CO-RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN TO EXPLORE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE

What is it? This project deploys RErights.org – a child online consultation platform first developed by Western Sydney University (WSU), in partnership with UNICEF and the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard – to conduct co-research with children to explore their experiences and perceptions of violence in the context of COVID-19. The project uses a unique, participatory, workshop-based methodology that has been used to gather insights with children about their rights in over seventy countries. Representatives of child-facing organisations are trained to implement online workshops with children in-country, with technical support from a WSU team. The project builds research capacity in partner organisations, enhances their capacity to work with children to generate data, and channels children’s insights into policy and practice outcomes.

What challenge does it solve? Generating data about children’s experiences of violence is notoriously difficult under any circumstance, but especially in a historic moment characterised by physical distancing and unprecedented disruptions to everyday life. And yet, the challenges presented by current conditions – including disturbances to children’s routines, support networks and the institutions that shape their lives, as well as heightened pressures on families – potentially expose children to increased likelihood of experiencing violence. Only by working closely with children and centring their insights in efforts to counteract violence against them can we understand the challenges they experience and develop truly effective responses to them. Explorations of children’s experiences of violence and safety will align with INSPIRE indicators and the Child-Centred Indicators for Violence Prevention (CCIVP), which have been developed by WSU and a range of partners in the Philippines and the Global Partnership to End Violence. This will ensure that, at a time of limited resources and capacity, children’s insights can augment and help to explain data gathered using more conventional methods and contribute to national data gathering efforts related to meeting the violence reduction targets set out in the SDGs.

How is it done? The process is approximately four months in duration and is implemented by a research team, in partnership with local child-facing organisations.

1. **Design:** Drawing on the INSPIRE framework and the CCVIP, the project team works with key project stakeholders to identify priorities and design the data collection tools for understanding children’s experiences of violence, particularly as they are inflected by COVID-19. A key priority is to ensure that data collection processes complement and augment more conventional monitoring and reporting efforts relating to children’s rights in the field of violence prevention and more broadly.

2. **Facilitator training and workshop implementation:** The project team then designs a detailed facilitators manual and trains (via webinar) in-country facilitators (training in English; workshop delivery in language that children speak), who then implement workshops with children age 10-18.

3. **Co-analysis and generation of project outputs:** Workshops generate rich and diverse forms of data, including text, photos, drawings, collage and maps. This data is co-analysed by the research team and participating organisations, thereby enhancing organisational capacity for data generation and analysis. Project outputs are presented in succinct project reports, accompanied by relevant infographics. Child-friendly versions of all project outputs are shared with child participants and other children.