



Inclusion without Exception

**Report on the Consultation with Children, Adolescents
and Young People in Mexico and Latin America**

**United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child
Towards General Comment No. 21
on Children in Street Situations**

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Introduction

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has promoted the implementation of a series of regional consultations to be held in different countries (Brazil, India, Belgium, Ghana, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo) with the aim of learning about the opinions of street children regarding the situation of their rights, which are recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The purpose of these consultations is to make a significant contribution to the Committee's General Comment No. 21, which is currently under development, as an advocacy tool to get Member States to respect and guarantee their rights.

For these consultations, the Committee, which is a body of independent experts, received the support of the Consortium for Street Children (CSC), an international network that, together with the Network for Children's Rights in Mexico (REDIM), held the Consultation on Children in Street Situations for the Central American Region as a children's participation mechanism that places emphasis on children's voices as a key element in their recognition as subjects of rights.

This consultation, which was held in Mexico City in the month of April, promoted the participation of several groups of street children, adolescents and young people, in addition to adult educators from different social organizations with a recognized trajectory in favor of the rights of this sector.

Beginning with its methodological design, the consultation took into consideration the specific traits of this population sector. Thus, its planning and implementation led to the conditions required for an appropriate collaboration environment that fostered dialog and an exchange of experiences and knowledge between the different groups of children participating, educators and members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, both face-to-face and online.

It is worth noting that the methodological approach focused on the Committee's interest in the opinions of the children who live or have lived on the streets in the region. This required an in-depth exploration of different areas of focus, which had to do with political rights, civil rights and basic living conditions (economic, social, cultural and environmental rights), all of it based on the recommendations included in the consultation guidance document and friendly questions provided by CSC. In this regard, it is important to mention the work previously done in the places of origin of the participants, which involved a series of activities in preparation for the consultation with a focus on knowledge of the Committee's recommendations, the implementation of peer discussion

processes, the selection of the children's representatives who would attend the consultation, and the compilation of ideas and comments expressed by the children with whom they interact in their local environment in response to children-friendly questions.

Finally, this report is structured around the contents of the consultation with street children. In order to provide substantial elements of analysis for the Committee's General Comment No. 21, we have placed emphasis on the results obtained through the identification of issues and solutions suggested in connection with the rights discussed by the children participating. A key aspect in this regard are the Conclusions of the Consultation with Children, Adolescents and Young people in Mexico and Latin America, "Inclusion without Exception", which reflect the positions, life experiences, concerns and proposals shared during the whole consultation process.



Rationale

In Latin America, it was in the 1970s that we began to see the presence of persons living on the streets. That decade witnessed a series of macroeconomic and demographic events that led to the migration of large population groups to major cities. According to ECLAC (2001:32), between 1976 and 1985, all the countries in the region experienced a shift in their economic development model that led to the dismantling of state protectionism and the end of income redistribution policies through regular social spending, a situation that, among other conflicts, resulted in migration from the countryside to the city as a widespread social phenomenon (Pérez García: 2003) and fostered the emergence of **street populations**, that is, a sector of children, adolescents, young people, adults and elderly people surviving on the streets, all of whom had to develop a street culture to survive in such a hostile environment.

For street populations, the street is not only a space where they can generate financial resources; it is also a place for socialization and the creation of emotional bonds, a social identity and cultural identification, where the street becomes both an emotional space and a place of belonging. It is for this reason that we can find persons who were born and raised and have reproduced on the streets and who, together with their social network, have created what Pérez García (2011) has defined as street families, that is, a social organization of individuals who, for different reasons, interact in the public space and create emotional bonds through their everyday interaction, the elements inherent in the street way of living and an identity resulting from social exclusion.

The members of these new family structures include street children, adolescents and families that pose a huge challenge to organizations, States and communities, which must seek inclusive and participatory alternatives to ensure the survival and development of these citizens. Baker & McKenzie law firm drafted a document about the legal framework about children's rights in Mexico, particularly about the the right to freedom of association and assembly and the right to special protection and assistance for children deprived of a family environment. (Annex 8. Baker and McKenzie Pro Bono Legal Research in Support of Mexico Consultation).

The possibility of providing inputs for the development of the first General Comment on Children in Street Situations is also an opportunity to bring attention to this population sector as part of the agenda on children's rights and influence international legislation with the aim of setting precedents for the prevention of human rights violations on a local level.

Objectives

- Listen to the experiences of children and adolescents who survive or have survived on the streets in connection with the realization of their human rights.
- Identify the actions or omissions constituting violations of the rights of children and adolescents who live and survive in the streets.
- Gather information on the different solutions suggested by children who survive or have survived in the street so that the States Signatory to the Convention can fully guarantee their rights.



