

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ANALYSIS, PLANNING AND DESIGN OF PROGRAMMES

A guide for Save the Children staff



Save the Children

Save the Children works in more than 120 countries.
We save children's lives. We fight for their rights.
We help them fulfil their potential.

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Cover photo: Bhawani, age 16, at a children's club meeting in Surkhet district, Nepal. They are part of a network of clubs that raise awareness of issues affecting children and advocate for children's rights, including calling for an end to child marriages. (Photo: Suzanne Lee/Save the Children)

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PHOTO: CLAIRE OKANE

“Seek children’s perspectives, recognising them as people with dignity and evolving capacities; that they are empowered and assisted to speak out, have their views heard and become an integral part of processes of change.”

Getting it Right for Children, Save the Children, 2007

I INTRODUCTION

“We don’t want to get on a moving train, we want to start the journey with you.”

Young person, South Africa, member of the Save the Children UK Global Panel 2011

WHAT IS CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION?

Children’s participation¹ is about children having the opportunity to express a view, influence decision-making and achieve change. It is the informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them. Children’s participation is an essential principle that informs Save the Children’s way of working, cutting across all arenas – from homes to government, from local to international levels.

Save the Children’s vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. The principle of children’s right to participation is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This right acknowledges that children are social actors in their own right and are entitled to be involved in decision-making in all matters that affect their lives, while taking into consideration their evolving capacity and best interests.

Save the Children’s child rights programming approach uses the principles of children’s rights to plan, implement and monitor programmes, with the overall goal of improving children’s social position so that all boys and girls can fully enjoy their rights and live in societies that acknowledge and respect their rights.² Children’s participation in programming fits well within the ‘voice’ element of our ‘Theory of Change’. Children and young people (especially the

most marginalised) should be provided with genuine opportunities to inform and influence every stage of the cycle in programmes that concern them and that are relevant to their lives, that is: assessments, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.³

Children’s participation in the programme cycle is more meaningful when girls and boys are involved from the earliest stages: in child rights situational analysis (CRSA), strategic planning, annual planning and the design of programmes. Children and young people’s involvement in the CRSA enables them to effectively influence strategic planning and the design of programmes that can improve their child rights situations and/or environments. In the design phase, children and young people can be involved in developing relevant objectives and indicators that would show change in their daily lives and realisation of their rights. Furthermore, when children are familiar with project objectives and indicators, and have been actively involved in the planning process, they can play a more meaningful role in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

However, in many contexts and for different reasons, children and young people tend to be more involved in implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, and less involved in strategic planning and the design of programmes. Therefore, we have developed this guidance to help programme managers and staff increase and enhance the meaningful participation of children and young people in the early stages of programming.

WHY SHOULD WE INCREASE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMME ANALYSIS, PLANNING AND DESIGN?

Article 12, UNCRC states that:

“State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.”

There is a clear rationale for ensuring that children and young people participate in developing Save the Children programmes:

- Children's participation is a right.
- Children's participation is integral to our vision, theory of change (see note on previous page, 'be the voice') and child rights approach.
- All programmes are expected to monitor and report on a global indicator on children's participation.
- Children's participation in the early stages of programming helps to ensure that planning and design is more relevant to the needs and the rights of girls and boys – which will lead to more effective and accountable programmes.

The benefits of participation to children and young people are that it:

- contributes to **personal development**
- offers children the **opportunity** to contribute to positive changes in their communities

- can lead to increased **empowerment** and motivation
- **protects** children – with greater awareness of their rights, children and young people are more likely to voice concerns
- promotes **children's capacities** for civic engagement, tolerance, respect for others and the **inclusion** of marginalised children
- can enable **access to training and development** (action planning, research)
- can help children receive **better targeted** and more relevant services.

