

Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP)
Policy Brief
-DRAFT-

Information about the project

The Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI), together with the University of Lincoln (UK), is implementing the MAP project to work with school youth. The project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Council (AHRC) and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) in the UK.

The project aims to strengthen peace by teaching youth positive skills to express their own ideas and to promote their stronger engagement in community life through the use of innovative arts-based methods. The main objective of the project is to empower young people to promote intergenerational dialogue between youth and adults for peacebuilding. To achieve this goal, the project seeks to support youth to express their feelings and personal experiences through various types of art including theatre, video, painting, music, and dance.

Brief information about the authors

This draft was prepared by members of the young researchers' club of Secondary School T. Ismailova in Aravan (Osh oblast). In January 2021, club members conducted a study among their peers regarding the problems that affect young people. Together with their peers, they prioritised the issue of forced labour of students by school graduates. The club members prepared a video on this problem and held a meeting with decision-makers, where they discussed the problem and ways to solve it. The video showed how forced labour of schoolchildren can negatively affect their lives. It underpinned the need to prevent violence by peers and adults in a timely manner.

Forced child labour by school leavers

Situation

Forced labour of students (pressured by school leavers) is an omnipresent problem in the community. This type of offence is a form of racketeering – forcing victims to do some work around the house or in the field (agriculture). The Young Researchers' Club members identified this issue during a study among their peers.

In 2019, 51 cases of extortion among students of educational institutions were reported within the first five months, and again for the same period in 2018 (23 cases) (see 'Fifth periodic report of the Kyrgyz Republic on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the period from 2014 to 2019').

According to students of the Secondary School T. Ismailov, graduates force schoolchildren to work in the field. Students who are subjected to violence do not report because it will worsen the situation (i.e. increase violence). Adults and parents are often ignorant of these matters.

This form of racketeering is hidden. As a result, it is increasingly difficult for teachers and the police to identify the facts and confront this problem. The consequences of this problem are pretty severe and pose a threat to the well-being of youth.

Causes

- The lack of opportunities for young peoples' self-realisation
- Parents do not pay attention to the emotional state of the child
- Nobody talks about it (schoolchildren), there is a sense of defenselessness
- The absence of impunity and permissiveness
- Young people perceive violence as a normal state of behaviour
- Parents do not know how to establish contact with children, do not know how to talk to them
- For young people, the use of violence against the weaker is the only way they feel they can assert themselves
- Young people do not trust adults or parents and thus, do not talk about their problems.

Consequences/Risks

Forced child labour by schoolchildren is accompanied by psychological violence-insults, intimidation, and threats. Psychological bullying leads to the refusal to attend school, as well as anxiety, and low self-esteem. This can lead to an increase in child suicide.

Recommendations

- To develop programs for the organisation of leisure of young people according to their interests
- To involve children at risk in preventive work with other schoolchildren
- To create a commission to monitor the situation in schools (e.g. school administration, social pedagogues)
- To reorient young people in a constructive direction
- To conduct explanatory work together with psychologists, social pedagogues and inspectors for juvenile affairs