Methodology

The consultation was held through the use of two different work strategies –face-to-face and online. In this section we describe the results of the face-to-face consultation, which was attended by 22 participants from El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala: 5 girls, 1 boy, 4 adolescent women, 4 male adolescents and 8 young people. (Annex 1. List of participants).

The children, adolescents and young people participating in the consultation received support and services from 11 civil society organizations engaged in the provision of social welfare services and the defense of the human rights of persons in street situations. The table and map below show the different organizations that participated in the consultation and their locations.

ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE CONSULTATION		
Organization	City/Country	Form of participation
Yolia, I.A.P.	Tlalpan, Mexico City	Face-to-face
Programa Niños de la Calle I.A.P.	Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City	Face-to-face
El Caracol A.C.	Venustiano Carranza, Mexico City	Face-to-face
EDNICA, I.A.P.	Coyoacán, Mexico City	Face-to-face
CIDES, I.A.P.	Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City	Face-to-face
JUCONI	Puebla, Puebla	Face-to-face
IPODERAC, A.C.	Atlixco, Puebla	Face-to-face
CODENI, A.C.	Guadalajara, Jalisco	Face-to-face
Canica, A.C.	Oaxaca, Oaxaca	Face-to-face
Fundación Mi Arca	Guatemala, Guatemala	Face-to-face
Viva, Juntos por la Niñez	San Salvador, El Salvador	Face-to-face
Casa Alianza Honduras	Tegucigalpa, Honduras	Online
Acción Callejera	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	Online
Fundación Alalay	La Paz, Santa Cruz, Oruro and Cochabamba, Bolivia	Online

Source: Own records, 2016

Map of organizations participating in the consultation by country



Source: Own records, 2016

Working methodologies

The methodologies followed were designed to analyze the consultation's areas of focus and groups of rights, taking into consideration the diversity of age groups, care profiles, socio-political contexts and forms of street connection.

The participants had three different profiles: 1) those who had lived on the streets without parental care and were in the process of building a life project out of the streets, 2) those who live on the streets together with their families, and 3) those who work but do not live on the streets and maintain bonds with their relatives.

The participants worked in groups, depending on their age.

- Group 1: Ages 7 through 10: 3 girls and 1 boy.
- Group 2: Ages 11 through 13: 4 girls
- Group 3: Ages 14 through 17: 2 girls and 4 boys
- Group 4: Ages 18 through 21: 7 men and 1 woman

Each individual group was assisted by three educators who were members of the methodological team and played the following roles:

a) Facilitators

They were responsible for implementing the methodologies and prompting reflection among participants. During the participants' free time, they focused on providing them with emotional support and looking after them, as well as fulfilling their recreation and nourishment needs, among others.

B) Monitors

They were responsible for producing video, audio and photographic materials during the different activities carried out, to reflect the participants' opinions and experiences.

C) Rapporteurs

They were responsible for organizing the information gathered from the different comments and reflections expressed in each group. The rapporteurs took note of the participants' comments literally and wrote their observations on the attitudes of both the participants and the members of the methodological team. This turned their reports into the main input for the final systematization of the Consultation.

d) Observers

We had the participation of the following special guests: José Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Bernard Gastaud, members of the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child; Sarah Thomas de Benítez, representative of the Consortium for Street Children; Isabel Lacalle, representative of the organization *CalleLink*, and three members of the *Baker & McKenzie* law firm. Each group had the presence of one or two observers, who had the opportunity to ask questions to the participants and made sure the participants were able to express themselves freely, without any intervention, induction or censorship by the methodological team.

Consultation contents

The methodological approaches and structure that served as a basis for the consultation were developed by taking into account the characteristics of the three different participant profiles and the “Children-Friendly Consultation Questions” document (See Annex 2). The following table shows the organization of the different questions by group of rights:

Category	Rights	Children-friendly questions suggested by the Committee
Political rights	Rights of Association and Assembly, and the Right to be Heard.	<p>Is this right respected or is it difficult for you to be on the streets with your friends? If it is difficult, why?</p> <p>What do you think would help to make sure your right to choose your friends and be with them on the streets is respected? What do you think would help to make sure your right to live with your family even if your parents live on the streets is respected?</p> <p>Do you have examples of times when you think street children should and shouldn't be able to choose their friends and be on the streets with them? In which situations do you think you or your friends should not be with your parents?</p>
Civil rights	Right to a Life Free from Violence / Sexual and Reproductive Rights / Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination, Right to Live in a Family.	<p>What are the reasons why you consider you could not be with your parents?</p> <p>What can governments do to care for children who can't live with their parents so they don't have to go to live, work or spend lots of time on the streets?</p>

Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights	Health, Food and Recreation, Right to Employment, Right to a Healthy Environment.	<p>What are the reasons why you live on the street? What would you and/or your family need to stop living on the street?</p> <p>What are the <u>best things</u> governments can do to help make sure street children and children who might go to live, work or spend lots of time on the streets have their basic needs met, including helping their families or other people supporting them?</p>
Comprehensive measures to prevent children and adolescents from developing strong street connections and support those already in street situations.		<p>What should governments do to make sure children don't have to live, work or spend lots of time on the streets? What should governments do to make sure street children's rights are respected?</p> <p>How can you tell when something governments or other organizations do is good for stopping children having to live, work or spend lots of time on the streets? How can you tell when something governments or other organizations do is good for street children?</p> <p>What are the most important things the Committee should tell governments to do to make sure street children's rights are respected?</p>

Activities by right

For each category of rights, we designed specific methodologies to identify, through a series of games and/or open-ended questions, the level of access to human rights by the participating children and adolescents. The following is a summary table of the methodologies followed.

Activity	Objectives
What you see. Why you don't see yourself.	Observe the social invisibility in which children and adolescents part of street populations survive. Prompt reflection among children, adolescents and their families around the social invisibility they experience as a result of surviving on the streets.
The fortune teller.	Identify the level of access to economic, social, cultural and environmental rights among street children.
How they see you.	Identify different forms of social representation and attitudes of public officers in response to the demand for services targeted to street children and their families.
The community.	Identify street children's organization and mutual support strategies to survive and defend their human rights in the public space.
Thematic hearing.	Identify the level of access to protection mechanisms among street children without parental care.
What do I dream of? What do I need to realize my dreams?	Develop comprehensive protection and support measures for children and adolescents in street situations or at risk of surviving in the streets.



Results of the consultation by area of focus

Civil and political rights

This group of rights included: freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, access to information and the right to be heard.

The methodological team found that prompting reflections around the realization and protection of these rights was particularly complicated, because the participants in the consultation do not see themselves as subjects of rights and citizens.

As far as the realization of these rights is concerned, two main issues were identified in all the working groups: 1) The constant acts of abuse and harassment by law enforcement bodies, and 2) Discrimination and stigmatization from citizens who do not live on the streets, as well as from public officers.

The groups of adolescents (12 to 17) and young people (18 to 21) participating in the consultation reported due process violations by law enforcement bodies, arbitrary detentions and unlawful use of force by law enforcement. They also made reference to the constant deprivation of their right of association and assembly in public spaces.

GROUP ONE Ages: 7 to 10	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
<i>"Police officers chase and beat us while we work cleaning windshields"</i>	
<i>"Some of my classmates won't let me play with them"</i>	
<i>"At school, we're told: 'You don't belong here'. They always kick us out of the places where we want to play".</i>	
GROUP TWO Ages: 11 to 13	
Issues identified	Solutions Suggested
<i>"People treat us like we're worth nothing; they think we're not old enough to have an opinion".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mechanisms to report police officers arresting you without a valid reason or assaulting you during the arrest. • Police should have an obligation to believe us and investigate whenever we report a crime such as drug dealing. • Police should let us work and sell our stuff wherever we want. • People should not impose limits on our freedom.
<i>Upon making reference to reporting crimes such as theft or drug dealing, "Police never believe us, or it takes them too long to do something because they think we're lying".</i>	
<i>"I was beat up by the police; they took away the products I was about to sell at the Xochimilco Main Square, and I was hit on the head with a bottle".</i>	

GROUP THREE Ages: 14 to 17	
Issues	Solutions suggested
<i>"We are not a priority to society; we are invisible".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The media should publish more articles on the situation of persons living on the streets.• Organize a peaceful protest march to make ourselves known.• Develop programs to spread information on the situation on the streets, with the participation of important people to suggest solutions.• Laws should apply equally to everyone.
<i>"The government sees us as another burden, they don't care about our situation".</i>	
<i>"Institutions are corrupt, police officers always ask for 'mordidas' to let you work in the street".¹</i>	
<i>"The human lives of the poor have no value".</i>	
GROUP FOUR Ages: 18 to 21	
<i>"Police officers will often take you to dark places to beat you up". "Police officers will kick you out of the Mexico City Zócalo".²</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be mechanisms to report misbehaving police officers.• Investigate police officers to determine if they are behaving well, if they are doing their job, and also to make sure they won't arrest innocent people.• Train police officers so they can respect people's rights and prevent them from abusing people.• Fire bad police officers.• Install more emergency buttons in streets.• People should not give you the evil eye just because you're on the street.• People should not bribe police officers to eliminate corruption.
<i>"There is a lot of discrimination, especially from teachers, at schools." "At school, that who hits the hardest is the best".</i>	
<i>"There are people who want to prohibit things that are natural, such as thinking or working".</i>	

¹ "Mordida" is Mexican slang to refer to bribes.

