

A FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

A PREPARATORY DRAFT FOR PILOTING

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CONTENTS

SETTINGTHE CONTEXT	3
Introduction	3
Participation: setting the context:	4
Defining the participation of children	4
Why participation is important	5
Challenges in respecting participation	6
The case for measuring participation	7
Moving forward	8
 INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK FOR PILOTING	 10
 PART ONE:	
Measuring the creation of a participatory environment for children	12
Standards for measuring the environment for children's participation	12
Matrices for measuring the environment for children's participation	14
Measuring legal entitlements to participate	14
Measuring the right to access to information	15
Measuring awareness-raising on children's participation rights	16
Measuring opportunities to influence decisions	17
Measuring respect for children's participation in their daily lives	18
 PART TWO:	
Measuring the scope, quality and impact of participation	20
Scope of participation throughout the programme cycle	21
Understanding the scope of child participation	21
Measuring child participation throughout the programme cycle	23
Matrix for measuring the scope of participation	24
Quality standards in promoting effective participation	26
Basic requirements for quality participation	26
Matrix for measuring the quality of participation	29
Outcomes associated with participation	35
Types of outcomes	35
Matrix for measuring the outcomes associated with participation	27



Introduction

In recent years, among the child rights NGOs, governments and donors, there has been an increasing emphasis on the need to develop better indicators against which to monitor and measure process and outcomes in child participation work. Numerous models have been explored, and discussion has taken place across many different agencies and in different regions of the world, to identify indicators which are meaningful and which rely on data capable of being collected and analysed with relative ease. This framework builds on that discussion and thinking. It represents an evolutionary process. The original version, *Criteria for the Evaluation of Children's Participation in Programming*, was produced by Gerison Lansdown in collaboration with partners of the Bernard van Leer Foundation in Brazil, and was published in 2004¹. She further developed it for the UNICEF MENA region in 2008, incorporating perspectives from the region, as well as adding a dimension on measuring participation within the wider societal environment². It has since been amended to reflect more closely the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment on Article 12³. It also incorporates feedback from participants at a conference in Canada on accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and from a consultative review across Save the Children UK, both in 2009⁴.

Save the Children, together with UNICEF, Plan and World Vision are now undertaking a global inter-agency pilot of the framework. This process has been funded by the Oak Foundation, and will be conducted in partnership with a number of national NGOs with experience and expertise in child participation. The pilot will test the effectiveness and usability of the framework and provide detailed feedback to contribute towards the development of a revised and strengthened version. In the longer term, the framework will be promoted as a common tool for monitoring and evaluation which can be widely applied by organisations throughout the world. This will contribute to the aim of enabling organisations, committed to child participation, to review and improve their practice, as well as contribute to building a body of evidence to documenting the positive outcomes for children associated with promoting and respecting their right to express their views and be taken seriously.

The framework will be piloted by 12 initiatives in different regions of the world, and addressing a broad range of different practices, objectives, age groups, and children's experiences, with a strong focus on child protection. It will [take](#) place over an 18 month period, beginning in September 2011. The framework is accompanied by a [Toolkit](#) - detailed set of methodological tools, providing guidance on how to collect, organise and analyse the data, together with suggested activities that can be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders, including, of course, children themselves to measure and evaluate participation programmes.

¹ Lansdown G, *Criteria for the evaluation of children's participation in programming*, in *Early Childhood Matters*, Bernard van Leer Foundation, November 2004, No 103 pp 35-39

² The development of environmental benchmarks of participation has benefitted from the work of Joachim Theis, in *Children as Active Citizens* Government commitments and society's obligations for children's civil rights and civic engagement in East Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2007

³ General Comment, No12, The Right of the Child to be Heard, CRC/C/GC/12, July 2009

⁴ *Child Rights into Practice* conference organised by IICRD, 26-29th October, 2009, Whistler, Canada.



Participation: setting the context

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that children are not merely passive recipients, entitled to adult protective care. Rather, they are subjects of rights entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them and to exercise growing responsibility for those decisions they are competent to take for themselves. Article 12, together with Articles 5 and 13-17, introduces a philosophy of respect for children as active participants in their own lives. Governments are obliged to fulfil, protect and respect the right of children to express their views, as individuals and as a constituency, in all matters of concern to them, and to have them taken seriously. This obligation poses profound challenges to the status of children in most regions of the world, where children have not, traditionally, been deemed to have the experience, knowledge or understanding necessary to be directly involved in contributing to, let alone taking responsibility, for major decisions affecting their lives.

The past two decades, since the Convention was adopted by the UN, have shown that children have unique perspectives and expertise with which to shed light on both the challenges they face and the strategies for resolving them. During that period, as the concept of involving children as participants in their own lives began to be explored, a wide range of initiatives has developed to create space for children to begin to influence the laws, policies, services and decisions that impact on them. They have been engaged in advocacy, social and economic analysis, campaigning, research, peer education, community development, political dialogue, programme and project design and development, and democratic participation in schools. Globally, this experience has highlighted a number of issues:

- Children, when provided with the opportunity, necessary information and support, can and do make a significant contribution to decisions affecting their lives;
- Children want greater control over the issues that affect them both at the individual and collective levels;
- Adults commonly under-estimate children's capacities and are positively impressed when faced with children's active contributions;
- The right to participation remains a piecemeal, patchwork experience throughout the region, with little sustained commitment to creating the legislative, policy and cultural changes necessary for it to become a reality for all children;
- Too little evidence has been gathered on the sustained impact of participation, nor on the approaches that are sustainable and effective;
- There is a need for improved indicators and tools with which to measure the work that is being undertaken.



Defining the participation of children

Article 12 of the CRC states that every child, capable of forming views, has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him or her, and that their views must be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Not only is it a fundamental right, but the Committee on the Rights of the Child has identified it as an underlying principle which must inform the implementation of all other rights. Article 5 clarifies that when providing direction and guidance in the exercise by children of their rights, parents and other guardians must have regard to the evolving capacities of children. In other words, they need to recognise that children acquire skills

and competencies as they grow up and they are able to take an increasing level of responsibility for decisions that affect them as these capacities develop. Articles 13 -17 address the child's right to freedom of expression, religion, conscience, association, privacy and information. Together, these civil rights have been broadly conceptualized under the term 'participation'. The Convention itself does not use the term 'participation'. Rather it has been widely adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the wider child rights community, as a shorthand to describe the realisation of these rights.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has stressed that the right to participate applies to all children who can form views, however young, and it applies to all areas of their lives from the family, school, local communities, and public services to wider government policy⁵. The Committee also emphasises the fundamental importance of providing children with the necessary information in accessible forms, as well as the time and space in which to participate safely and effectively.



Why participation is important

Participation is a fundamental right. It is also a means through which other rights can be realized. It is important because:

- The active engagement of children provides information and insight into their lives with which to inform legislation, policies, budget allocation and services. It will contribute positively to the achievement of the MDGs.
- Empowered children can become active and effective advocates for the realisation of their own rights.
- Children acquire skills, knowledge, competencies and confidence through participation. It therefore enhances their development and contributes to the aims of education outlined in Article 29, their optimum development, in accordance with Article 6 and their capacities to exercise their rights, consistent with Article 5.
- It leads to better protection. Children who are silenced and passive can be abused by adults with relative impunity. Providing them with information, encouraging them to articulate their concerns and introducing safe and accessible mechanisms for challenging violence and abuse are key strategies for providing effective protection. Children who have access to information about health and sexuality are better able to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, and HIV. Child workers who form and join associations may be able to protect themselves better against exploitation and abuse. Opportunities to participate have been found to be of particular importance in situations of conflict and emergencies.
- Participation promotes civic engagement and active citizenship. Through experience of direct participation in matters of concern to them, children acquire the capacity to contribute to the creation of peaceful and democratic societies which are respectful of human rights. Participation contributes to a culture of respect in which decision-making is undertaken through negotiation, rather than conflict. Children also learn that human rights are reciprocal and mutual and not a route to selfish individualism. Community participation in government decisions helps improve public services, holds public officials to account, ensures justice and strengthens the rule of law.

- Participation is central to a process of building accountability and promoting good governance. It is a means through which governments and other duty bearers can be held to account. Recognition of the right of children to be heard can make an important contribution towards the creation of more transparent and open government.