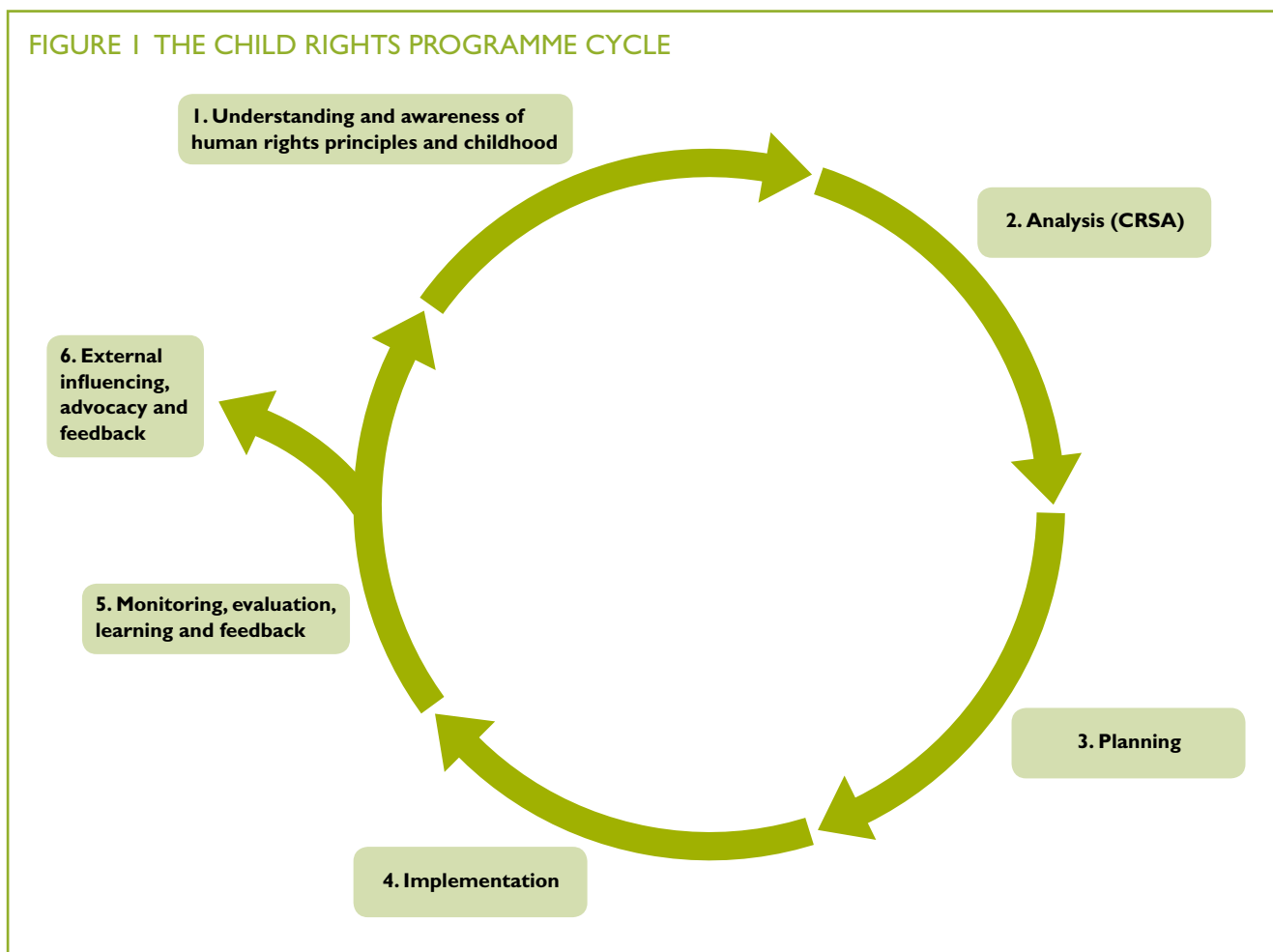
The benefits of participation to Save the Children are that it:

- leads to **improved decision-making** and better informed responses and outcomes
- demonstrates **our values**
- leads to organisational learning about the reality of children's lives
- improves our **credibility** and **accountability**
- ensures that our **advocacy** with key stakeholders is better informed
- helps create robust policy by building a body of evidence from children.

THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

The child rights programme cycle is grounded in an understanding and application of human rights principles (universality, indivisibility, inalienability, participation and accountability) and of child rights principles (survival and development, non-discrimination, best interests, and participation). Children and families (especially the most marginalised) should be empowered to claim their rights; duty bearers (especially government as primary duty bearers) should be strengthened to fulfil their responsibilities to protect, respect and fulfil children's rights.

FIGURE I THE CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMME CYCLE



THE CHILD RIGHTS SITUATION ANALYSIS

It is essential to carry out a comprehensive child rights situation analysis (CRSA) and to regularly update it in order to inform your country strategic plans, annual plans and programmes. This will ensure that plans effectively address any violations of children's rights and any gaps in the full realisation of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

CRSAs usually encompass:

- **mapping of violations of children's rights** – including gaps in provision
- **causality (or problem) analysis** – an examination of the immediate and root causes of violations and/or gaps

- **responsibility analysis** – who are the duty bearers and other relevant actors
- **capacity gap analysis** – identifying what duty bearers and other actors are doing, and why they might not be fulfilling children's rights
- **external analysis** of what may help or hinder the realisation of children's rights
- **identification of strategic opportunities** for Save the Children to increase realisation of children's rights.