² The "Zócalo" is the Constitution Square, which is located in Mexico City's Historic Center, next to the National Palace and the Cathedral. It is one of Mexico's most important landmarks.

<i>"Street persons are never featured on the media"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government should abide by the Constitution.
<i>"When you approach the entrance to some places (like hotels) you're denied access".</i>	
<i>"Police will beat them up for no reason, just for getting together as a group or because of the way they dress. They say they're criminals".</i>	

Methodological Team's Observations on Political Rights

The table above shows that the participants' level of knowledge and recognition of their own rights increases with age. Adolescents and young people, on the other hand, have more clarity on what it actually means to realize their political rights compared to children.

For this reason, the methodological team believes the General Comment should stress the States' obligation to design strategies for the promotion of children's rights by designing messages targeted to children beginning in their early stages, and also taking into consideration that children living on the streets do not go to school regularly and lack access to mass media such as radio, TV, newspapers or magazines.

We also believe that strengthening the training and work of street educators through the adoption of a children's rights approach can be an effective strategy for the promotion of rights among all age groups in the population of children and young persons with street connections.

Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights (Basic living conditions)

GROUP ONE Ages: 7 to 10	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
<i>"There are street children who die, while others survive, because they don't have the money to pay for a hospital"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install trash cans everywhere. • Build playgrounds in parks and abandoned places. • Open more soup kitchens for the poor. • Persons in a street situation should not be banned from selling their products on the streets. • Selling <i>activo</i>³ to children should be prohibited. • Street cleaning crews should be paid more. • The government should make sure cars don't pollute and garbage is not burned, although this is done in small towns. • There should be places for the distribution of free clothes and more soup kitchens. • We should be allowed to sell wherever we want. • These should be cleaning crews everywhere. • Trees should be pruned.
<i>"I once got cut by a nail and they didn't take me to the doctor, but the wound healed itself. So when we get sick, we just wait until we recover".</i>	
<i>Upon referring to the government, "They lie, because the other day I talked on the microphone and asked for a decent house, but I didn't get anything. I went to the Senate with my Mom and they promised they would give us food and everything. I went to the place they said, but they didn't give me anything".</i>	
<i>"The government won't do anything; they promised they would give away blankets and provide shelter for street children, and all I see are more and more people on the streets every day".</i>	

³ Activo refers to either glue or thinner bought for sniffing. These are the drugs most commonly used by street populations and poor young people.

GROUP TWO Ages: 11-13	
Issues identified	Solutions Suggested
<i>"People take advantage of our situation, jobs are really tough, and we don't have the time to do what we really like".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create decent part-time jobs for us. • Implement measures to make sure people won't abuse our bodies or our time. • Open community kitchens where free food is distributed. • Parents should not leave their children alone and should pay more attention to them. • Establish appropriate working schedules for children. • Implement a mechanism to report workplaces with excessive working hours. • Build houses for single parents. • Everybody should be treated equally; people should not be discriminated against just because they are poor. • Parks should have more green areas, and playground equipment in poor condition should be fixed. • Open daycare centers at workplaces so that children won't have to spend lots of time on the streets. • Make mobile medical care units available. • Build more hospitals and make more drugs available. • Men should not get too close to women. There should be separate subway cars for married, divorced, single and separated people, and another for children that is fun, so that children can be relaxed. • Hospital employees shouldn't get paid if they are rude. The government should install complaint boxes and CCTV cameras. Doctors shouldn't be rude; don't pay them. • Houses should be repaired so people can have better living conditions.
<i>"There are no safe places to play on the street".</i>	
<i>"Money is not enough to survive".</i>	
<i>"Subway tunnels are not well lit; there should be more subway cars and special seats for babies, because women have to carry their children".</i>	