Challenges in respecting child participation

Growing attention has been paid by children's rights agencies to the participation of children in a wide range of areas, including health promotion, education, environmental campaigns, disaster risk reduction, research and consultations on child abuse and exploitation, in the media and in governance. However, to date, these investments have not led to significant sustained change in the status of children nor to their role in society. Children's civil rights are not only much less understood than the rights to survival, development and protection, but they also necessitate more significant challenges to adult power, social attitudes and respect for children as agents in their own lives. The difficulties derive from:

- **Lack of clarity as to what participation means:** The term participation is used for a wide range of diverse activities. These activities, while all of potential positive value, tend to be short term, or one off processes, which do not create continued opportunities for children to realise their civil rights. Too much focus has been given to Article 12, the right to be heard, and insufficient attention has been paid to the other aspects of participation enshrined in the CRC - for example, the right to information, to seek redress, and to respect for evolving capacities in the exercise of rights.
- **Lack of legislation to establish the right to participate:** the right to participation necessitates the introduction of legislation affirming children's entitlement. It is not sufficient to rely on good will or individual commitment on the part of adults. For example, there is a need for legislation establishing the right to set up democratic bodies in schools, to affirm the obligations of parents to listen to their children, to introduce complaints mechanisms and appeal procedures in all areas of public policy, for example, education, health, child protection, juvenile justice, and to independent advocacy or representation when seeking redress against rights violations or defending against prosecution.
- **Cultural barriers and adult resistance:** In many cultures children are expected to be silent in the presence of adults. They are not encouraged to express their views or ask questions at home, in school or in community gatherings, nor are they recognised as having the capacities to do so. Furthermore, the presence of children in public roles challenges the existing relations between children and adults, and requires significant social adjustment. Much more work needs to be undertaken with adults to sensitize and educate them about children's participation rights and their positive implications.
- **Lack of adult capacities:** Promoting children's participation requires a wide range of skills and experiences. Initiatives often fail because the adults working with children lack the skills and understanding of how to relinquish full power over children in favour of an approach based on partnership or collaboration.
- **Lack of tools for monitoring and measuring participation:** if children's participation rights are to be realised, it is important to develop standards and indicators against which to monitor and

measure what has been achieved and why. Although there has been much debate, internationally, over the need for such tools, to date, none have yet been agreed or applied systematically.



The case for measuring child participation

As argued above, investment in monitoring and evaluating the extent, nature, quality and changes associated with children's participation has been relatively limited. Whilst there is considerable anecdotal evidence of the beneficial outcomes, relatively little sustained or independent research has been undertaken. This lack of significant progress is also a consequence of the very real practical and ethical difficulties inherent in constructing effective tools for measurement.

A number of challenges need to be addressed:

- There are no agreed indicators against which to measure effective child participation.
- There is a need to construct universally applicable indicators in order to be able to compare initiatives in terms of the outcomes and impact they achieve. This can be difficult in the context of widely disparate initiatives in different cultural, social and economic contexts.
- Children themselves have a role to play in determining the objectives in any initiatives in which they are involved. It is important therefore to reconcile both universal indicators with specific objectives and indicators against which to measure their attainment.
- The outcomes of participation are often qualitative not quantitative and therefore hard to measure.
- Many of the desired outcomes of participation relate to sustainable long-term changes in children's lives which cannot be measured within a short time period.

No simple answers exist to these challenges. However, there is a powerful case for seeking to address them. A focus on developing standards and tools with which to measure child participation will:

- Help define the legislative and policy environment needed to promote and respect children's right to participation.
- Clarify who are the duty bearers and their responsibilities.
- Enable children to gain a greater understanding of what they hope to achieve.
- Help assess the strengths and weaknesses of initiatives, and clarify which procedures and practices are helpful and which are redundant or obstructive.
- Help identify what support and resources are needed to strengthen child participation.
- Provide evidence to support the case for political commitment to the realisation of children's participation rights.
- Encourage donors to see the benefits of investment in strategies to promote child participation.

If children's participation is to be sustained, replicated, resourced and institutionalised into the wider communities in which children live, it is necessary to begin to construct methods of measuring what is being done and how it is impacting on children's lives. Only by doing so, and demonstrating its efficacy, will it be possible to argue the case for continuing investment in strategies to promote participation, and indeed, to build and share understanding of what constitutes effective participation.



Involving children in measuring participation

If monitoring and evaluating children's participation is to be effective, it must be undertaken in partnership with the children themselves. In order that their involvement is both ethical and effective, the following principled guidelines need to be taken into consideration:⁶

- Monitoring and evaluation with and by children is addressed during the planning stages, as an integral part of any project or programme initiative.
- Girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) are supported to participate in feedback, monitoring, evaluation, and follow up processes.
- Confidential reporting mechanisms are made accessible to girls and boys in their local communities to ensure that they can easily share concerns or reports about child abuse which are then followed up sensitively and promptly by the appropriate agencies
- Children are equipped with the skills and confidence to use participatory monitoring tools to support their active role in monitoring and evaluation.
- Child sensitive indicators are developed with children enabling agencies to understand the priority concerns of children themselves and the goals they aspire to.
- All information and findings are disaggregated according to gender, age, ethnicity, caste, religion, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status and other relevant factors.
- Children are given rapid and clear feedback on the impact of their involvement, the outcome of any decisions, next steps and the value of their involvement.
- The results of monitoring and evaluation are communicated back to the children involved in an accessible and child-friendly way and their feedback is taken into account in future work.
- Feedback reaches all children involved.
- Mistakes identified through evaluation are acknowledged and commitments given about how lessons learned will be used to improve participatory practice in the future.
- Adults evaluate how they have translated and implemented children's priorities and recommendations into their policies, strategies and programmes.
- Sustainability of support is discussed with children. Adults provide clear feedback to children regarding the extent/limit of their commitment to support children's ongoing initiatives and organisations. If ongoing support is not possible, adults provide children with resources and support to make contact with other agencies who can support them.

A number of lessons have been learned from experiences to date of involving children in monitoring and evaluation which provide useful pointers for future work⁷:

- Significant time is needed for a meaningful process – it involves supporting children's engagement in all stages of the process, and working at times when children are most available such as school holidays and weekends.

6

See Action for the Rights of Children resource pack, Foundation Module 4: Participation and Inclusion, Save the Children.

7

Save the Children Norway's global thematic evaluation on children's participation in armed conflict, post conflict and peace-building (2006 -2008)

- Commitment to and application of ethical guidelines are essential in all stage of the evaluation process.
- Participatory tools can be effectively used by children to gather and analyze rich information from children and adults and to transform children into young researchers and evaluators
- Girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds can demonstrate significant skills and confidence as active researchers, evaluators, documenters and agents of peace.
- The creation of advisory boards or reference groups at local or national levels (with representation from children, NGO and INGO staff, government officials and *others*) helps create common ownership and follow up action by concerned adults and children on issues raised by children.
- Creative child led documentation, media and advocacy initiatives can be supported through children's involvement in an evaluation process.
- Children and staff have been empowered through their involvement in the thematic evaluation process.



Moving forward

Although considerable progress has been made since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, in exploring and applying the concept of child participation, it is still very much at an early stage of development. There is still too much emphasis on short term and unsustainable projects. More investment is now needed to institutionalize participation by promoting the cultural changes needed in the status and role of children for the full and sustainable realisation of their rights. This will necessitate the following approach:

- **Introduction of the necessary legislative changes to protect and promote participation rights** – for example, complaints mechanisms, entitlement to be heard in schools, policy development, introduction of ages of consent, prohibition on early marriage, female genital mutilation, lowering of voting ages.
- **Provision of appropriate and accessible information on rights for children of all ages and abilities** – children cannot exercise their rights unless they have access to information in a form which they can use and understand.
- **Investment in sensitization and awareness raising of adults** – training of all professionals working with and for children on the rights of children, parent education, media campaigns, capacity building.
- **Introduction of systemic mechanisms for influencing public decisions at all levels** – access to information, training and capacity building, democratic schooling, development of child friendly and collaborative public services and support for child led organisations, peer education, access to the media, community mobilization, and engagement in dialogue with government in all relevant aspects of policy development.
- **Improvements in the quality of programmes or initiatives to promote children's participation** – promoting practice which is ethical, child-sensitive, relevant, inclusive, safe, well-supported and understood in the context of children's own families and communities.
- **Commitment to monitoring and evaluating progress in realizing the right to participation** – indicators for the right to participation, in respect of all the four approaches listed above, need to be developed and used as the basis for measuring progress in its realization.



Introduction to the framework for piloting

The following section sets out the conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating child participation. It provides the user with a detailed overview of **what** information needs to be gathered, in order to begin to measure the extent to which children are able to express their views and have them taken seriously, as well as the nature of that experience and the outcomes associated with the realization of that right. It is accompanied by detailed guidance on **how** to gather the data - the methodology and tools to be used in undertaking the pilot - see the [*Toolkit for Creating a Step Change in Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation*](#).