It is important to create and support opportunities for children to express their views and participate in the CRSA. See the case study on page 5, illustrating how Save the Children in Cambodia supported children and young people in participating in a CRSA.

2 TOOLS AND APPROACHES

PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND CASE STUDIES

THE CHILD RIGHTS SITUATION ANALYSIS

Participatory tools for the CRSA process

The following tools for participation can be used with and by children and young people.

Body mapping (likes and dislikes): an icebreaker and introductory tool to help understand children's likes and dislikes.

Working in gender/age groups of children (eg, 8–12-year-old boys, 8–12-year-old girls, 13–17-year-old girls, 13–17-year-old boys), the children make a 'body map' by drawing around the shape of a child on large flipchart paper. A vertical line is drawn down the middle of the body map, so that one side represents a happy child, ☺ = things they like; and the other side represents a sad child ☹, showing things they don't like.

Encourage children to use the body parts to share and record their likes and dislikes. For example:

- **The eyes:** Ask children what they see in their homes/schools/communities that makes them happy ☺ or sad ☹. What ways do adults see them that make children feel happy ☺ or sad ☹? Why?
- **The ears:** What do they hear that makes them happy ☺ or sad ☹? Do the ways in which adults listen to them, or not, make them happy ☺ or sad ☹? Why?
- **The mouth:** What do they speak/not dare speak about that makes them happy ☺ or sad ☹? What ways that adults speak to them make children happy ☺ or sad ☹? Why?
- **The head:** What do children think about that makes them happy ☺ or sad ☹?
- **The heart:** What do they feel that makes them happy ☺ or sad ☹? What do adults feel about children that makes the children feel happy ☺ or sad ☹? Why?



PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN IN MYANMAR

Talking to children about their likes and dislikes in Myanmar (Burma)

- **The shoulders:** What kind of responsibilities do they take on that they like 😊 or dislike ☹️? Are there any responsibilities they take on that they feel are too much for children ☹️? Why?
- **The stomach:** What do they eat or drink that makes them happy 😊 or sad ☹️?
- **The hands and arms:** What do they do with their hands or arms that makes them happy 😊 or sad ☹️? How do adults use their hands and arms with children that makes them happy 😊 or sad ☹️?
- **The feet and legs:** Where do they go that makes them happy 😊 or sad ☹️?
- **Any other body parts that they would like to discuss...**

Mapping child rights violations using child rights images:

Using particular UNCRC articles (eg, right to education, right to protection from abuse, right to nutrition, right to health, right to participation, right to association, etc.), explore whether most,

some, or few children in their communities enjoy these rights. Why, and how? Which children are least likely to enjoy these rights? *Each child right is explored one time at a time in gender/age groups. Different colour maps can be prepared for rights that are enjoyed by most, some or few children.*

Drama/poetry/drawing/creative expression on the child rights violations that most affect/concern them can be prepared and presented in plenary by each gender/age group after the mapping using the child rights visual images.

Problem tree analysis, with and by children and young people, to explore the ‘root causes’ and ‘outcomes/impact’ on children of the key problem/child rights violations (eg, to explore the main concerns presented in the drama/creative expression).

Note: children and young people can also contribute to responsibility analysis and capacity gap analysis.

CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN CRSA: CAMBODIA

In early 2012 Save the Children in Cambodia undertook a child rights situation analysis in order to inform the development of its country strategic plan 2012–15. The CRSA considered the status and trends of factors that either enable children to enjoy their rights, or that are obstacles or constraints to their enjoyment, now and in the future.

The CRSA was seen as an opportunity to collaborate with Save the Children staff, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government partners, and children and young people to improve understanding and application of child rights programming. Furthermore, the nine basic requirements in children's participation (transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, child-friendly, inclusive, supported by training for adults, safe and sensitive to risk, and accountable) were used to help plan and implement meaningful children's participation in the CRSA process.

