

NEWS NOTE

UNICEF presented the results of the survey “Children and social conflicts in Bolivia”

The purpose of the study is to find out and analyze the Bolivian people’s perception regarding how social conflicts affect boys, girls and adolescents

La Paz – Bolivia, November 27, 2008.- The United Nations Program for Development (UNPD) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) presented the results of the survey “Children and social conflicts in Bolivia” as part of the Living Together and Sowing Peace Campaign. The study was conducted in order to find out and analyze the Bolivian people’s perception regarding how social conflicts affect boys, girls and adolescents. Moreover, the study aims at raising awareness in the population and institutions regarding the need to protect the rights of minors in all situations, but especially in moments of conflict that can jeopardize their physical and emotional well-being.

Present at the event were the UNICEF Representative, Gordon Jonathan Lewis, the UNPD Deputy Representative, Gonzalo Calderón, and the Ombudsman, Waldo Albarracín. The event also included the participation of boys and girls representing the Wawastinkuy, a cultural association of children, who were in charge of reading a declaration in favor of the defense of children’s rights.

A total of 2,144 people were interviewed for the study between September 27 and October 9 of this year in the cities of Santa Cruz, La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Tarija, Oruro, Potosi and Trinidad, which allowed for a wide and general view of the feelings and perceptions of the population regarding children’s rights.

Among the survey’s most important results is the finding that more than 80% of the population relieves that the presence of children at protests, manifestations and violent confrontations affects their basic rights as recognized by the Children’s Rights Convention (1989), which was ratified by Bolivia. Regarding whether or not minors under 18 have been very affected by the conflicts, 80% of the people interviewed replied yes. In general, the Bolivian population thinks the conflicts have had enormous impact on boys, girls and adolescents, especially in the emotional and psychological aspects.

Regarding the transmission of images of conflicts broadcasted by the media, 90% of the population considers this to have an impact on children. Furthermore, over 80% of the participants thought the presence of minors in conflicts generates in them conducts of intolerance, discrimination and violence. Finally, the survey detected that more than 90% of the population agrees that children and adolescents have the right to be protected in situations of conflict and manifestations, and that the responsibility for their protection lies mainly with their parents, without forgetting the relevant role that should be played by the Ombudsman, the police and all the country’s citizens.

This study corroborates the existence of a great number of Bolivians who are conscious of the vulnerability of children in all violent situations.

The survey was elaborated in the framework of the Living Together and Sowing Peace Campaign, the purpose of which is to create a climate of opinion to represent and give a voice to this majority of citizens who want peace to be present in all environments. This Campaign emerged by the hand of the United Nations System in Bolivia, with the support of the Jubilee Foundation, representing the Catholic Church, the Ombudsman, the UNIR Foundation, the CEPAD and its partners in Santa Cruz. Work is also being done in collaboration with filmmakers, plastic artists, musicians, publicists, intellectuals, journalists, youths, businesses, associations and every individual or institution that wants to join, since the Campaign places great importance on social mobilization as a way to promote positive and peaceful attitudes.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

For more information:

Gridvia Kuncar, Program Communication Specialist
Telephone: (591-2) 2770222- Ext. 235
gkuncar@unicef.org

United Nations Children Fund
20th Street, Calacoto
P.O. Box 3-12435
La Paz - Bolivia

Phone (591-2) 2770222
Fax (591-2) 2772101
lapaz@unicef.org
www.unicef.org/bolivia