GROUP THREE Ages: 14 to 17	
Issues identified	Solutions Suggested
<i>“You don’t eat well and are malnourished”.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create more government institutions to support children in street situations through housing, education and food.• People and the government should value the lives of the poor.• Grant full scholarships.• Provide psychological counseling and open a mental health center for people living on the streets.• Support to improve housing and cheaper rents.
<i>“You must wear raggedy clothes or clothes that don’t fit”.</i>	
<i>“There are few opportunities to work or go to school”.</i>	
<i>“Most of the kids who live on the streets don’ know their rights, and that’s the reason why they’re rude”.</i>	
<i>“The rights to food, education and housing are not enforced”.</i>	
<i>“Children must work because their families need it”.</i>	
GROUP FOUR Ages: 18 to 21	
<i>“Sometimes you need to make an appointment to get care; you need an appointment even if you go to the emergency room. Sometimes it’s not that people don’t care; it’s just that it’s too crowded”.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fathers should be forced to fulfill their responsibilities towards their children so they won’t abandon women once they get pregnant.• Justice is key for the fair distribution of tasks.• The government should conduct surveys to figure out what they can do with all the resources available.• If this gets to the President, I would ask him, ‘Why do you continue to pay pensions to former Presidents?’ Instead, that money should be invested to improve services and
<i>“There are no drugs available, people are prescribed things even if they won’t cure them”.</i>	
<i>“At school, children believe one father is better than another just because he makes more money”.</i>	
<i>“There are indigenous communities where kids must walk for 2 or 3 hours to go to school”.</i> <i>“Not all schools are the same; some of them</i>	

<i>support children with disabilities. Regular schools don't have the capacity to do that mainly because of bullying".</i>	<p>create more jobs. Why are there so many people cleaning windshields? Maybe because they had problems in the past.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People requiring medical care should be referred to another hospital. • Build more hospitals, improve facilities and have more order. • Have more qualified staff to provide better services to people. • Instead of building more orphanages, the government should build more leisure and training centers. • They should not only talk, they should enforce rights.
<i>"A man should not abandon a pregnant woman. There should be justice; they should be held responsible".</i>	
<i>I was in jail for 8 months and I saw 2 persons die due to lack of care. Even though they saw they were ill, they were not allowed to leave the prison".</i>	
<i>"Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few. Wealth should be equal and should not end up in the hands of the Government".</i>	
<i>"If there is a pothole, they'll only fix it if it's really deep; if it's only a small pothole, they don't care".</i>	
<i>"There is no democracy in the government".</i>	
<i>"Unfortunately, we live in a country where the way they treat you is based on your looks".</i>	
<i>"You can have as many shelters as you want, but if we're not productive, we won't be able to change anything".</i>	

Methodological team's observations on living conditions:

In the case of group one, one of the specific proposals for the protection of this group of rights had to do with environmental rights. When asked about government actions to guarantee rights such as education, housing or health, most of them were skeptical. The participants in this group made multiple references to the constant violations of the right to health, particularly access to services. They also talked about cases of deaths involving children due to lack of medical care, because they didn't have any money.

Groups 2, 3 and 4 made reference to the right to decent work and the need for training programs to expand access to employment. The methodological team believes it is important to take these comments into consideration, because in countries like Mexico, public policies have typically focused on prohibiting child labor and raising the minimum working age. And far from creating better living conditions, these measures could

exacerbate the precarization of working conditions and young people's involvement in criminal activities, which generate huge profits through child labor exploitation.

Groups 3 and 4 highlighted the importance of establishing mechanisms to allow mothers and fathers to exercise parenthood together and prevent domestic violence, which would also guarantee the exercise of other rights.



Special Protection Measures⁴

GROUP ONE Ages: 7 to 10	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
<i>"On the streets, children suffer; they do drugs and then give us a "calzón chino"⁵.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should not be separated from their families. • Their rights should not be violated. • We would ask for decent housing and to never be separated from our families.
<i>"There are children who become the victims of rape; women do drugs and then men want to abuse them".</i>	
<i>"There are women who do drugs, and then they get arrested".</i>	
<i>"There are children who are abandoned or sent to a boarding school by their parents because they don't love them. Sometimes they are even abandoned at landfills".</i>	
<i>"Sometimes they experience even more suffering in shelters than on the streets, because they're not with their families". Parents are sometimes lied to and their children are taken to shelters".</i>	
<i>"The DIF⁶ is an orphanage where children can play and have fun".</i>	
<i>"The DIF is a source of support. I was in one of them together with my sister, and it took my Mom one month to get us out of there".</i>	
<i>"The DIF is nothing but a house where children are mistreated and there is no hot water".</i>	
<i>"I don't like to live in shelters".</i>	

⁴ We were unable to gather information on this topic from Group 3.

⁵ A wedgie, an uncomfortable tightening of the underpants between the buttocks, typically produced when someone pulls the underpants up, thus hurting children's genitals.

⁶ DIF: Integral Family Development System, a body in charge of social welfare services in Mexico.

