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| Mr. Asako Hattori United Nations Office at Geneva, CH 1211 Geneva Switzerland |  |
| Submission for the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 35/10 of the Human Rights Council   | 18th October 2017 |

Dear Mr. Hattori,

please find below the input for the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 35/10 of the Human Rights Council from the RheinMain University of Applied Sciences in Germany.

Kind regards





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1. What are the concrete steps your Government or your organization has taken, at normative, institutional and programme levels, to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate violence against women and girls?

At the RheinMain University Social Work students can enrol at *MamMut* (*Mitmachen macht Mut. Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt*, a training established in Germany in 2015 as a cooperation with the German Society for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ] GmbH in Ecuador. The training is based on a programme which started in 2012 in Latin America by the GIZ and its Regional Project entitled *Fighting Violence against Women in Latin America* (*ComVoMujer*). The programme in Latin America was intended to promote reflection on gender stereotypes and unequal based relationships. However, in Germany the programme has been adapted as well as translated to go beyond the initial scope and to highlight a child rights-oriented participatory approach which contributes to raise awareness about gender-specific and intergenerational violence. *MamMut* is conform with the Art 13 of the Istanbul Convention as it is an educational programme that focus on primary prevention of violence against women, oriented to raise general public’s attention and it is focused on children.

The training *MamMut* emphasises that children are right holders whose rights shall be protected under the UN CRC, namely under Art. 19, 12, 28 and 13 of the UN CRC. During the conduction of the training two children become engage to critically question other children about their rights. With this, children become empowered to know more about children’s rights and make them a reality.

*MamMut* intends to tackle causes of gender inequality by training future social workers to work with children aged 6 to 9 with non-formal education tools. It uses child rights-oriented participatory and is based on the (de) constructivist theory grounded on the anti-bias approach.

The training is based on three approaches that drive girls and boys to engage in constructive and deconstructive learning processes: the motivation to play together, to learn through experience, and to participate in identity-related work that values the child and others and is also associated with a strong sense of justice. During the training children develop a critical thinking on issues concerning prejudices and traditional inequalities among the girls and boys so that they are empowered to resist them and become capacitated to stand up to injustice and violence.

The training is fourfold. Firstly, it aims to promote reflection about mechanisms that lead to violent, discriminatory, and unequal interpersonal dynamics based on a person’s gender. This reflection is based on a joint examination of the prevalent attitudes and behavioural norms, perceptions, ideas, and assumptions that come from the everyday lives of children. The training helps to empower children to build respectful, equitable social relationships. Furthermore, it aims to ensure that the assessment of violence against women as a fundamental injustice becomes firmly rooted in those children attending the training.

Thirdly it aims to encourage children to confide if they witness violence between their parents and create an environment in which children feel safe and can report these incidents with the assurance that the information will be handle with care by the trainers. Trainers who are confronted with these incidents provide information on contact persons, sources of support, and post-gender based violence care. And finally, it aims to strengthening the child as a “valuable” being, self-confident and assertive. This empowerment is an important basis for prevention. Through a participative dialogue in which children are appreciated, understood and consistently involved their rights are put forward. Children's perspectives and children's interests are required as an integral part of the child's well-being. Their right to be heard in all areas regarding their life is a fundamental requirement assigned by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The training includes 5 successive stages in which ideally groups of 20 to 30 children participate. Experience has demonstrated that even larger groups (n=100) can be trained. On the first stage children understand the dynamics of gender specific violence and their consequences as well as the myths and stereotypes that underlie beneath. On the second stage children can observe and reflect on the damages caused by gender specific violence using illustrations. On the third stage the focus is on strengthening self-esteem and self-awareness as children with a healthy self-esteem are proved to be able to exercise and assert their rights and needs better. On the fourth stage children become aware of the need to seek help and the joint task of breaking through the cycle of violence. The intention here is to reinforce a sense of solidarity. At the end, the newly learned information and knowledge are consolidated, and children are given an opportunity to express their rejection of violence against women collectively by putting up together posters and banners exposing their opinions on the matter. As a child rights oriented training the participation of children during this cycle is of great importance, that is why in an ideal group of 20 children, two children, follow critically the cycle and question their peers about their rights as described at the UN CRC.

Although on a global level the programme was developed to reach children aged 6 to 9, it has already been promoted amongst children aged 5 to 11, including children with special needs. Since 2012 the programme reached more than 8.500 children in 5 countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru – through *ComVoMujer -* and in Germany - through *MamMut-*) and over 900 Professionals working with children.

The department of Social Work at RheinMain University will continue to implement *MamMut* over the next coming years. The training has been translated into English with further planning to translate it into more languages trained to guarantee an equal treatment between men and women and will play an important role on future generations as those entrusted as learners will become actors in the change of the children's lives.

1. What are the challenges that your Government or your organization faces, at normative, institutional programme levels, in engaging men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in particular efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviors that underlie and perpetuate violence against women and girls?

The greatest challenge so far has been the sustainability of the implementation of the training as funds are scarce. Although *MamMut* has won an award from the Landespräventionsrat Niedersachsen - Grüne Liste Prävention Price- the financial sustainability is very precarious. With an allocation of funds for the project (either from private as public funds) dissemination and the training could be implemented on a national level.

Another challenge has been to engage civic society and different professionals, especially in those professions which are leaded on a higher level by men (e.g. police). An expert conference has been organised to form a platform to exchange information and guarantee that the programme can further be developed and expand to other segments of expertise. Many professionals were present at the expert conference such as professionals working in the police, on formal education settings or community support. Nonetheless, and although there was a great willingness to engage in the *MamMut* training, the implementation of the training outside the higher education context was not achieved.

Additionally, we encountered difficulties in attracting the private sector in the training. Experience has proved that in Latin America the training in the private sector was a success.

Flyers, posters and other dissemination materials have been distributed in schools. In different locations at the region of Hessen, male social work students distributed material about "Violence against Women" and about the training *MamMut*.

Further steps will be taken to engage further community members in the programme but rigorous schedules, tight flexibility on the tasks performed during work and occasional state supports decrease the probabilities of more and more professionals to join this training.

1. Are women and girls, including women’s rights organizations, involved in the efforts by your Government or your organization to engage men and boys in promoting and achieving gender equality, in particular efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and the negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underlie and perpetuate violence against women and girls?

Girls and boys are equally engaged in the promotion of gender equality through the *MamMut* training. Throughout the implementation of the training it has become evident that children are constructed as unknowing, not yet fully developed, not yet (adult) people, naive and “innocent,” with an emphasis on their need for protection. Children are not seen as actors although over and over scholars and human rights advocates highlighted the importance of understanding children as individuals and actors of their own life. We observed that children’s empowerment to self-protection fades into the background. This kind of stereotype (intergenerational inequality) has been confirmed over the conduction of the training and is for us another form that perpetuates the violence against children in general. Such an age-based discrimination is a channel of preserving the advantage of adults in terms of power, albeit not always consciously, and preventing or delaying the equality of children. When conducting our training with future social workers we underline the critical thinking towards children’s rights and adultismus emphasising that also this is a form of promoting equality among different generations.