VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL CLEANSING AGAINST STREET POPULATIONS (INCLUDING VIOLENCE IN THE HOME THAT MIGHT HAVE DRIVEN THEM TO THE STREET)

VERÓNICA MÜLLER (ASSOCIAÇÃO DE EDUCADORES SOCIAIS DE MARINGÁ)

Policy recommendations

Integrated policies must exist in relation to education, security, culture, social services, health, sport, leisure and human rights, which promote systems that offer complete services within the community environment. These systems should include provisions for spaces, formal training, salaries, materials and training for the required professionals.

The policies should assume the premise that children and adolescents are subjects of education and rights, and live in a street culture which differs from other people’s values and that they have their own dreams, survival strategies, fear, threats, and in many cases, a history of violence from adults. As such, children and adolescents of the streets should not only be reviewed within the theme of social assistance. There are primarily the focus of education and of the entire system for the guarantee of rights.

• Justice systems: What should justice systems that interact with children and youth in street-situations look like? What due process should be in place? How does a state ensure that children and youth have access to justice?

• Justice systems should be composed by professional teams, which consist of professional outreach workers, educators and social workers, who can establish a bond with the child living in the street situation and can preform the role of mediator and as a translator of the street culture for the justice culture and vice-versa.

• The legal processes must be agile and acompanied by civil organisations, as well as by the family and primary carers.

• Services must be offered within the community environment, simplified, with the focus not of punishment but of restoration.

• The government must promote the teaching of rights as well as a network of community services in schools and within all institutions, through the provision of content for lessons and graphic materials exhibited within the city and via the internet, so that justice systems are strengthened by prior knowledge.
Legal Definitions: What legal definitions should be used within statutes and policies?

- States, in all of their decisions must consider human rights principles and child rights principles and each country must have their own legislation, for example, the statute for the child and adolescent in Brazil, which forms the basis for judicial decisions.

- The concept to be used is the understanding that the child and adolescent are subjects of rights and have the opportunity to be heard in a dignified and just form, and that in the first place they should be cared for as the victim and not punished as the victimizer. Solutions should be reached by putting people in contact, through dialogue and agreements.

- Furthermore, states must have policies that protect children and adolescents as witnesses of crimes.

Monitoring: How should states monitor and keep track of their progress on this particular topic?

- States should encourage popular control initiatives for the existence of observations that record activities carried out and make statistics and other data transparent, always preserving the names of the people involved.

Research: Might there be a benefit to research within your particular topic? If so, what research might be helpful?

- We should prioritise the development of a broad and detailed mapping of the street situation within cities, so that data exists for countries and continents. To achieve this, there must be actions undertaken by research groups and other organisations which have already undertaken work in this area within universities, together with movements and social organisations.

- It’s important to observe that aside from the different characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, geographical origin, we must recognize that factors could be prevalent, for example if the relationship of the child with the street is motivated by family or institutional violence, or if the motives of survival are connected to their family situation or in some cases, by the imposition of traffickers and other such associated groups.

Services: What services should street-connected children and youth have access to within this substantive area? What should these services look like?

Public policies must promote that children and adolescents have access to bathrooms, bedrooms, food and leisure activities (art, sport, library, film, music, dance, other). Houses with social educators with professional
qualifications, with few rules and in which there is always the opportunity to return. On this line, there should also be a house which signifies a “second stage” where the rules are more advanced. This house should also be accompanied by a social educator with a professional qualification.

The states should force existing centers to act as reference points for children and adolescents to access information and ask for help to ensure they feel protected.

Another necessary service in large centers is the existence of their own school, such as the example of the EPA School in Porto Alegre, which attracts street connected children and adolescents through their own methodology which respects the time and culture of this population whilst at the same time enabling them to evolve into great scholars.

Stakeholder collaboration: What stakeholders should be engaged and involved to ensure that the rights of street-connected children and youth are protected? In what ways do state and local governments need to work together to implement these rights?

The policies must forecast help in all instances from government for local actions. These should form collective work within organizations and local leaderships, as well as by utilizing the regional knowledge of the university.

Systems: What systems should be in place to ensure that the rights of street-connected children and youth are protected? What should states consider when designing any new system?

States must foresee that the social educator is a part of the entire national education system. Frequently the education system is understood to only exist in our understanding as the school and its teachers.

The social educator exists throughout the world and does not always operate formally in various countries. It is necessary to assume in the national education system two types of education, the school and the “social” and that we should foresee both as two spaces, with materials, professional qualifications, and salaries.

Training: Should any training be implemented for stakeholders to ensure the protection of rights? What should that training look like or what topics should be covered?

The state must foresee the need for many social educators within the street, who can be in contact in children and adolescents, offering activities and education about their rights. Aside from this, all professional groups of any area (political, judicial, teaching, medical, other) must have the appropriate training regarding psychological, biological, anthropological social, legal and technical aspects which exist within this population.
Youth Voice

- Cities should, through the use of their social educators, listen to the claims of the children and adolescents. This is the way to arrive at a profound truth as to what they have to say, and via playful and political activities.

- The project “Projeto Brincadeiras’ (Play project) with children in street situations of Maringa is an example of a university/community project which has works with children and adolescents for 20 years within a political formation which reaches out to them via a playful/pedagogical/political methodology and develops a political consciousness and of the collective organisation for problem solving and the realisation of dreams.

- Local governments must assume a pact as a priority for children and youth (example of Pontevedra in Spain and some cities in Italy) and encourage communities to meet and discuss community issues together with the child and adolescents; school clubs should exist and have weight in decisions; schools should assume in their methods the listening of the child and the adolescent; advocates and judges of children and adolescents should be required to listen to them; child-juvenile rights associations and universities should contemplate the decisions of children and listen to them.

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