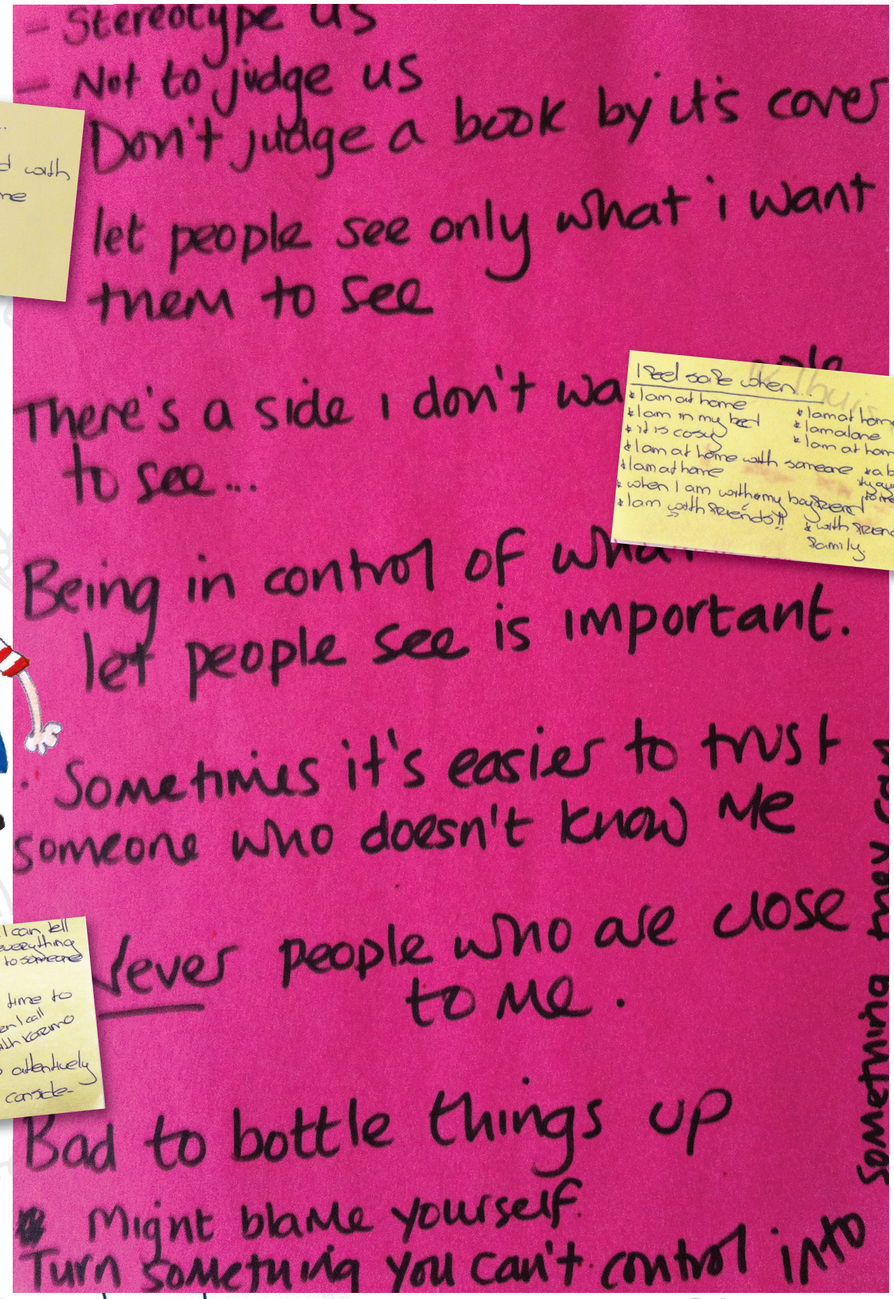
Ik voel mij veilig als....

Ik omgeven ben met mensen die me zekerheid geven.

