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Mission statement

Introduction

FIMCAP, a Catholic, intercontinental, and umbrella youth organisation, advocates the participation and inclusion of all children in Church and society. It is in our interest to empower the child to know its rights, as defined by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). After the discussion of these rights during the Study Session of the 24th FIMCAP General Assembly, the member organisations pledge to uphold the Rights of the Child and to consider them in their activities. FIMCAP also decide to dedicate the FIMCAP Days of the next three years to one specific aspect of the Children's Rights.

Best interest of the Child

The best interest of the child is the foundation of all our actions and activities. We acknowledge that every child has his/her own specific personal interests, his/her own rights and responsibilities. As FIMCAP, we create a friendly environment for our children and leaders. We stand for zero tolerance of violence (both physical and psychological) or any form of abuse, and we respect everyone's personal boundaries. In order to achieve that, we aim to develop various mechanisms to deal with the above-mentioned problematic issues.

Attitude change in society

We want children to be children, to find free and safe places to play, explore, discover and thereby strengthen their values, and to find answers to their needs.

Children should be critical and responsible agents of change in their families, communities and societies; therefore, a holistic education is essential; an education that gives children the necessary instruments for participation, and teaches adults to listen to the children. Relationships between adults, youngsters and children should be respectful and equal.

Children should not be objects of power structures such as politics, law, public opinion, media and economies. We acknowledge that local problems, such as corruption or manipulation, affect our

work with children and the children alike. We recognize that these injustices are similar across the globe, which is why we want to protect children in cooperation with other stakeholders.

Children and Peace

As a Catholic youth organisation, FIMCAP has the responsibility to promote, stand and act for peace within the member organisations and societies in general. We affirm every person's right to live in peace and harmony through truth, justice, freedom and love.

The child has the right for peace. We define peace as the result of different conditions such as the respect of human rights and children's rights; the respect of human dignity; the provision of safe environments; equal access to and equal opportunities in education and resources.

Children are entitled to live in a healthy environment. We acknowledge the family as the primary provider of such an environment; FIMCAP organisations also contribute towards the realisation of such an environment, and call on Church and society to do the same.

FIMCAP considers the child to be a protagonist in the process of peace. FIMCAP organisations and their leaders are encouraged to make children aware of peace, threats to peace, to learn to be peaceful and to live together in peace.

Child labour

ILO's definition of child labour gives a good framework for protecting children's rights and guidelines to ban child labour. However, there are continental differences, since child labour figures are much higher in Asia or Africa than in Latin America. Also, while some countries may consider a situation of child labour to be serious, others may consider the same situation as a child helping their family.

Child labour has a different aspect in Europe: articles produced by children in other continents are sold on the European market. FIMCAP calls everyone worldwide to be a responsible consumer.

FIMCAP's task is to be children's spokesperson, to disseminate the respect of children's dignity. FIMCAP says 'no' to child labour.

Inclusion

According to the CRC, "every child has the same rights and the same opportunities"; however, we see a different reality. We consider inclusion as a tool of children's rights. Inclusion is not a goal, it is an ongoing process to identify and find exclusion and eradicate it. Inclusion stands for an environment where everyone has the equal opportunity to participate fully, and where each person is valued with his or her distinctive skills, background and perspectives.

FIMCAP organisations welcome children from all over the world, regardless of their physical or mental capabilities, or their cultural, economic, geographical or religious backgrounds.

FIMCAP organisations advocate for the inclusion of any marginalized child by reducing stigma and raising awareness among their members.

Conclusion

FIMCAP advocates the enforcement of Children's Rights. The future is now, the future is ours. We are responsible for our societies and are called to further social justice. We ask all actors in Church and societies to answer this calling.

Glossary of key terms

CRC: UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified by 192 countries

Child: The Convention defines a child as a person below the age of 18, unless the relevant laws recognize an earlier age of majority.

Holistic: all encompassing, comprehensive; enabling a person to connect to the community, nature, humanitarian and spiritual values.

ILO: International Labour Organization, the UN specialised agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights. (www.ilo.org)

Child labour: Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (definition according to ILO)