Who are children?

The definition of a child or a young person varies widely across different countries and cultures. In some countries, the term 'child' is used until around 12 years of age, after which the term youth or young person is used. In some cultures, young person is used up to the age of 25 years, while in others it extends to 30 and beyond.

However, for the purposes of this paper, the term 'children' is used to apply to anyone up to the age of 18 years. It takes this definition from the UNCRC.

The framework is intended for use by practitioners and children working in participatory programmes, as well as by governments, NGOs, civil society or children's organisations seeking to assess and strengthen the extent of participation by children within society. It can be used for a number of purposes:

- To map the extent to which participation is institutionalised at all levels of society and provide a tool for determining priorities for building a culture of respect for children's right to express views and be taken seriously.
- To help determine the nature of participation at the outset of a project or programme.
- To establish goals for participation and help monitor the extent to which those goals are realised.
- To monitor and evaluate the scope, quality and change associated with participation at the end of a project or programme.

It falls into two discrete but linked parts:

- **Part one** - provides benchmarks or standards against which to measure the extent to which the environment at the national and local level is conducive to respect for children's right to participate - whether the necessary legislative, policy, social and cultural changes have been made. It introduces 5 categories of standards and offers a set of matrices for each, against

which to chart or measure the current situation in any given country. **Part one**, for the purposes of this pilot, is **optional**. Initiatives participating in the pilot can choose whether or not to undertake the process of a national mapping of the extent to which child participation is addressed at all levels throughout the country.

- **Part two** - provides benchmarks or standards against which to measure the actual experience of participation – what are the scope, quality and outcomes associated with specific participation initiatives in which children are involved. Again the framework elaborates a series of matrices against which to identify objectives associated with any given initiative and to chart progress and achievements. **All initiatives participating in the pilot will be involved in Part two.**

In undertaking the pilot, it will be important to bear in mind the following issues:

1 Some outcomes associated with children's participation can be measured quantitatively, for example, numbers of schools which have established a school council, allocation of a municipal budget for a proposed initiative demanded by children themselves or the introduction of a law or policy relating to corporal punishment. All these changes can be demonstrated through documentary evidence of their existence. However, many outcomes will necessarily be qualitative and difficult to measure. Evaluating whether children's participation in a community development initiative, for example, has impacted on children's self confidence and self esteem, on local attitudes to children or on the quality of child/parent relationships, will require the application of tools which seek the views and experiences of all stakeholders in the initiative, and interpretation of the respective responses. These qualitative assessments are extremely important and of value, but need to be recognized as producing more subjective evidence of outcomes.

2 Any analysis or measurement of change needs to take account of and reflect the local cultural, economic, social and political context. What constitutes progress in one country may not be significant in another. For example, the creation of a children's council engaging with the local municipality may be relatively easy to achieve in Norway, but represent a huge shift in cultural and political terms in a country with no history of democratic engagement such as Yemen or Burma. Accordingly, the benchmarks of progress need to be understood and recognised in light of that context.

3 It is not always possible to make direct links between the goals and activities in a given programme and any change that follows. For example, a local children's club may be engaged in advocacy to stop marriages of young girls. However, there may also be wider campaigns engaged in similar advocacy. If the government changes the law, imposes greater penalties for breaches of the law, introduces better training for the police to enable them to protect girls more effectively, it may be difficult to decide how to attribute those improvements. Furthermore, unconnected external events may have a significant impact, either positively or negatively on whether or not the outcomes of the project are achieved: a change of government, increased access to information technology, a humanitarian crisis. Claims made as to the effectiveness of a programme always need to bear in mind the contribution of such external events in resultant change.

4 The outcomes of participation may not always have a positive impact, either on children or their communities. Involvement of children in a campaign may, for example, lead to them being exposed to harsh media criticism, social exclusion within their community or even arrest and assault by police or security forces. It is important that any negative outcomes are recorded as they provide invaluable information and learning to help other programmes to advise children more effectively on how to keep themselves safe, avoid placing children at undue risk, and build on strategies to strengthen protection.



PART ONE (optional)

Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children

In many diverse countries across the world the environment is not child-friendly. The legislative and cultural context is hostile to the introduction of the right of children to participate. Unless efforts are undertaken to challenge this hostility and promote a legal, policy and social context in which those rights are respected, child participation initiatives will continue to be short-term, isolated and ad-hoc pockets of good practice. In addition, it is important to recognise that the realisation of children's participation rights is not resource free. All relevant government departments need to have adequate budgets to ensure the effective implementation of these rights.

The following standards provide a framework against which to monitor the extent to which respect for the participation rights of children and a child friendly environment exists. They provide an overview of what needs to be in place if children's right to participation is to be fully respected. The matrices which follow provide a tool through which you can 'map' where a given country currently stands with regard to those rights. This process should highlight the major gaps or weaknesses, and accordingly can then be used as a tool to determine programme priorities. It can also be used as an advocacy tool with governments. Specific indicators can be developed from these standards at an individual country level - for example, to introduce target numbers or percentages against those standards where there is a commitment to programming .

NOTE ONE: *Quantitative indicators need to be disaggregated according to, for example, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, social class, rural/urban setting. Without disaggregation, the difficulties experienced by the more disadvantaged or marginalised groups of children, in realising their participation rights, will not be recognised.*

NOTE TWO: *In assessing whether, and to what extent, the indicators have been reached, it will be necessary to gather information from all relevant stakeholders. Take, for example, the right of children to establish democratic school councils. It would be important to get the perspectives of the government, local authority, teachers and children. Governments may argue that the legislation is in place to support this right, but children's experience may be that, in practice, such bodies have little relevance or influence in the school, are managed largely by teachers and that no account is taken of their views.*



Standards for measuring the environment for children's participation

Please see pages 51-57 of the *Toolkit* for suggestions on how to collect evidence on these standards

1 Measuring legal entitlements to participate

- Child-friendly court procedures are introduced for child victims and witnesses, eg:
 - courts are obliged to consider children's views when deciding matters affecting them
 - mechanisms for recording and using children's statements are introduced in child protective proceedings.

- legal information and education is provided for children.
- Representation for children is provided through legal aid mechanisms.
- Respect is given to children's evolving capacities eg
 - minimum ages of consent to treatment have been introduced
 - children are entitled to confidential medical counselling
 - children have freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in accordance with their evolving capacities.
- Confidential mechanisms (such as child helplines) are in place for children to complain and to seek redress in cases to abuse, without fear of reprisals.
- Children are entitled to be heard at all stages of child protection procedures.
- Children are entitled to be heard in civil judicial proceedings affecting them, including divorce, separation, and adoption.
- Children in public care are entitled to be involved in decision-making processes affecting their lives.
- All schools are required to establish democratic school councils.
- Family law includes provisions on parental obligations including the obligation to involve children in decisions affecting them.

2 Measuring the right of access to information

- Education is compulsory and free.
- Information is available from a wide range of sources.
- Children have access to independent information from various sources: radio, television, libraries, books, press, Internet, helplines.
- Information is readily available in child-friendly and accessible formats that are appropriate for children of different ages and disabilities.
- Human rights education is included in the school curriculum.
- Human rights education is provided in outreach programmes for children out of school.
- Children have knowledge about their rights, and how to realise them.

3 Measuring awareness-raising on children's participation rights

- Child rights training, including a focus on participation, is introduced at pre- and in-service levels for all professionals working with and for children, including teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, police, psychologists, social workers, prison staff, and staff working in institutions.
- Programmes of parent education on child rights and participation are developed and made widely available.
- Policy makers are sensitive to and aware of children's right to participation.

4 Measuring opportunities to influence agendas

- Children are consulted on local and national government legislation, policies, services and resource allocations.
- Children provide feedback on the quality, accessibility and appropriateness of public services for children.
- Children are represented in local and national governance bodies.
- Children have the right to establish their own organisations.
- Democratic child-led organisations are supported at national and local level.
- Children have meaningful opportunities to control their own organisations.
- Children have the opportunity to use broadcast and online media to communicate their own views.

5 Measuring respect for children's participation in their daily lives

- Children, from babyhood upwards, are listened to, and, in accordance with their evolving capacities, their views taken into account within families when decisions affecting them are being made.
- Schools provide a child friendly, participatory learning environment.
- Children are involved in decision-making processes concerning their own health care, consistent with their evolving capacities.
- Children can access confidential health care services, including reproductive health care.
- Children participate in local community actions or decision-making processes.
- Child friendly cities and communities are introduced.