I feel safe when...
I am surrounded with People who give me security



Hear us out, we'll shoot you!



I feel safe when...
* I am at home
* I am in my bed
* It is cosy
* I am at home with someone
* I am at home
* when I am with my boyfriend
* I am with friends!!
* I am at home
* I am alone
* I am at home
* as a secure
* with friends and family

I feel heard when...
* somebody really listens to me
* when somebody makes time to listen to me
* I call with Yuliq
* when someone listens attentively
* when people take me into consideration
* I can tell everything to someone
* when I call with Kareno

ik denk dat ik niet serieus word genomen

ik denk dat ik niet gehoord word

IN CHILDREN'S WORDS AND IMAGES

What is violence to us?

We know and understand what violence is. Through our knowledge, our experience and through the lives we lead we understand violence just as you do. We know about physical violence and rape, but we understand that threats, swearing and cyber-bullying are forms of violence too. We understand these things because they go on in our lives. We also watch the TV and read things. We know about terrorism and racism and we see the same images of war in the media as you do.

WE KNOW WHAT VIOLENCE IS. IT IS PART OF OUR LIVES.



He dreams he's going to school with a gun.

Hear's a Kalashnikov for you.

Thanks

Ha! Ha!

Absolutely

Because I'm afraid they'll hit me

Okay, I'll give you this AK 47

What do we need to feel safe?

ABOVE ALL WE NEED SOMEONE WE CAN TRUST AND RELY ON. It may be mum or dad. It may be a brother or sister or a friend. It could be a teacher. The person needs to be someone who listens to us; someone we can share things with.

We feel safe when we belong to a family or a group of friends. We need a place where we feel safe. Sometimes we need to find such a place on our own – our room, the computer or a tree where no-one can find us.

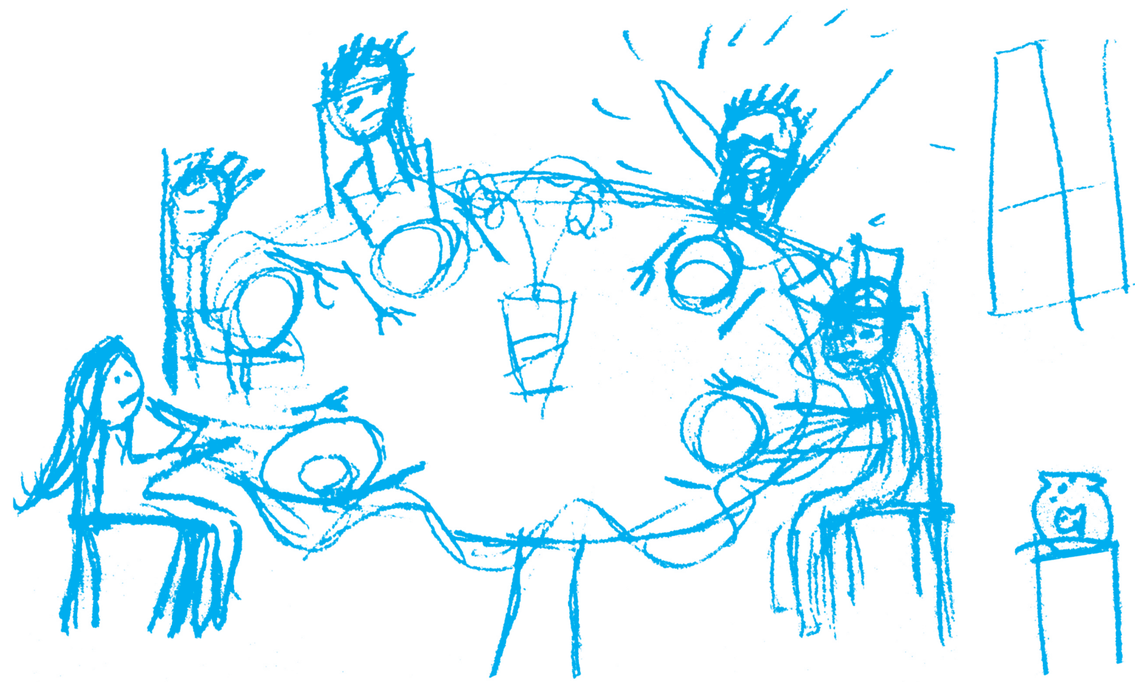


I love you but you don't love me.