GROUP TWO Ages: 11 to 13	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
<i>"They discriminate against you just because you're peddling on the streets".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People mistreating children in shelters should be fired, because they were not hired to mistreat others, but to care for them.
<i>On the DIF: "When I was there, I was told my friend's Mom did drugs and that's the reason why my friend was there. Her Mom was given one week to recover, but she never came back".</i>	
<i>"It's a place where children are mistreated. They always tell me that if I continue to misbehave I will be sent there".</i>	
GROUP FOUR Ages: 18 to 21	
<i>"If a child is sent out to work just to benefit his parents, that's wrong, but if the child is sent out to work to support the family, then it's OK".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those shelters that abuse children should be closed, and good shelters should be improved. Children should be treated with respect, because if children receive love, that's the way they will be when they grow up.• Persons in charge of shelters should receive training so they can learn how to deal with things without resorting to violence.• Judges and the authorities responsible for separating parents from their children should study, observe and analyze cases. Not all cases are the same; those who have not been exposed to high levels of violence should be treated differently from those who have been exposed to a lot of violence.• Families should also have access to family therapy.• The State should provide therapy for parents with addictions so they can be rehabilitated and take care of their
<i>"A child can be admitted to a DIF shelter when: There is violence in the family, parents are about to abandon a child, the father is an alcoholic, there is sexual abuse or parents are in a street situation. Parents force children to work at a very early age. Also in cases of divorce, when parents separate. Children are rejected by their families."</i>	
<i>"There is physical or emotional abuse. Emotionally, you don't feel well. Our body reacts to what we feel. If you do well, you'll feel well, and if things go bad, then you'll feel bad".</i>	
<i>"Some children don't have any fun because they have to work. They can only leave once they finish working".</i>	

<i>The more the time passes and the more you do drugs, the more difficult it is to leave them.</i>	children.
<i>"In Guatemala, there is this orphanage known as "El Cholo", but there are orphanages where they treat you equally bad. If you are sent to a shelter, you're supposed to be there to be better off, but if someone other than your Dad will beat you up, then you'd better stay home".</i>	
<i>"The DIF is good, but it's like a prison, because you cannot go to school".</i>	

Paradigmatic cases that highlight issues where special protection is required

Issues	Testimony
Human trafficking and disappearances	"A friend of mine told me that, the other day, she was walking down the street with her cousin, and a man began following them. They ran off, but just around the corner, there was a van; they were picked up and then her Mom received a call telling her they had been kidnapped. My friend told me they were raped and forced into prostitution, and the man was a police officer. They were only found two years later".
Unaccompanied Migrant Children	"Her mother migrated to the US when she was 6 due to domestic violence and poverty. She was left with her grandmother, but since her grandmother was unable to provide for her, the girl made the decision to travel to the United States in an attempt to reunite with her mother. Along the way, she was abducted by an organized crime group. After she was rescued from this group, where she became the victim of sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation, she was referred to a shelter run by an NGO, where she now lives." Karen, 12, Honduran
Separation from the Family due to Poverty	"My siblings were taken away from my Mom. One day, police came and told her they had a DIF order and they were taken away".

	Joan, 7 “My siblings were taken away from my Mom and they were taken to the DIF” Vanessa, 10 años
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Methodological Team’s Observations on Special Protection Measures:

One of the institutions currently providing special protection to street populations in Mexico is the DIF. Everybody knows the DIF as an institution, either directly or indirectly, and their opinions vary. The methodological team believes the reason behind these different perceptions and experiences is that DIF shelters do not have care standards. Their service protocols and the quality of their services are subject to the willingness of their top-level officers. This means the country lacks an efficient mechanism to evaluate and monitor their operation. This institutional weakness is the reason for multiple rights violations at these centers.

Integral care and prevention measures for street children

GROUP ONE Ages: 7-10	
Issue	Solutions Suggested
As regards their interaction with neighbors, most of the children mentioned their neighbors saw them with fear, because they were afraid they would break into their homes to steal from them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should have a home so we won’t have to sleep in the street. • My Mom should have a well-paid job. • Have a house and a better school.
They don’t have a home and they don’t go to school.	