Matrices for measuring children's participation at the societal level

The following matrices provide a tool for identifying and monitoring the extent to which participation rights are being realised within the society as a whole, using the above standards. You can highlight in colour which boxes most accurately reflect the situation in your country. You can then use the analysis to assess where you consider you should prioritise your advocacy for change.

1 Measuring legal entitlements to participate

Legal provisions	No provision	Limited provision	Moderate provision	Comprehensive quality provision which is implemented
Accessible and child friendly court procedures	No children-friendly court procedures	Rules and procedures for children-friendly court procedures developed but not yet put into practice	Children-friendly court procedures applied in selected courts, mainly in urban areas	Fully functioning children-friendly procedures in all courts. Children provided with information about their rights and courts obliged to consider children's views when deciding matters that affect them
Representation in court hearings	No mechanisms for legal aid for children	Legal aid mechanisms are being developed	Legal aid mechanisms are in place for children in certain parts (mostly urban) of the country	Girls and boys in all parts of the country have ready access to legal aid mechanisms
Respect for evolving capacities	No legal provisions for children to express their views on matters of custody, guardianship, medical treatment, religion etc	Entitlement to express views from aged 15 and up	Entitlement to express views from aged 10 and up. The law provides for fixed ages when children can give consent to, for example adoption, medical treatment	Children are entitled by law to express their views from the earliest age possible - in accordance with their capacities. In addition to fixed ages limits for consent, the law provides that children below those ages, who can demonstrate competence, can also give consent. Law is understood and implemented
Complaints	No feedback or	Complaints procedures	Complaints procedures	Complaints procedures

mechanisms and means of redress	complaints mechanisms	in urban centres accessible to some children. Follow-up mechanisms not effective	widely available. Follow-up, referral and response mechanisms are working well in some areas	are mandated by law and easily accessibly by all children. Follow-up, referral and response mechanisms are well-established, accessible and effective
Child protection	There are no child protection proceedings provided for by legislation	There is no legal requirement that the child's view's should be heard	The law mandates that children must be heard through a body or representative	The law mandates that children must be heard directly at all stages of the child protection process and is implemented
Children in care	All decisions made by adults without reference to children	Guidance to encourage listening to children but no explicit right for children to be heard	Law requires that children are consulted on all matters of concern to them and their views given due weight, but not widely implemented	Law requires that children are consulted on all matters of concern to them and their views given due weight. Court officials and other professionals have training in listening to children and apply their learning into practice
Children in civil proceedings eg divorce, separation and adoption	All decisions made by adults without reference to children	Guidance to encourage listening to children but no explicit right for children to be heard	Law requires that children are consulted on issues of custody and access and their views represented in court, but not widely implemented	Effective implementation of law requiring that children are consulted on issues of custody and access and that their views represented in court. No child, capable of forming a view, can be adopted against their wishes.
Democratic schools	No student council	Student councils in some experimental schools. The best students are appointed by teachers. Students debate issues but have no influence over the final decisions	Student councils are wide-spread in schools. Members of student councils are elected by the students. Children's decision making power is limited	Mandatory student councils and school management committees where students have real control over important decisions. Student councils are fully representative of the student body
Parental responsibilities	Parents have complete authority over their children	Law provides some protection against abuse in families	Encouragement on the part of government towards more democratic parenting, some parent education course provided	Law defines parental responsibilities and includes provision that parents must consult with children when making decisions that affect them

2 Measuring the right of access to information

	No access information	Limited access to information	Moderate access to information	Comprehensive access to
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				information
Free and compulsory education	Education not free and only compulsory at primary level	Primary education compulsory and free	Primary and secondary education free and compulsory but low rates of enrolment, attendance and completion	Primary and secondary education free and compulsory and on track to meet the MDGs for boys and girls
Legal rights to information	No laws guarantee information rights. Public access to government documents is extremely limited.	Public access to government documents is limited but expanding	Legislation regarding public access to information is in place, but in practice, it is difficult to obtain government documents	Government documents are broadly and easily accessible to the public
Access to independent information from a wide range of sources	Children have no access to information	Children's access to information is largely limited to better-off children in urban areas	Children have access to a range of information, but large disparities exist between children	All boys and girls have access to a wide range of information from various sources: radio, television, libraries, books, press, Internet, helplines
Information available in child friendly and appropriate formats	No child or disability-friendly information available	A few documents are available in children-friendly formats - usually just one format for all children	Children-friendly information is widely available	Information is readily available in child and disability-friendly formats that are appropriate for children of different ages. Government departments are mandated to produce key documents in child and disability-friendly formats
Human rights education included in the curriculum	No human rights in education curriculum	Willingness to consider the inclusion of human rights in curriculum but no action yet taken	Human rights in curriculum but only taught in limited numbers of schools	Human rights included in the curriculum, teachers trained and teaching resources provided
Awareness of rights	Children lack basic knowledge in a wide range of areas	Better-off, mostly older children in urban areas have knowledge about their rights, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, contraceptive methods	A majority of children have knowledge about their rights, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, contraceptive methods	All children have adequate knowledge about their rights, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, contraceptive methods, and how to realise those rights

3 Measuring awareness-raising on children's civil rights

	No awareness-raising	Limited awareness-raising	Moderate awareness-raising	Comprehensive awareness-raising
Child rights training for professionals working with children	No training available on child rights	Some workshops on child rights provided for some professional groups	Some courses for professionals are beginning to introduce training on child rights	All pre and in-service training for professionals working with and for children includes child rights, as well as the development of competencies for assessing capacity

Programmes for parent education	No programmes available	Some NGOs and civil society organisations providing parent education	Government provides limited resources to civil society organisations to develop parent education programmes	Government has supported the development and dissemination of parent education programmes in all areas of the country
Awareness of children' participation rights by policy makers	Policy makers are not informed about or trained in children's rights, and not expected to involve children in any policy-making	Voluntary training is offered for policy makers. Individual initiatives to involve children in policy making take place	Policy makers in government departments with direct responsibility for children (eg health and education) are trained in children's rights and expected to consult with children on major policies	Policy makers across government at local and national levels are trained in children's rights and provided with clear guidance from the government about the obligation to introduce and support children's participation in policy making

4 Measuring opportunities to influence agendas

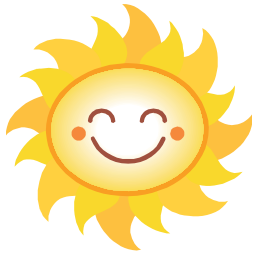
	No influence	Limited influence	Moderate influence	Comprehensive influence
Consultation on legislation, public policies, services and resource allocation	Children are never consulted	Some consultations are held with some children on some policies	The views of girls and boys are gathered systematically in relation to a majority of policies affecting children	The development of all legislation, policies and services affecting children must take children's views into account
Children are able to provide feedback on quality, accessibility and appropriateness of public services	Children are provided with no opportunities for feedback on public services	Some local health, education and social welfare services provide complaints mechanisms	Public services are required to establish feedback systems including evaluation forms, surveys and complaints mechanisms	Public services implement effective feedback systems including evaluation forms, surveys and complaints mechanisms. Mechanisms for auditing and inspection involve children on a systematic basis
Child representation in governance bodies at local and national level	No children are represented	A few youth councils and children's parliaments exist, but are often not sustained for very long	A range of effective mechanisms have been developed for children's representation at local and national levels. These are being spread across the country.	Local and national governance bodies are mandated by law to have children represented
Right to establish child-led organisations	Children are prevented by law from forming their own associations. Child workers are prevented from joining labour unions	Legislation entitled children to form their own associations, but bureaucratic procedures make it very difficult for children to formally register their associations	Procedures for establishing and registering children-led associations have been simplified with the result that the number of registered children-led associations is growing steadily	Children are entitled by law to form their own associations and to join unions. Responsible government departments process applications for children-led associations in a

				professional and speedy manner
Existence of child-led organisations	No children-led associations	Only few types of children-led associations are active, mostly for only short periods of time	Growing number and diversity of children-led associations	Large number of different types of children-led associations are active and effective in the country
Respect for children's right to run their own organisations	Children's associations are completely controlled by adults	Adults set the agenda of the children's organisations and make all important decisions	Girls and boys set some of the agenda. Adults listen to children's views but retain final say over the agenda of the organisations	Children-led associations receive support, advice and resources from adult civil society organisations without interference in their internal decisions
Access to broadcast media to communicate views	No opportunities exist for children to use broadcast media to communicate their own views	A few projects exist to support young journalists and reporters	A growing number of opportunities are available for children to broadcast their views. Access to these opportunities is concentrated on better-off children in urban areas	Opportunities for children to use broadcast media to communicate their own views are readily and easily available for a majority of girls and boys (radio, newspapers, ICT, television)
Access to ICT	No ICT available in the country	Only children from better-off families, mostly in urban areas have access to ICT	Over 50-70% of children in the country have access to ICT	All boys and girls have access to ICT