If you leave us alone to work things out, that is when things can go wrong. We try to be as strong as the persons that scare us. That is when we get aggressive. When you don't have time to talk with us, we close up or get depressed. We go out on the street and hope someone will notice that we need help.

That's when we feel alone.



What do we need from adults?

When adults have big problems, they tend to forget about us. You forget that we are there too. We see and hear everything. You don't ask us what we want and how we feel. When we try to tell you something, you tell us "It's none of you business." or "Everything's gonna be alright." But it's not always like this.



fig.1 – Daddy (What d'you want?)

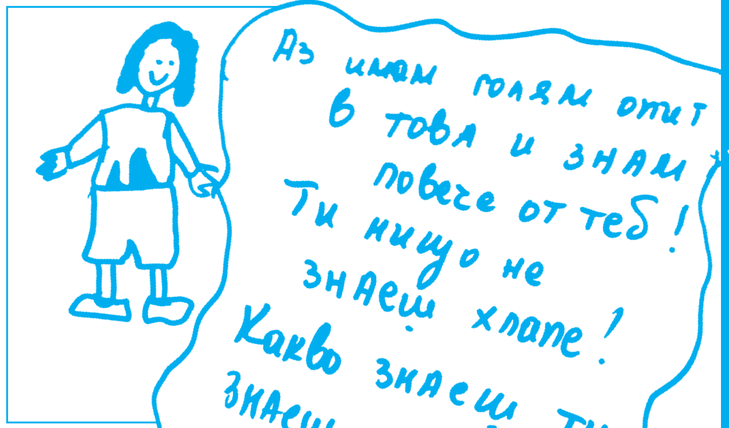


fig.2 – Mom

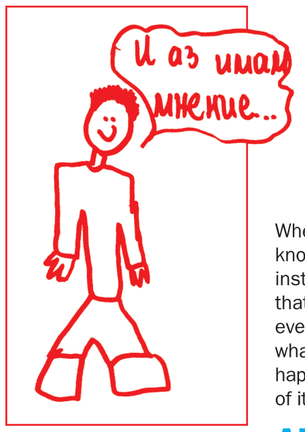
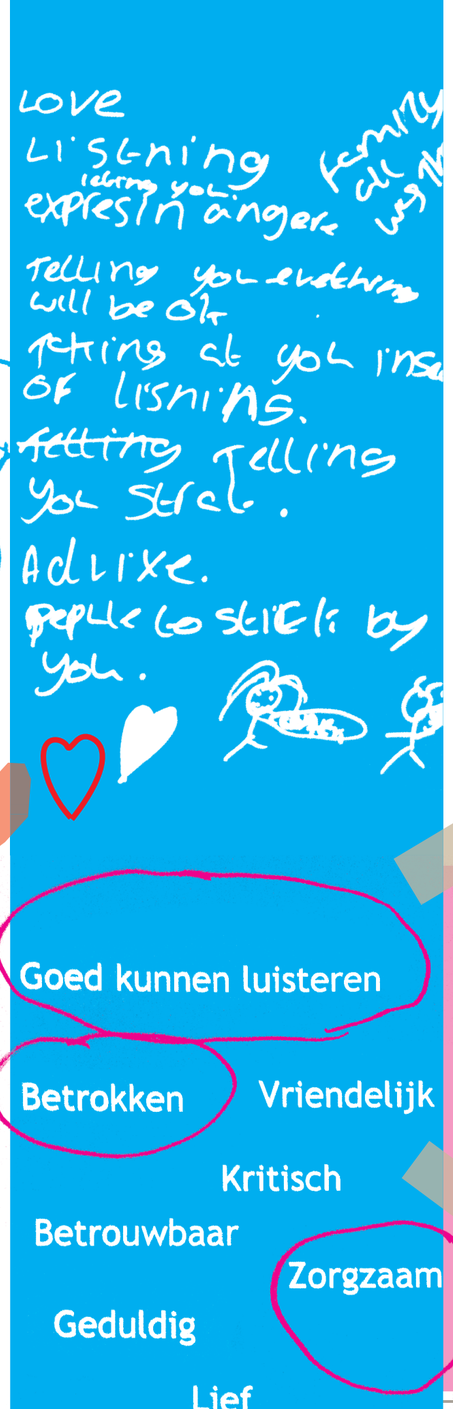