The CRSA process included:

- capacity-building of 26 people (researchers/facilitators from Save the Children, NGO partners and child/youth movements) to enable them to undertake consultations with children on their rights

- a two-day CRSA workshop with Save the Children staff and civil society partners, including children and young people's representatives
- secondary data analysis of more than 100 reports from the government, UN, NGOs, international NGOs, child/youth organisations, and research institutes
- primary data collection, including: interviews and focus group discussions with government officials, media and corporate sector representatives, parents/caregivers, and village elders
- consultation with Child Group Representatives from children and young people's networks and movements,⁴ drawing upon their experiences as young people, and their findings from earlier child-led consultations
- consultations with more than 190 children and young people aged 8 to 17 using participatory child-friendly methodology, including: body mapping of children's likes/dislikes; images to explore 10 children's rights (whether most, some or few children experience these rights); drama; drawings; and a ‘hand activity’ for children to share their suggestions on actions by different duty bearers.

continued overleaf

CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN CRSA: CAMBODIA

continued

Half-day to one-day consultations were organised with girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) in those locations where there were gaps in information on children and young people's views, including:

- poorest urban areas in Phnom Penh where migrant families and children are living and working
- minority ethnic areas, including remote areas in Ratanak Kiri and Preah Vihear
- children of Vietnamese parents – stateless children in Kandal
- children affected by floods and migration in Prey Veng
- children living in institutions in Phnom Penh.

The consultations in each location involved 22 to 30 children: 8–12-year-old girls/boys, 13–17-year-old girls/boys.

In addition to developing a main CRSA report, the consultant produced a summary report for translation and sharing with children and adults who had participated in the CRSA process. Furthermore, building on the CRSA participatory process with further engagement by children young people, and groups led by them, networks and movements were planned to inform the development of the country strategic plan.



PHOTO: CLAIRE OKANE

A young facilitator in the CRSA process

COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ANNUAL PLANNING

Save the Children's country strategic plans (CSPs) usually cover a 3–5-year period. The CSPs are informed by Save the Children's global strategies and objectives (including those of the Global Initiatives) and by their in-country child rights situation analysis. A participatory process involving Save the Children staff and partners (government and civil society), as well as children, young people and community members, can contribute to more effective and accountable CSPs. Country strategic planning and

annual planning processes need to incorporate opportunities for consulting and involving children and young people in meaningful ways, and should be informed by the voices and experiences of children and young people gathered during CRSA and/or other relevant research processes.

Specific strategies should also be informed by the views and perspectives of children and young people. Furthermore, the strategies should include indicators, plans and budgets which support children and young people's participation in the sector programming.

CASE STUDY: INCREASING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL PLANNING: MYANMAR (BURMA)

In 2010, Save the Children in Myanmar organised a series of training workshops on child rights programming for approximately 100 coordinators and managers. During the training, staff assessed when and where children's participation was most and least supported in the programme cycle. The weakest area was in the design phase, especially in influencing Save the Children's annual plan. As a result, and as part of endeavours to increase accountability to children, more efforts were made to consult children in a timely manner and to bring children's representatives together to inform the annual planning process.

The process included developing and disseminating a child-friendly version of Save the Children's strategic plan, and sharing additional information with children and young people on each thematic programme plan. Information was shared with children and young people in their communities in different programme areas.

In May 2011, 34 children's representatives from 17 townships where Save the Children was implementing programmes were brought together in a National Children's Forum, to share their feedback on all the sector programmes – child protection, education, child survival, hunger, and HIV and AIDS. The 17 girls and 17 boys aged 9 to 18 were from diverse backgrounds, including working children and children from poor families. Children and young people were able to share their experiences and views on the strengths and weaknesses of existing programmes. On the final day of the forum, the children and young people presented their key findings and views to senior managers and programme staff. Key findings were also documented and used to inform the 2012 annual planning process.



Children in Myanmar share their views of Save the Children programmes

PRACTICAL PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

These tools can be used with and by children and young people in **participatory strategic planning**, **annual planning** and **programme design**.

'H' assessment, for children and young people to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing sector programmes and to make suggestions for improvements.

☺	Sector programme	☹
	(!) suggestions to improve	

Visioning tree, to explore ways in which children can be better cared for, protected and supported in families, and how to achieve the vision.

- The *fruit* represents their vision/dream (individual and collective)
- The *roots* will represent their individual and collective strengths as children, as communities, etc
- The *trunk* will represent their recommendations and action planning to move towards their vision(s).

How? How? How? An exercise to explore strategic and practical ways to address a problem/concern.

Child-led tours, for children and young people to lead a tour of their early childhood care and development (ECCD) centres, schools, or communities, to explain changes they would like to see through programme interventions.

Community risk and resource mapping, for children and young people to map their communities, to identify and highlight risks/concerns/things they do not like/places where they do not feel safe, and to identify and highlight places they like, where they feel safe and the resources (human, material) that could enhance the realisation of their rights.

Diamond ranking or **sticker voting**, to identify the priorities of girls and boys of different ages and

backgrounds (different colour stickers can be used by girls/boys of different ages and backgrounds).