5 Measuring respect for children's participation in their everyday lives

	No-day-to-day participation	Limited day-to-day participation	Moderate day-day participation	Comprehensive day-day participation
Children are listened to within their own families	Parents never listen to or consult children on their views	Parents consult older adolescent boys on some major decisions	Parents consult adolescent boys and girls on some decisions	Parents regularly involve all children, including very young children, in decisions within the family
Child friendly and participatory schools	No child-centred learning and teaching methods	A few schools experiment with child-centred teaching methods	Child-centred learning and teaching methods have been promoted widely in the country	Child-centred teaching methods are mandatory at all schools
Children can access confidential health care services	No confidential services available. All children must get parental consent to access health care	Individual health centres provide adolescent clinics, but no clear policies on confidentiality	Some free and child and adolescent friendly, confidential services available in urban areas	Free, accessible, child-and adolescent friendly, confidential services available throughout the country and widely publicised
Children are consulted in decision-making processes concerning their	No children under 18 years are consulted or involved in decisions concerning health care	Some individual medical practitioners consult older children, but no policy exist	Doctors are encouraged to involve children in their own health care/ a policy exists , but no training is provided and its implementation is	A policy has been drawn up requiring staff to involve children in their own health care as far as possible. Age-appropriate

own health care, consistent with their evolving capacities			uneven	information is provided, as is training on the application of the policy for all health professionals
Children participate in activities within their local communities	A very small minority (less than 10%)	A small minority (10% to 30%)	A minority (20% to 50%)	The majority of children volunteers regularly and takes part in social, cultural or environmental activities
Child-friendly cities or communities	No strategies to develop child-friendly cities or communities	Small-scale initiatives to create child friendly environments in a limited number of communities	Most cities have begun to explore strategies for involving children in the development of child friendly environments	A comprehensive national strategy is being introduced, in partnership with children, to create child friendly cities and communities



PART TWO

Measuring the scope, quality and impact of child participation programmes

Beyond the creation of an environment which is conducive to respect for child participation, it is also necessary to develop mechanisms for measuring how effective and ethical specific participation programmes are in practice.

The term 'programme' in this section is used to encompass a very wide range of activities: peer education, consultations, conferences, children's parliaments, unions, clubs and committees, involvement in the media, policy development, policy advocacy and campaigning, school councils. They can be one-off activities or long term commitments. The following framework can be applied to any of these activities. However, for the purposes of convenience, the term 'programme' is used generically to encompass them all.

There are three distinct dimensions to participation which require measurement if practice is to be monitored and evaluated effectively:

- **Scope** - what degree of participation has been achieved and at what stages of programme development - in other words - **What is being done?**
- **Quality** - to what extent have participatory processes complied with the agreed standards for effective practice - in other words - **How is it being done?**
- **Outcome** - what has been the outcome - on young people themselves, on families, on the supporting agency, and on the wider realisation of young people's rights within families, local communities and at local and national governmental level - in other words - **What has been achieved?**

The following section provides an explanation of these three dimensions, together with a series of matrices which can be used as a tool to help you track the nature of participation in the programmes in which you are involved. In each box, you need to assess where you consider your programme falls. This will provide you with a visual overview of the scope, quality and impact of your work and what you need to be monitoring. It should help you determine whether you are meeting your objectives, what is working well and where the programme needs strengthening or developing.

NOTE: *As in the previous section, it is necessary to ensure that the views of all relevant stakeholders are considered, as different constituencies may have very different perspectives on the extent to which participation is taking place, is meaningful and is achieving change. This will always include children themselves but may also include staff and partners, parents, local community leaders, teachers, local or national politicians depending on the nature of the programme.*



1 Scope of participation in programmes

Please see pages 25-30 of the Toolkit for suggestions on how to collect evidence on these standards

1.1 Understanding the scope of participation

In order to assess the scope of participation in which children are involved, it is necessary to address two perspectives:

a) **Point of engagement** - Children can be involved at different stages in the process of developing a programme - from the initial concept through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The earlier they are involved, the greater their degree of influence.

b) **Level of engagement** - At each stage of developing a programme, there are three potential levels of engagement for children - consultative, collaborative and child-led. The extent to which children are empowered to exercise agency within an initiative will be influenced by the level at which they are participating. However, **all three are valid approaches** and can be appropriate, depending on the goals of the programme or initiative. Programmes will not necessarily remain at one level. There is a dynamic, and often over-lapping relationship between them. A programme can start as consultative process, move on to becoming collaborative and ultimately create space for children to initiate their own agenda.

- **Adult consultative participation** - where adults seek children's views in order to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experience. It is characterised by being:
- adult initiated;
 - adult led and managed;
 - lacking any possibility for children to control outcomes.

It therefore does not allow for sharing or transferring decision-making processes to children themselves. However, it does recognise that children have expertise and perspectives which need to inform adult decision making. Consultation is an appropriate means of enabling children to express views, for example, when undertaking research, in planning processes, in developing legislation, policy or services, or in decisions affecting individual children within the family, in health care or in education, or as witnesses in judicial or administrative proceedings.



Children and health care in South Africa⁸

In a consultation with children in South Africa about their experiences of health care, the children repeatedly commented that nurses and doctors did not always seem to care about them or their health. Even when they were in pain, many felt that there was no-one to tell or who was interested in them. Because they were children, they found it difficult to ask for help or attention when they needed it. They often felt lonely and frightened, particularly at night. Many also expressed fear because doctors and nurses sometimes shouted at them, or treated them roughly when, for example, changing bandages. Lack of privacy and respect for their dignity was another major concern they raised. They also highlighted the lack of information provided by doctors which left them feeling unnecessarily anxious and lacking control, commenting that *'It makes us sad when we ask the doctor or nurse what is wrong and he won't tell you'*. Some criticism was also focused on their caregivers who often failed or refused to take them to a doctor even when they were sick or in pain. They felt that health professionals had a role to play in educating caregivers about early identification and referral. They also felt that health workers should be sensitized to the power relationship between adults as authority figures and children, children's

vulnerability when sick, and to be encouraged to be more pro-active in offering care in ways that acknowledge the child's feelings.

□ **Collaborative participation** - where there is a greater degree of partnership between adults and children, with the opportunity for active engagement at any stage of a decision, initiative, project or service. It can be characterised as:

- adult initiated;
- involving partnership with children;
- empowering children to influence or challenge both process and outcomes;
- allowing for increasing levels of self-directed action by children over a period of time.

Collaborative participation might include involvement of children in designing and undertaking research, policy development, peer education and counselling, participation in conferences, or in representation on boards or committees. Individual decisions within the family, in education and in health care can also be collaborative rather than consultative, and involve children more fully in decision-making processes. Collaborative participation provides opportunity for shared decision making with adults, and for children to influence both the process and the outcomes in any given activity.

Consultative processes can be made collaborative by, for example, in a research project:

- enabling children to identify what the relevant questions are;
- giving children the opportunity to help develop the methodology for the research;
- allowing children to take on the role of researchers;
- involving children in discussions about the findings, their interpretation and their implications for future developments.



Child Media as an efficient strategy to strengthen children's participation and communication capacity⁹

Plan West Africa's Kids' Waves programme involves thousands of children in 10 countries in the region in participatory radio making, strengthening their capacity to communicate and to organize in groups. Project evaluations in participant countries have demonstrated that the project [in operation since 2004] has contributed to significant increase in awareness-raising on child rights amongst adults and young populations in the target areas. The project has produced over 1,500 radio shows on child rights since its inception, thanks to an established partnership with about 110 media partners in the region. These figures represent a substantial increase on reporting on children's rights in the West African media scene. While increased awareness and an increase in the number of broadcasts on children's issues are two important achievements, the most impressive results of the project are evident in talking with the young participants who reported an increase in their ability to communicate, strengthened confidence and ability to stand up in public as part of the evaluation. Adults confirmed these impressions and reported they had increased respect and a different view on children's abilities after having witnessed (their) children in the recording and broadcast activities.

□ **Child-led participation** - where children are afforded the space and opportunity to initiate activities and advocate for themselves. It is characterised by:

- the issues of concern being identified by children themselves;
- adults serving as facilitators rather than leaders;
- children controlling the process.

