

## 4.2 Mobilizing young people to raise understanding of commercial sexual exploitation of children

In the very first year of Daphne's existence (1997), ECPAT UK (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking – an international NGO with a member in the UK) received funding for a youth work pack on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The topic was 'hot' – the first World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children had taken place in Stockholm in August 1996. There was, though, much misunderstanding about CSEC, and not enough had been done to give young people a chance to work out what CSEC meant to them and how they could contribute to efforts to combat it.

### Materials produced

- The main product of the ECPAT project was a campaign pack called 'Rights, Camera, Action!' built around a 10-minute video produced by a production team of seven young people aged between 11 and 16 with guidance and support from professional film-makers and ECPAT staff. The materials were produced in English because the concept was seen as a pilot that could be replicated in other countries of Europe.
- Accompanying the video is an education-based booklet that takes the reader (or youth working group, or school class etc) through the making of the video, focusing on what the young producers learned in interviews, research and production. This way the subject of CSEC is explored in an indirect way – it is a difficult, sensitive subject and sometimes retaining a little distance is a good way to approach it.
- An important part of the campaign was a brightly coloured 'join in' postcard, that young people could send to ECPAT to receive information and join the ECPAT UK Youth Campaign. [ECPAT has subsequently become well known worldwide as a forum where young people mobilized against CSEC find a chance to meet, contribute and be listened to.]
- The final report on the project was itself constructed as a 'lessons learned' exercise for anyone who wanted to reproduce the project experience. It was translated by the project partners into Italian, French, Finnish, Swedish and Dutch.

### How the materials were put together

- The **target group** was UK youth groups, and this was decided in consultation with national project partners (schools and youth departments of development agencies and a film production charity specializing in films for young people). Adolescents are a particularly important group to mobilize against CSEC, because they are also just exploring their own sexuality, and are also a high-risk group for sexual harassment and violence. Helping them to understand CSEC is a way of increasing their self-protection instincts.

- The **message** of the video was decided by the production team, which consisted of the seven youth producers. They based the contents of the video and pack on the rights of children, including the right not to be exploited in commercial sex.
- The **format** was chosen by the youth group, who felt it was an appropriate medium to reach other youth groups. They thought that other young people would be interested in the idea of film production, and that video would be particularly appropriate because what they had heard about CSEC had come mostly via the television news.
- **Quantities produced:** The video pack was produced, promoted and distributed in the UK by the National Youth Agency, the largest publishing organization in the UK specializing in youth work materials. More than 100 orders came in for the pack. Additionally, partner Save the Children UK's education department distributed 100 packs and CAFOD distributed 25 to appropriate youth worker staff.
- **Other issues:** The project got extra publicity when it was short-listed for the One World 2000 Media Awards. If you have good publications, videos, posters or other promotional materials, consider entering them for appropriate competitions/awards. This can give your project good publicity and help to raise awareness further. And you might just win! (Don't forget to put the EC logo and credit Daphne on anything you enter...)
- The project coordinator noted that the project could have had more impact with European youth if some kind of meeting had been organized for the production team to share their experience with other young people. This did happen at an international meeting some time later, but a final youth meeting in Europe could have been built into the original project.

**ECPAT UK contact details:** the 'Rights, Camera, Action!' project was coordinated by Helen Veitch, +44-207-501-8927, Fax +44-207-738-4110, e-mail [ecpatuk@antislavery.org](mailto:ecpatuk@antislavery.org).

### A few comments

- Because the topic of CSEC is particularly sensitive and difficult to deal with, it is perhaps not surprising that the young people chose to focus mostly on the exploitation of young people in other parts of the world. But it is important, too, that young people are helped to discuss the fact that CSEC also happens in Europe, probably in their home town. Helping them to come to terms with this is an important way of protecting them.

### Graphics references

#### 4.2 ECPAT Youth eye-catching sign-up card.jpg