



AR/090

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/090

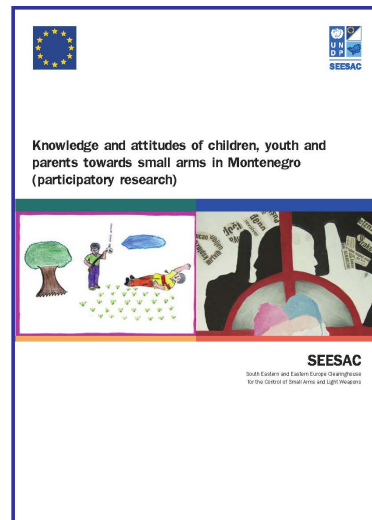
KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PARENTS TOWARDS SMALL ARMS IN MONTENEGRO (PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH)

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 4 - SALW Awareness and Communications Strategy
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	OA 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities OA 7 - Training and Research

One of SEESAC’s functional areas is Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Awareness and Communication, which constitutes an integral part of all SALW Control interventions. This strategy involves the use of professionally developed core messages and dissemination strategies to impart knowledge to, shape the perceptions and change the behaviour of the civilian community towards SALW. Collecting quality data is a prerequisite for developing any SALW Awareness activities.

One of the first requirements of any attempt to develop educational responses to social issues is obtaining quality data. In the case of small arms, this means data on:

- The impact of small arms on children and young people, in terms of statistics on crime (homicides, assaults, armed robbery), where young people may be victims or perpetrators;
- Public health data (accidental deaths and injuries, suicides);
- Information about attitudes and perceptions of small arms on the part of children and their parents and teachers; and
- Broader data on violence in society and its impact on children.



The SEESAC 2004 SALW Survey of Montenegro, ‘A house isn’t a home without a gun’, indicated that there was little or no data available relating to children and young people and subsequent meetings with the relevant professionals in Montenegro confirmed this lack of data on children and small arms, and therefore the impossibility of developing any appropriate educational responses. The decision to commission two small pieces of research was made in this context of attempts to raise community awareness of the number of weapons in Montenegro, and the need to control civilian access to these weapons, as well as to identify the extent of violence in schools.

This research was commissioned by the SALW Education (Curriculum) component of the EU Western Balkans SALW Control Support Plan 2006 project, as the second part of a two-phase project examining the

impact of small arms on children and young people in Montenegro. The first report explored the availability of data on the impact of small arms on children and young people, whilst this second piece of research is a participatory study of the attitudes and perceptions of children and their parents towards weapons in society. The report also makes recommendations for possible violence against children prevention programmes in schools.

It is hoped that this research, conducted by an experienced clinical psychologist with extensive field experience, will contribute to raising awareness about a child's right to grow up in safety and security, to attend schools without violence and to live in a community where guns are seen as enablers of security in the hands of the relevant authorities and not as enablers of violence. It is also hoped that other countries in the region will consider initiating such research and developing ongoing mechanisms for gathering data relevant to the safety of children and young people.

This study report will shortly be available on the SEESAC website (www.seesac.org). For more information please contact SEESAC SALW Awareness Officer Ciara Loughney: ciara.loughney@undp.org.



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