

DYNAMO INTERNATIONAL
STREET WORKERS NETWORK

RUE DE L'ÉTOILE, 22
B-1180 BRUXELLES
TÉL.: +243 971 791 705

E-mail : edwin@travailderue.org
Site web: www.travailderue.org

Brussels, 24 January 2018

to Mr Bernard Gastaud

Committee on the Rights of the Child

United Nations in Geneva

Subject : General Comment No. 21 (2017) - Translation error in the French and Spanish versions

Dear Mr. Gastaud,

On behalf of the social street workers, members of Dynamo International – Street Workers Network, let me first congratulate you and the other members of the Committee for the excellent work done in the drafting of the General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations. Overall, there is no doubt that we find the observations, remarks and suggestions that children, young people and social street workers have sent as part of the broad consultation to which we participated with our partner the Consortium for Street Children.

I write to you today to draw your attention to what could be considered as a **translation error or misinterpretation** from English to French and Spanish. While in the English version of the General Comment, the name and the text both refer to the term "**Children in street situations**", in the French version the term becomes "**the children of the streets**". The same error seems to have occurred from English to Spanish where the term "**los niños de la calle**" is used instead of "**niños en situación de calle**".

This change of name is all the more surprising since the call for contributions for this General Comment has always referred to "**children in street situations**".

Many contributions, such as those of our colleague Daniel Stoecklin, the BICE, the committee Los Derechos del niños del Uruguay, and indeed the Dynamo International - Street Workers Network, to name just a few, have pointed out that the term "**children in street situations**" is the most consistent with the contributions from the field workers and scientists and the outcome of the international consultation.

The term "Children in street situation" is a good illustration of what the General Comment tries to demonstrate, namely that these are children "*who have formed strong connections with public spaces and for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities*".

The various contributions and testimonials have clearly demonstrated that the term "**street children**" gives a static and immutable representation of the situation. The term "street situation" does not demonstrate the diversity and specificities of each situation, as it does not presume the child's willingness and ability to build his or her own life scenario. Worse, on-the-ground realities and in the eyes of the general public **this term is stigmatizing**.

Therefore, may I suggest you to review the **French and Spanish translations** so that we can find the letter and the spirit of what we think is essential to you and us: respect, dignity and rights of the child in a street situation.

Thank you, Mr. Gastaud, for the attention that you will give to our request.

Edwin de Boevé

Director

Dynamo International – Street Workers Network