fig.3 – The child (I have an opinion too.)

When it's difficult for us and we are scared because of violence we need to know that you do their best to protect us and don't involve us in your conflicts instead. We need you to explain us what is going on. We don't want to feel guilty that you are having problems. We need to feel that we are important to you, even if you are desperate. We need to (be able to) talk to you. Please listen to what we say. Take us seriously. We will have our own opinion about what should happen. Listen to us. We don't expect you to do everything we say, but take notice of it. Explain things. Include us. Don't judge us.

AND IF SOMETIMES WE CAN HAVE A LAUGH TOGETHER, THAT'S COOL TOO.

I have more experience with this and I know better than you! You're just a kid, you don't know anything! What do you know, you only talk nonsense.



MESSAGES TO ADULTS, PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS AND POLICYMAKERS

THE REALITY IS THAT CHILDREN, THROUGH THEIR LIFE AND SURROUNDINGS, KNOW WHAT VIOLENCE IS. WE HAVE TO HELP THEM TO DEAL WITH THAT. IF WE DON'T HELP THEM THEN THEY WILL FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS WHICH CAN BE UNSAFE AND UNHEALTHY SOLUTIONS. THEY WILL EITHER FIND AN UNSOCIABLE OPTION (E.G. VIOLENCE) OR TURN INTO THEMSELVES WHICH MIGHT CAUSE PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESSES.

THIS IS WHAT THEY SHARED WITH US DURING OUR CONVERSATIONS:

TO THE PARENTS

CHILDREN SAY THAT OFTEN WHEN THERE IS A DIFFICULT SITUATION AT HOME PARENTS ARE NOT ASKING WHAT THE CHILD WANTS AND HOW SHE/HE FEELS. CHILDREN OFTEN EXPERIENCE THAT PARENTS ARE NOT PREPARED TO LISTEN, THEY DON'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: JUST SAY IT WILL BE OK OR DIRECT IT TO SOMEONE ELSE, ANOTHER ADULT.

CHILDREN MENTIONED THAT THEY WANTED THEIR PARENTS TO HAVE EMOTIONS AND TO SHOW THEY CARE TO BE ABLE TO MANAGE THESE RATHER THAN THE CHILDREN FEELING RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR PARENT.



– Don't stick your nose here, these are adult things.
– Maria, go to your room!
– As usual!

– Let's enrol her in a math course.
– Honey, let's enrol her in a language course.
– Hey, I want an arts course!

Чуйте ни!

Listen to us!

SOME CHILDREN FELT IT IS HELPFUL FOR PARENTS TO BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM AND THEIR NEEDS IN MIND. CHILDREN WANT ADULTS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE RESPONSIBILITY AND NOT TO INVOLVE THEM IN CONFLICTS. SOMETIMES PARENT NEED HELP TO BE ABLE TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN AND NEED TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THIS. THEY WANT TO SEE THAT PARENTS ARE ABLE TO SEEK AND FIND HELP FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THEIR CHILDREN.