Children can initiate action as individuals, for example, in choosing a school, seeking medical advice, pressing for the realisation of their rights through the courts, or utilising complaints mechanisms. They can also initiate action as a constituency by establishing and managing their own organisations

for the purposes of policy analysis, advocacy, awareness raising; through peer representation and education; and through the use of and access to the media. The role of adults in child-led participation is to act as facilitators to enable children to pursue their own objectives, through provision of information, advice and support.



Establishment of child municipal councils in major cities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory¹⁰

As part of a child-friendly cities initiative, hundreds of young people aged 12 to 17 have been elected to child municipal councils in the West Bank and Gaza and are working with mayors and other city officials as well as parents, teachers, school officials and neighbourhood committees to take positive action in their communities. The councils are all the more remarkable given the military occupation, which restricts personal freedom, and the prevalence of violence. Despite their daily challenges they face, the youth are working to improve their communities and have energized their peers through projects that increase children's protection and give them access to safe play, sports and psychosocial support.

All three levels of participation are appropriate in different contexts, and initiatives which begin at a consultative level can evolve to enable children to take more control as they acquire confidence and skills. For example, a local municipality may decide to consult children on aspects of policy and planning. As the children become more familiar with the governmental processes, they may seek to establish their own council or local parliament through which to take a more proactive and representative approach to bringing issues of concern to the notice of politicians.

1.2 Measuring child participation throughout the programme cycle

The following standards can be used to measure the extent to which children have been able to participate in each of these stages.

Note: The brackets indicate the level of participation that the statement implies.

(i) Identification of key issues/situation analyses

Children have a contribution to make to an understanding of their lives and the issues that are of significance for them. Adults should not assume that they necessarily have the knowledge and insight into what is important for children. Before undertaking a programme therefore, it is important to ensure that it reflects the real concerns faced by children and deemed of relevance by them. The standards against which to measure this include:

- Children's views are solicited but the design and process for information gathering as well as the analysis are undertaken by adults (consultative)
- Children are invited to contribute to the design the methodology for the analysis, their views are sought in both the data collection and the data analysis (collaborative)
- Children undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern (self-initiated or managed)

(ii) Strategic planning

Children can play a part in helping plan what programmes/advocacy might be undertaken by an organisation or agency. If children have been involved in the identification of issues of significance to them, it is obviously important to ensure that those views are taken seriously when plans are being drawn up. The extent to which children play a part in this process can vary considerably. The standards against which to measure this include:

- Planning takes account of the issues raised by children in the identification of key issues (consultative)

- Children are involved in contributing what programmes are to be developed (collaborative)
- Children are able to identify and determine what programmes they would like to see developed or the issues on which they want to advocate change (self-initiated or managed)

(iii) Programme design

Once a programme has been decided on, children can play a significant part in helping decide what it should try to achieve and how it should be designed. Children, for example, may have ideas about what will work, what questions to ask, who to involve, what forms they want to use to express themselves. The standards against which to measure this include:

- Children are consulted on ideas conceived by adults (consultative)
- Children work with adults on the design of the programme, and deciding what activities will take place and who should be involved (collaborative)
- Children work together to design their own programme (self-initiated or managed)

(iv) Implementation

Once a programme is conceived, children can play a key role in its implementation. For example, they might play a part as researchers finding out about an aspect of children's lives, or run a school council or contribute on-going ideas and feedback for developing a children's facility. The standards against which to measure this include:

- Children are invited to participate (consultative)
- Children work with adults and are involved in the implementation of the programme, for example, communicating what the programme is seeking to achieve, taking part in programme activities (collaborative)
- Children organise and manage the programme and have full responsibility for its implementation (self-initiated or managed)

(v) Monitoring and evaluation

Children need to be involved in contributing to an understanding of how effective programmes are. This both provides them with a sense of ownership and interest in the outcomes, and helps them work towards their improvement. Programmes evaluated by adults alone will not necessarily take account of children's perspectives and experience. The standards against which to measure this include:

- Children are consulted on whether the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives (consultative)
- Children collaborate with adults in developing the criteria for evaluating the programme and they are consulted on whether the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives (collaborative)
- Children determine what should be evaluated and, with adult support, undertake the evaluation of the programme (self-initiated or managed)




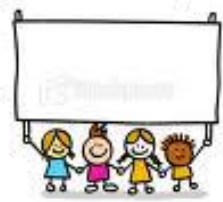


1.3 Matrix for measuring the scope of participation in a programme

In the following matrix, you should identify which box best reflects the nature of children's participation in your programme. It is helpful to consider how and why the children were involved at that point and degree of involvement. This process may help you assess whether it would be possible both to involve children at an earlier stage and with a greater degree of decision-making or control over the process.

It is important to note that the boundaries between the three levels of participation will not always be clear cut, and projects can move across from one level to another at different stages of their development. It is also important to recognise that different levels of participation, and different stages of involvement, can be appropriate for different activities. It should not be assumed that all

projects must aim for children to be involved throughout, or that child initiated activity is the universal goal. For example, adult designed and managed research which involves children as respondents can be entirely valid, as long as it complies with appropriate ethical and quality standards. However, that said, consideration should always be given to the ensuring the optimum level of participation possible and appropriate in any process or activity.

	Children are not involved 	Consultative 	Collaborative 	Child-initiated, led or managed 
Situation analysis		Children's views are solicited but the design and process for information gathering as well as the analysis are undertaken by adults	Children are invited to contribute to the design the methodology, their views are sought for both the data collection and the data analysis	Children undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern
Strategic planning		Planning takes account of the issues raised by children in the identification of key issues	Children are involved in contributing to what programmes are to be prioritised and developed	Children identify and determine what programmes they would like to see developed
Programme development and design		Children are consulted on ideas conceived by adults	Children work with adults on the design of the programme, and deciding what activities will take place and who should be involved	Children work together to design their own programme
Implementation		Children are invited to participate, for example, delivering a peer education programme,	Children work with adults are involved in the implementation of the programme, for example, communicating what the programme is seeking to achieve, taking part in programme activities	Children organise and manage the programme and have full responsibility for its implementation
Monitoring and evaluation		Children are consulted on whether the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives	Children collaborate with adults in developing the criteria for evaluating the programme and they are consulted on whether the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives	Children determine what should be evaluated and, with adult support, undertake the evaluation of the programme



2 Quality of children's participation

Please see pages 25-35 of the Toolkit for suggestions on how to collect evidence on these standards

There is an emerging consensus as to the requirements for achieving quality standards for effective participation. These requirements are elaborated in the CRC General Comment on Article 12¹¹. Without compliance with them, participation is less likely to be meaningful, fruitful or safe for children. However, it does need to be recognised that there will be many circumstances where they are extremely difficult to meet in full - for example, in emergencies and post conflict situations, or where a government is particularly authoritarian. They should therefore be established as the goal for every programme to work towards, while accepting that they will not all be met at the outset of every programme. However, some of the requirements must be seen as a benchmark without which participation is unethical and inappropriate. These would include the requirements that programmes are safe, respectful and non-discriminatory.

1.1 Basic requirements for quality children's participation

In order for programmes to ensure that they take account of the basic requirements and are working towards reaching full compliance with them, it is important that they are able to measure their practice. This can be achieved by monitoring participation as follows:

☐ **Requirement One: Participation is transparent and informative**

Children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact:

- Children understand what the initiative is about and feel confident and informed about the nature and scope of their participation.
- The roles and responsibilities of all involved are clearly defined and understood.
- Clear goals and targets are agreed upon with the children concerned.

☐ **Requirement Two: Participation is voluntary**

Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage:

- All participating children have voluntarily, and without coercion, agreed to be involved in the process.
- Children are given time to consider their involvement.
- Children can withdraw at any time if they wish.

☐ **Requirement Three: Participation is respectful**

Children's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working with children should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of children's participation, for instance, in their contributions to the family, school, culture and the work environment. They also need an understanding of the socio-economic, environmental and cultural context of children's lives. Persons and organizations working for and with children should also respect children's views with regard to participation in public events:

¹¹

Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.12, The Right of the Child to be Heard, CRC/C/GC/12, July 2009 . these basic requirements are, in large part, based on the Save the Children practice standards

- Children's time commitments are respected and accommodated.
- Ways of working and methods of involvement incorporate and build on local structures, knowledge and practice and take into account social, economic, cultural practices.
- Support from key adults in children's lives is gained to ensure wider encouragement and assistance for the participation of children.

☐ **Requirement Four: Participation is relevant**

The issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, space needs to be created to enable children to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important:

- The issues are of real relevance to children's own lives. Children do not feel pressurised by adult support workers to participate in processes that they do not perceive as important or relevant to their lives.