GROUP TWO Ages: 11 to 13	
<i>"Children feel sad; they lose interest in going to school".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They should see us as normal persons, just like everybody else.● Mothers selling on the streets should get scholarships.● The government should allow people to sell on the streets, because without those jobs we wouldn't be able to eat. People selling candy on the street should not get their candies confiscated.● Improve rural and city schools.● Parents should have access to decent employment.
<i>Teachers didn't help street children. They are afraid of being discriminated against and that's why they don't go back.</i>	
<i>"There are people who discriminate because they don't have an education".</i>	
<i>At school, "if your mother or father don't show up, you'll be expelled".</i>	
GROUP THREE Ages: 14 to 17	
<i>"Often times, parents are not prepared to be parents, they just don't know how to do it".</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create many forms of support to children in street situations.● Allocate resources to social welfare programs.● Support for drug abuse prevention.● Vocational training.● Academic support.● Mental health and academic support.● Jobs for parents.● Strengthen family bonds and educate and/or support parents.● Provide more sexual and family planning education.
Common drug and alcohol use.	
<i>"There are no good jobs for mothers".</i>	
GROUP FOUR Ages: 18 to 21	
The issues identified in this section were the same as those expressed in other activities and, therefore, the participants in the group didn't want to repeat them. Instead, they focused on suggesting solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Have a country without violence or corruption.● Crime and discrimination against the poor should not exist. Poor people should get help, because they don't have access to hospitals, so they can have what they need, especially those living in the mountains.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be more drug rehab centers. • Organize trades workshops. Also, we should be treated equally. • The government should invest in young people.
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Methodological team's observations on prevention and care for children and young people in street situations.

The proposals in this section are really interesting, considering they reveal an in-depth reflection process among participants in connection with the protection and guarantee of, and respect for, their rights.

We believe attention should be paid to the repeated references and proposals that seek to address structural problems. In this section, the youths participating stressed the importance of creating decent employment opportunities, vocational training opportunities to enter the job market, access to decent housing, quality education free from all forms of violence and discrimination, the creation of mechanisms for a more equitable distribution of wealth, and even actions to address structural issues such as impunity and corruption, as part of support and prevention actions targeted to the population surviving in the streets.



Methodological Team's Final Remarks



The members of the methodological team want to express their concern over the repeated references to acts of abuse by police experienced by the participants, as well as the lack of health and education services. We believe this situation highlights the States' weaknesses and possible ignorance when it comes to the development of public policies that allow public officers to acknowledge and take responsibility from the standpoint of respect for, and the protection of, their human rights.

All the groups made reference to the need for actions to strengthen family bonds and provide mental health care as preventive measures for children and young people in street situations. The actions suggested included support to help parents adopt child-rearing practices based on care and respect, developing mechanisms to promote and ensure an equitable division of household chores and upkeep among guardians and parents, and psychosocial support to prevent gender-based violence in households.

The widespread use of institutionalization as a "protection measure" is another common issue identified in the participating countries. In this regard, the methodological team wants to stress that this should be the last resort for this population group. Poverty should not be a justification for the implementation of these measures. States should exhaust all options available to support families both financially and psychosocially.

In order to deal with those situations where keeping families together is not an option and institutionalization is required as a measure to guarantee the best interests of the child, it will be necessary to create the conditions to make sure that children are not re-victimized

at these centers. Having duly trained staff members who understand the reasons behind the strong connections to life in the street is essential to the operation of these centers.

The right to decent work, coupled with training processes, is another common concern identified among participants. The participants made reference to the importance of creating decent work opportunities so that children, adolescents and young people with a street connection can develop a life project out of the streets. In the case of this right, they also referred to the need for training programs and well-paid jobs with social security benefits for their parents as a preventive measure to avoid the street situation.

Finally, the right to decent housing is a key condition for the restitution of the rights of children and adolescents in street situations. Realizing this right will also guarantee the right to live in a family in a comprehensive manner.

Minimum measures to guarantee the protection of, and respect for, the rights of Street Children and Adolescents

A review of the different issues discussed and solutions suggested during the consultation led the methodological team to identify seven issues that demand urgent public policies for their solution, including a set of minimum conditions for the respect for, and the guarantee and restitution of, children's rights that allow for the construction of a life project out of the streets. These measures are cross-cutting to the four guiding principles of the Convention.



No.	Issues	Solutions Suggested	Guiding Principle
1	<i>"People treat us like we're worth nothing; they think we're not old enough to have an opinion"</i>	Develop mechanisms to report police officers arresting you without a valid reason or assaulting you during the arrest. Investigate police officers to determine if they are behaving well, if they are doing their job, and also to make sure they won't arrest innocent people	Participation / Best Interests
2	<i>"I was beat up by the police; they took away the products I was about to sell at the Xochimilco Main Square, and I was hit on the head with a bottle"</i>	Police shouldn't prevent us from selling or working.	Non-discrimination
3	<i>"Street persons are never featured on the media". "We are rejected by society; they say people living on the streets are a cancer to society. When they see you all dirty or high on drugs, they say you're the worst".</i>	Develop programs to spread information on the situation on the streets with the participation of important people to propose solutions.	Non-discrimination
4	<i>"There are street children who die, while others survive, because they don't have the money to pay for a hospital"</i>	"Open more soup kitchens for the poor"	Survival and Development
5	<i>"There is a lot of discrimination, especially from teachers, at schools. At school, that who hits the hardest is the best". "I would like for people who have never lived on the streets to see us as persons"</i>	We would like for people to see us as equals, with interests just like theirs.	Non-discrimination