Who knows what will happen to me

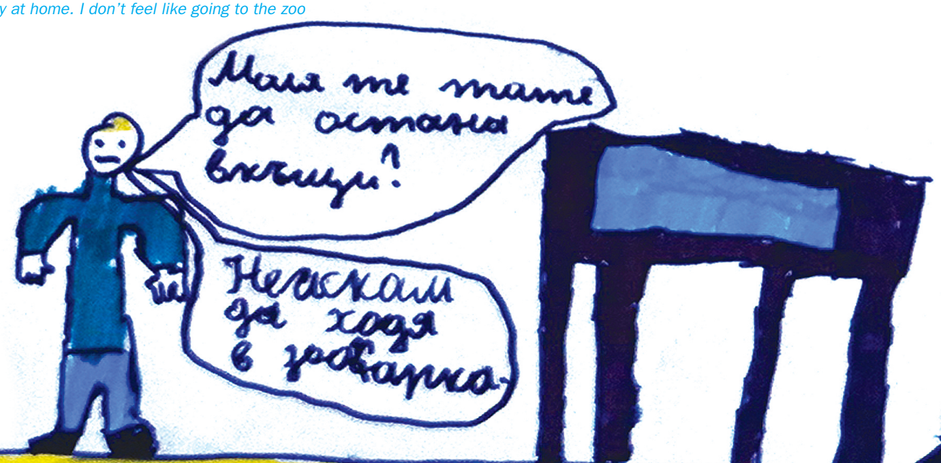
Ние имаме мнение!

Listen to us!We do have opinions!



– G-o-o-a-l! Be quiet! We're going to...!

– Daddy, let's stay at home. I don't feel like going to the zoo



CHILDREN TELL US THAT THEY OFTEN FEEL THEY HAVE TO WEAR 'MASKS' SO THAT THEY APPEAR TO BE HAPPY/COPING TO THEIR PARENTS AND TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.





TO THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION IS TO HELP CHILDREN

Children are perceptive about how helpers are, and quickly understand whether someone is interested in them. It is about what is done with them rather than to them. Children want time to develop trust rather than to immediately talk about difficult or personal issues. Children need the opportunity to be able to say if they feel comfortable with a therapist/worker or not.

Children find it very boring to 'just sit and talk'. They like to play games, write, make drawings and do other activities, to make the process more interesting.

A specialist should be open and sincere and do what is best for the children. He or she should not judge, but listen and take their lead from the child. The worker should be interested in how children are progressing, to take part in activities; the worker needs a balance between joining in and seeming to be interested in her/his own issues.

Children want opportunities to decide how they want to be involved and at what level.

Children prefer it if the worker remains consistent as this helps the trust and relationship building. Children would like workers to be available when needed.

They want to have fun as well as do some serious thinking.



TO POLICYMAKERS

IT IS ADULTS WHO USHER CHILDREN INTO THE WORLD.

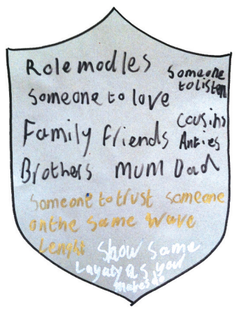
CHILDREN NEED ADULTS TO HELP THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THEIR DIFFICULTIES COME FROM AND WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES THEY CARRY.

CHILDREN NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEM AT ANY TIME.

ADULTS NEED TO BE ABLE TO LISTEN TO WHAT A CHILD SAYS AND HELP A CHILD UNDERSTAND WHAT SUPPORT THEY CAN GET.

CHILDREN NEED RESPECT, TIME AND PATIENCE FROM ADULTS IN ORDER TO BUILD TRUST. POLICY MAKERS SHOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION IS TO HELP CHILDREN, TO BE ABLE TO LISTEN, TAKE TIME AND BE PATIENT.

CHILDREN WANT TO BE INFORMED, AND WHERE POSSIBLE INVOLVED, IN WHAT HAPPENS AND THE PLANS ADULTS MAKE TO PROTECT THEM.