☐ **Requirement Five: Participation is child-friendly**

Environments and working methods should be adapted to children's capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities:

- Ways of working are developed in partnership with children and build the self-esteem and self-confidence of boys and girls of different ages and abilities.
- Sufficient time and resources are made available for quality participation and children are properly supported to prepare for their participation.
- Child-friendly meeting places are used where girls and boys feel relaxed, comfortable and have access to the facilities they need. The meeting places are accessible to children with disabilities.
- Children are asked what information they need and accessible information is shared with children in good time, in child friendly formats and in languages that the children understand, including children with visual or hearing impairments.
- Recognition is given to the need for participation to be fun and enjoyable.

☐ **Requirement Six: Participation is inclusive**

Participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalized children, including both girls and boys, to be involved. Children are not a homogenous group and participation needs to provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds. Programmes also need to ensure that they are culturally sensitive to children from all communities:

- All children have an equal chance to participate, and voice their opinions, through mechanisms which ensure that children are not discriminated against on grounds of age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Efforts are made to ensure the equal participation of all children consistent with their evolving capacities.
- Those working with children facilitate an environment that is non-discriminatory and inclusive.
- Positive discrimination measures are introduced where they are needed to ensure the equal inclusion of all children.

- The initiative is sensitive to the cultural context of all participating children within a framework of universal rights.

☐ **Requirement Seven: Participation is supported by training for adults**

Adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities. Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require capacity-building to strengthen their skills in, for example, effective participation awareness of their rights, and training in organizing meetings, raising funds, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy:

- All staff and managers are sensitised to children's participation and are committed to children's participation.
- Staff are provided with appropriate training, tools, supervision support and other development opportunities in participatory practice to enable them to work effectively and confidently with children of different ages and abilities.
- Staff regularly evaluate their participation practice.
- Staff are able to express any views or anxieties about involving children in the expectation that these will be addressed in a constructive way.

☐ **Requirement Eight: Safe and sensitive to risk**

In certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the children with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimize the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation. Action necessary to provide appropriate protection will include the development of a clear child-protection strategy which recognizes the particular risks faced by some groups of children, and the extra barriers they face in obtaining help. Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm and know where to go for help if needed. Investment in working with families and communities is important in order to build understanding of the value and implications of participation, and to minimize the risks to which children may otherwise be exposed:

- These standards are used in conjunction with agencies' own child protection policies, which are well communicated and understood by all staff involved in the process.
- The protection rights of children are paramount in the way children's participation is planned and organised.
- Children involved in participation work are aware of their right to be safe from abuse and know where to go for help if needed.
- Careful assessment is made of the risks associated with children's participation in speaking out, campaigning or advocacy. Depending upon the risks identified, steps may be needed to protect children's identity or to provide follow-up measures to give protection (e.g. to ensure their safe reintegration into their communities).
- Consent is obtained for the use of all information provided by children and information identified as confidential needs to be safeguarded at all times.
- Children involved in participatory activities have access to a safe and confidential complaints procedure in respect of any issue concerning their involvement.
- No photographs, videos or digital images of a child can be taken or published without that child's explicit consent for a specific use.
- It must not be possible to trace information back to individual/groups of children.





☐ **Requirement Nine: Participation is accountable**

A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, children must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation needs to be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves:

- Children are supported to participate in follow up and evaluation processes.
- Follow up and evaluation is addressed during the planning stages, as an integral part of any participation initiative.
- All children involved are given rapid and clear feedback on the impact of their involvement, the outcome of any decisions/next steps and the value of their involvement.
- Mistakes identified through evaluation are acknowledged and commitments given about how lessons learned will be used to improve participatory processes in the future.
- Adults will evaluate how they have translated and implemented children's priorities and recommendations into their policies, strategies and programmes.
- Sustainability of support is discussed with children. Adults will provide clear feedback to children regarding the extent/limit of their commitment to support children's ongoing initiatives and organisations. If ongoing support is not possible, adults will provide children with resources and support to make contact with other agencies who can support them.

2.2 Matrix for measuring the quality of the participation

In this box you can identify the extent to which the basic requirements for ethical and meaningful participation have been adhered to. The overall picture will provide clear guidance as to what needs to improve, and how. It is essential that the analysis is undertaken with both staff and children. Children may have a very different perspective on how they have experienced their involvement in a programme.

		Standard has not been considered 	Awareness of the standard but not reflected in practice 	Efforts made to address the standard but no systematic procedures in place 	Standard fully understood by all staff, implemented and monitored 
Requirement 1: Participation is transparent and informative	Children understand what the programme is about and feel confident and informed about the nature and scope of their participation				
	The roles and responsibilities of all involved are clearly defined and understood				
	Clear goals and targets are agreed upon with the children concerned				
Requirement 2:	All participating				

Participation is voluntary	children have voluntarily, and without coercion, agreed to be involved in the process				
	Children are given time to consider their involvement				
	Children can withdraw at any time if they wish.				
Requirement 3: Participation is respectful	Children's time commitments are respected and accommodated				
	Ways of working and methods of involvement incorporate and build on local structures, knowledge and practice and take into account social, economic, cultural practices				
	Support for key adults in children's lives is gained to ensure wider encouragement and assistance for the participation of children				
Requirement 4: Participation is relevant	The issues are of real relevance to children's own lives				
	Children do not feel pressurised by adult support workers to participate in processes that they do not perceive as important or relevant to their lives				
Requirement 5: Participation is child friendly	Ways of working are developed in partnership with children and build the self-esteem and self-confidence of boys and girls of different ages and abilities.				
	Sufficient time and resources are made available for quality participation and children are properly supported to prepare for their				

	participation.				
	Child-friendly meeting places are used where girls and boys feel relaxed, comfortable and have access to the facilities they need. The meeting places are accessible to children with disabilities.				
	Children are asked what information they need and accessible information is shared with children in good time, in child friendly formats and in languages that the children understand, including children with visual or hearing impairments.				
	Recognition is given to the need for participation to be fun and enjoyable				
Requirement 6: Participation is inclusive	All children have an equal chance to participate, and voice their opinions, through systems which ensure that children are not discriminated against on grounds of age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status..				
	Efforts are made to ensure the equal participation of all children consistent with their evolving capacities				
	Those working with children facilitate an environment that is non-discriminatory and inclusive				
	Positive discrimination measures are introduced where they are needed to				

	ensure the equal inclusion of all children				
	Influential adults are engaged to gain family and community support for the participation of discriminated-against groups.				
	The initiative is sensitive to the cultural context of all participating children within a framework of universal rights				
Requirement 7: Participation is supported by training for adults	All staff and managers are sensitised to children's participation and are committed to children's participation.				
	Staff are provided with appropriate training, tools, supervision support and other development opportunities in participatory practice to enable them to work effectively and confidently with children of different ages and abilities.				
	Staff regularly evaluate their participation practice.				
	Staff are able to express any views or anxieties about involving children in the expectation that these will be addressed in a constructive way.				
Requirement 8: Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	These standards are used in conjunction with agencies' child protection policies, which is well communicated and understood by all staff involved in the process.				
	The protection rights of children are				

	paramount in the way children's participation is planned and organised.				
	Children involved in participation work are aware of their right to be safe from abuse and know where to go for help if needed.				
	Careful assessment is made of the risks associated with children's participation in speaking out, campaigning or advocacy. Depending upon the risks identified, steps may be needed to protect children's identity or to provide follow-up measures to give protection (e.g. to ensure their safe reintegration into their communities).				
	Consent is obtained for the use of all information provided by children and information identified as confidential needs to be safeguarded at all times.				
	Children involved in participatory activities have access to a safe and confidential complaints procedure in respect of any issue concerning their involvement.				
	No photographs, videos or digital images of a child can be taken or published without that child's explicit consent for a specific use.				
	Unless otherwise agreed, it must not be possible to trace information back to individual/groups of children.				
Requirement 9:	Children are				

Participation is accountable	supported to participate in follow up and evaluation processes.				
	Follow up and evaluation is addressed during the planning stages, as an integral part of any participation initiative.				
	All children involved are given rapid and clear feedback on the impact of their involvement, the outcome of any decisions/next steps and the value of their involvement.				
	Mistakes identified through evaluation are acknowledged and commitments given about how lessons learned will be used to improve participatory processes in the future.				
	Adults will evaluate how they have translated and implemented children's priorities and recommendations into their policies, strategies and programmes.				
	Sustainability of support is discussed with children. Adults will provide clear feedback to children regarding the extent/limit of their commitment to support children's ongoing initiatives and organisations. If ongoing support is not possible, adults will provide children with resources and support to make contact with other agencies who can support them.				
	Children are supported to participate in follow up and evaluation processes.				