	<i>with pride, like normal people”.</i>		
6	<p>“I need a home and a school, and my Mom should have a well-paid job. I need a clean place”.</p> <p>“Some institutions will help us. But some others are more like prisons, instead of shelters.</p>	<p>“Scholarships so we can have access to good education”.</p> <p>More government agencies dedicated to helping children (through housing services, food, education, etc.).</p> <p>To value the life of the poor.</p> <p>A Mental Health Center, food handouts, a government agency to improve houses.</p>	Survival and Development
7	“Gangs recruit children to sell drugs”.	“Drugs should not be sold to children”.	Best Interests

Online working session

In order to get to know the experiences and opinions of those children and adolescents who were unable to attend the consultation, on Tuesday April 5th we held an online session where the participants in Mexico were able to share their experiences with their peers in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Honduras.

A description of the methodology followed for this session can be found on *Annex 5. Online Session Methodology*.



COUNTRY: BOLIVIA Organization: Network for the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Street Situations Participants by City: La Paz: Joel Sanjines Berdeja, 18. Santacruz: Angélica Peña, 16, and Juan José Triveño, 16. Oruro: Dubeyza Ignacion Marca, 18. Cochabamba: Cristian Adrian Reynada Calicho, 20.	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
Hunger (bad or poor nourishment), cold. High level of drug or substance abuse. Constant exposure to hazards and death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase opportunities to access education. Technical schools. • Decent working conditions for parents of children living in the streets. • Psychological support for parents. • Prevention and care to treat addictions both for adults (parents) and children. • Special rehab facilities for children in street situations. • “We should receive support through rehab centers”. • Provide housing for children in street situations.
Discrimination based on their condition and situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We should all be equal before the law”. • “Peace for my friends who are on the streets”. • “Laws should be enforced”.
COUNTRY: HONDURAS Organization: Casa Alianza Honduras Participants: Nelson Menocal, 16 , and Alexander Zaldivar, 15.	
Issues identified	Solutions Suggested
The State fails to provide opportunities for families, parents, young people and children in street situations. “The State violates rights”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee the right to protection.
“Irresponsible parents who don’t give advice, don’t help and don’t care”.	
“The street is not a space to survive”.	

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Organization: <i>Acción Callejera</i> Participants: Robinson Martínez, 21, and Frank Junior Lagares, 18 .	
Issues	Solutions Suggested
Police brutality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee the right to food and education. • Provide more opportunities to live better. • Have a name, an identity, and opportunities for recreation and spend time with our peers, the family. • The right to have a home and to be loved. • To not be discriminated.
Many children working or living in the streets.	
Children don't know, or don't have access to, their rights.	
Children and young people are constantly mistreated, humiliated and discriminated against.	
COUNTRY: MEXICO	
<i>"Money is never enough".</i>	<i>Respect for their rights "Our rights should be respected all over the world and also in Mexico".</i> <i>"Laws should not only be on paper, they should be enforced".</i> Increase the number of shelters for children in street situations. <i>"It is important to change the way people think about us, we value what we earn, we feel proud of ourselves".</i> <i>"Raise our voice and express our feelings".</i>
<i>"Drug abuse".</i>	
Constant violence in their communities.	
Police brutality.	
<i>"Attitudes of rejection and discrimination by society. They don't value your work; police officers will beat you up just because they think you're a criminal".</i>	
Physical and emotional abuse in different areas.	
<i>"Rejection from your own family"</i>	

Annexes

- Annex 1. List of Participants
- Annex 2. Methodological Approach
- Annex 3. Reports by Group of Rights
- Annex 4. List of Consultation Audiovisual Materials
- Annex 5. Online Session Methodology
- Annex 6. Online Session Report
- Annex 7. Systematization of Consultations and Pre-consultations held in the Dominican Republic, Bolivia and Honduras.
- Annex 8. Baker and McKenzie Pro Bono Legal Research in Support of Mexico Consultation
- Annex 9. Final Declaration on the Consultation with Children, Adolescents and Young People in Mexico and Latin America, “Inclusion without Exception”