Listen to us!
Silence

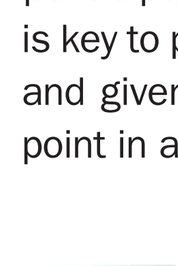
Being involved can help a child to regain some control of what is happening. It can be the start of building confidence and trust in themselves and others.

When children are not 'heard', when their opinion is not taken into account, protective measures can be perceived as controlling and can be re-traumatizing for the children.

Policy makers need to understand that child participation promotes protection and child protection is key to participation. Children's views must be invited and given due weight as an important step at every point in a child protection process.



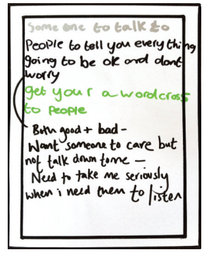


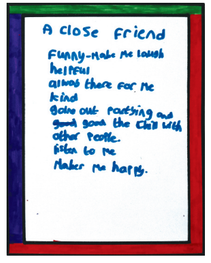












HAVING THE CHILDREN TAKE PART DOES NOT REQUIRE SPECIAL PROFESSIONAL SKILLS. IT IS NOT A COMPLICATED ACTION OR SPECIALIZED MEANS OF PROTECTION. IT IS RATHER AN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHILDREN. IT IS A CHANCE FOR CHILDREN TO BE HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD. IT GIVES THEM A FEELING THAT THEY ARE MEANINGFUL, THAT ADULTS THINK ABOUT THEM, THAT BESIDES THEIR HEALTH AND FOOD NECESSITIES, THEIR FEELINGS COUNT, THAT ADULTS ARE TOLERANT TOWARDS THE FACT THAT CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT FROM THEM, BUT UNDERSTAND THEM BECAUSE THEY USED TO BE CHILDREN ONCE.

IT IS SO SIMPLE, IT IS ABOUT SOMEONE LISTENING, EXPLAINING AND INCLUDING CHILDREN IN THE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH SITUATIONS AFFECTING THEIR LIFE.






Нищо не
вдъхновява
здраве

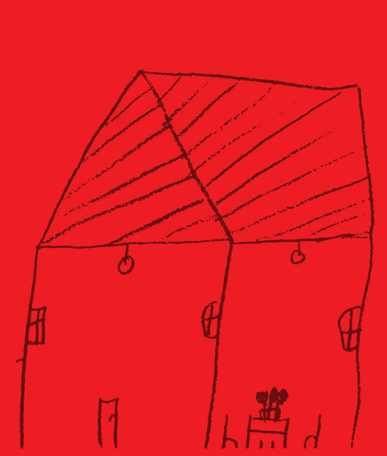
здраве


Чуйте ме!
Аз имам
мнение






Чуйте ме!
Ще ви
грея!



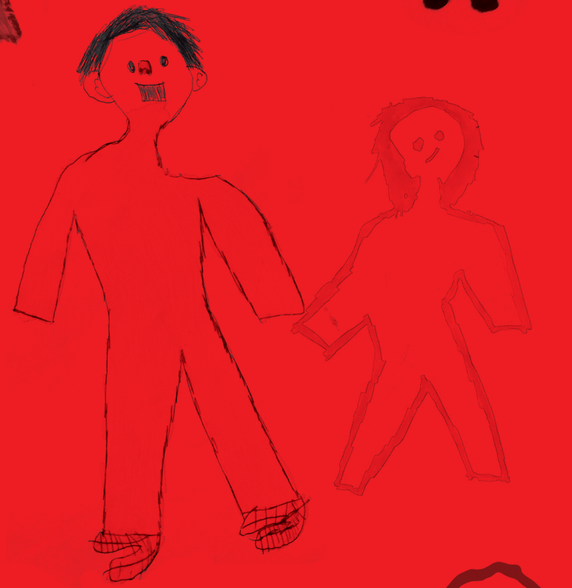



мамо
мамо










не ищем
но учим


не молхте идеи


ЧУЙТЕ
МЕ!