3 Outcomes associated with participation

Please see pages 36-50 of the Toolkit for suggestions on how to collect evidence on these standards

The outcomes associated with child participation will need to be assessed in accordance with the objectives for involving them. For example, the objective might be to promote children's self esteem and build skills and confidence. It might be to ensure that programmes reflect children's own expressed priorities. It might be to enable children to participate in challenging neglect or violations of their rights. It might be to change a law or policy to strengthen child protection. Indeed, it may include all these and other objectives. These different objectives need to be clear at the outset of the programme and will influence what indicators are constructed for measuring effectiveness.

The following provides an overview of the range of dimensions that might be considered in seeking to measure change, outcomes and effectiveness. They are illustrative, and have been developed as a guide to stimulate ideas and suggest possible outcomes. **Each initiative will need to identify its own objectives and the outcomes that it wishes to achieve.** Across all these dimensions, the outcome needs to be assessed potentially by all relevant participants – children, parents, staff, community members. In undertaking any assessment, it is also important to find concrete evidence of any change, rather than merely an assertion that the impact has been achieved – for example, how a child's self esteem has been raised and with what effect.

3.1 Types of outcomes

The outcomes fall into two broad categories:

□ **Process outcomes:** outcomes associated with the work of the project which have influenced those directly or indirectly involved in or affected by in the initiative:

(i) **Outcomes for children**

- Greater self esteem and self confidence
- Acquisition of skills (communication, problem solving, negotiation etc)
- Greater awareness of rights
- Sense of efficacy and empowerment

(ii) **Outcomes on parents' attitudes or behaviour**

- Higher level of awareness of children's rights and needs
- Greater level of sensitivity to children's rights and needs
- Improved quality of relationships with children
- Greater understanding of children's capacities
- Willingness to consult with and take account of children's views

(iii) **Outcomes on staff attitudes and behaviour**

- Changing practice towards respecting children's rights and needs
- Greater level of sensitivity to children's rights and needs
- Improved quality of relationships with children
- Greater understanding of children's capacities

(iv) **Outcomes for services/programmes/organisations/institutions**

- Change in organisational culture towards greater respect for children's rights
- Willingness of staff to reconsider power balances and relinquish control in favour of greater power sharing

- Children's participation built in to all programme areas as a common underpinning approach
- Changes in programmes to reflect children's concerns and priorities

(v) **Outcomes within the local community**

- Greater awareness of children's rights and attitudes towards children
- Improved status of children within the local community
- Increased willingness to act in the best interests of children

□ **Structural or external outcomes:** outcomes which impact on a wider constituency of children in the realisation of their rights. Clearly, these will vary widely across programmes, depending on their focus - for example, some might be directed to advocacy for legal reform, others on community development, media access or promoting a more democratic school. Some of these objectives will have child participation as a means while others will have participation as an end in itself.

- **Participation as an end:** In some programmes, participation itself is the desired outcome. For example, if the programme was directed towards establishing a forum for children to influence decisions of the local municipality, some outcomes will be defined in terms of the extent and effectiveness of their participation - the formation of a children's forum, access to municipal meetings on a 6 monthly basis, commitment to producing child friendly versions of municipal documents. The programme will be monitored and evaluated in terms of whether it actually achieved child participation. However, it will also need to evaluate what that participation achieved - for example, evidence of decisions that had been changed or influenced by children's participation.
- **Participation as a means:** Other programmes may seek outcomes such as ending violence towards children or increasing girls' access to education. Here the outcome is the realisation of a child's right to protection or education, using participation as the means of achieving it. The participation may involve, for example, advocacy, media work, research, or community sensitisation to achieve the outcome. It is not sufficient to gather evidence on what has changed - for example, a bridge was built to enable children to get to school during the rainy season. It is also necessary to try and demonstrate that it was children's participation in a process that contributed towards the change. So, when collecting data, it will be necessary to find out from stakeholders why they consider a change has taken place. For example, is there evidence that research done by children, documenting how many children were unable to get to school when it rained, served to convince the local authorities that the bridge was necessary? Did the children's local campaign lead to a groundswell of public opinion that the local authority could no longer ignore? Did the children use local media successfully to highlight the problem and build pressure for the bridge?

Users of the framework should include relevant structural or external outcome indicators in the matrix. The following is suggestive only, and is included in order to provide an indication of possible objectives and outcomes a programme might wish to aspire to. If any one of these outcomes were identified, the programme might wish to elaborate more specific or detailed goals.

For example:

(i) **Legal/policy reform**





- Raising age of marriage
- Ending corporal punishment in the family and all other environments
- Establishing the right of children to access confidential medical advice and counselling
- Primary and secondary education is compulsory and free.

- Legislation on child labour is introduced, implemented and monitored in dialogue with children themselves
- (ii) **Awareness of children's rights**
- Children have knowledge about their rights, and how to realise them.
 - Human rights education is included in the school curriculum.
 - Policy makers are sensitive to and aware of children's right to participation
- (iii) **Opportunities to influence public decisions**
- Children are consulted on local and national government legislation, policies, services and resource allocations
 - Children are represented in local and national governance bodies
 - Children have the right to establish their own organisations
 - Children have the opportunity to use broadcast, and online media to communicate their own views.
- (iv) **Political commitment to respect children's rights**
- Government provides a transparent budget indicating levels of expenditure on children
 - Social protection policies address and are informed by the rights and needs of children
- (v) **Respect for rights in the daily lives of children**
- Schools provide a child friendly, participatory learning environment
 - Children are involved in decision-making processes concerning their own health care, consistent with their evolving capacities
 - Children can access confidential health care services, including reproductive health care
 - Children participate in local community actions or decision-making processes.
 - Child friendly cities and communities are introduced
 - Schools provide a child friendly, participatory learning environment

3.2 Matrix for measuring outcomes





This matrix provides an illustrative framework to guide you in monitoring the outcomes associated with children's participation in respect of each of the relevant stakeholders. You will need to adapt it, in collaboration with children, to determine the outcomes you hope to achieve at the outset of a programme. It can then be used during, and at the end of the programme, to help you measure whether those objectives have been achieved, and what needs to change to improve the programme.

1 Process outcomes

		Negative change/harm arising from participation 	No change 	Immediate change / change only in some stakeholders/ lack of sustainability 	Significant and sustained change acknowledged by children and adults 
On children	Acquisition of skills and knowledge				
	Enhanced self				

	esteem and self confidence				
	Greater rights awareness				
	Sense of efficacy and empowerment				
On parents and staff	Greater awareness of children's rights				
	Awareness of children's capacities				
	Greater understanding of the importance of listening to children				
	Willingness to consult with children				
	Greater sensitivity to children's rights and needs				
	Improved quality of relationships with children				
On institutions	Change in organisational culture towards greater respect for children's rights				
	Willingness of staff to reconsider power balances				
	Children's participation built in to all programme areas				
	Changes in programmes to reflect children's concerns and priorities				
On local community	Improved status of children within the community				

2 External or structural outcomes (illustrative only - each initiative will need to identify the outcomes it seeks for its own project)

		Negative change/harm arising from participation 	No change 	Immediate change/change only in some stakeholders/ no sustainability 	Significant and sustained change acknowledged by children and adults 
Legal/policy reform	Raising age of marriage				
	Ending corporal punishment in the family and all other environments				
	Establishing the right of children to access confidential medical advice and counselling				
	Primary and secondary education is compulsory and free.				
	Legislation on child labour is introduced, implemented and monitored in dialogue with children themselves				
Awareness of children's rights	Children have knowledge about their rights, and how to realise them.				
	Human rights education is included in the school curriculum.				
	Policy makers are sensitive to and aware of children's right to participation				
Opportunities to influence public decisions	Children are consulted on local and national government legislation, policies, services and resource allocations				

	Children are represented in local and national governance bodies				
	Children have the right to establish their own organisations				
	Children have the opportunity to use broadcast, and online media to communicate their own views.				
Political commitment to respect children's rights	Government provides transparent budget indicating levels of expenditure on children				
	Social protection policies address and are informed by the rights and needs of children				
Respect for rights in the daily lives of children	Schools provide a child friendly, participatory learning environment				
	Children are involved in decision-making processes concerning their own health care, consistent with their evolving capacities				
	Children can access confidential health care services, including reproductive health care				
	Children participate in local community actions or				

	decision-making processes.				
	Child friendly cities and communities are introduced				
	Schools provide a child friendly, participatory learning environment				