Puppets, drawing, 'magic wish' and child-led photography can also be used to involve and seek the views and ideas of very young children.

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND DESIGN

Each programme and project should be planned and designed with a goal of increasing realisation of children's rights to survival, protection, development and/or participation. Space and opportunities need to be created for children and young people to inform and influence project/programme design, including identifying relevant stakeholders and suggesting indicators, key activities and relevant budgets.

As mentioned above, if children and young people are involved in programme planning and can influence the design of programmes to more effectively increase realisation of their rights, their participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation is likely to be more meaningful. As children know more about a programme, they will have a greater sense of ownership and engagement in its implementation. The indicators chosen for monitoring progress may be more relevant to their lives and able to better demonstrate change.

CASE STUDY: JAMEELABAD, ANDRA PRADESH, INDIA

In May 2007, children in the Jameelabad primary school explored the possibility of making their school child friendly; they did this through mapping, drawing, brainstorming, role plays and focus group discussions. A local NGO supported the follow-up process to get the involvement of children, parents, teachers, community members, the Parent–Teacher Association and the Village Education Committee.

Through children and adults participating in planning and monitoring, they were successful in:

- upgrading their school from a primary school to a high school going up to Grade 6
- getting an extra teacher appointed by the government
- renovating the toilets in the school
- banning corporal punishment in the school, with teachers receiving training in positive discipline
- ensuring admission and special care for children with disabilities
- organising regular festivals and competitions for children.

CASE STUDY: CHILD-LED INDICATORS FOR A CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL: SOUTHERN INDIA

In developing child-friendly schools in a post-emergency context, one of Save the Children's Tsunami Rehabilitation Programmes in southern India supported a child-led process to develop and monitor child-friendly schools.

Framework for child-friendly schools

To guide the process of children and other stakeholders defining how a school is child friendly, Save the Children developed a framework of five broad areas:

- a safe environment that is free from violence
- minimum standards in physical infrastructure
- teacher–student relationship involving participatory teaching and learning methodology
- parent and community involvement
- efficient school management.

The framework is shared with children in the form of a child-friendly poster, and children are asked to identify factors or indicators for each of the five areas. Girls and boys suggest indicators relevant to their own schools to define, guide and monitor progress towards developing a child-friendly school. The indicators are evolved through a guided process by children, parents, community members and school staff, so everyone feels they have a part to play in making their school child friendly.

An overview of the process

Step 1: Constituency building: Talk with adult stakeholders in the community, especially parents and family members, about why a school should be child friendly, how they can be involved, why it's important to listen to children's suggestions and how everyone can work together to create a child-friendly school.

Step 2: Meaningful children's participation: Talk with children about the process and decide how to work together to develop their visions of a child-friendly school.

Step 3: Child-led process: Work with children in small groups, according to age and gender, to identify the child-friendly elements for their school: 1) likes and dislikes in the school; 2) dream school; and 3) one thing they would like to change in the school. This should be done through a variety of methods, such as drawing a dream school, mapping likes and dislikes in school, playing games showing good factors in a classroom, role plays and other methods.

Step 4: Interpreting child-led indicators: Talk with children and encourage them to explain what they have drawn or shown through their role plays. It is important to understand exactly what they have in mind in terms of indicators.

Step 5: Organising indicators: Group the indicators in the framework to ensure there is a balance across the indicators.

Step 6: Prioritising indicators: Using ranking tools such as stickers, Post-it notes, diamond ranking, or other games (eg, 'wishes granted from a fairy'), to involve each child in identifying their top priorities.

Step 7: Sharing outcomes: Share the outcomes of the exercise with adults.

Step 8: Action plan: Agree on an action plan to make the key changes (eg, tasks, person responsible, timeline, etc).

Step 9: Creating visibility: The framework should be on display in the school so everyone can see what indicators have been developed.

Step 10: Monitoring and sustaining the model of a child-friendly school: Periodic monitoring is done through children's committees in collaboration with the school's headteacher, the Child Protection Committee and Parent Teacher Association members.

3 THREE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT AND POWER-SHARING

At each stage of developing a programme, there are three basic options for the engagement for children and young people: **consultative**, **collaborative** and **child led**.⁵ The extent to which children and young people are empowered to exercise agency within an initiative will be influenced by the nature of the initiative and the stage of the programme cycle. For example, there are many opportunities for child-led analysis and/or design of programmes or projects affecting them, but no opportunities for child-led processes to develop a country strategic plan for Save the Children. Thus, consultative, collaborative and child-led participation are all valid approaches and may be more or less appropriate at different times, depending on the goals of the programme or initiative. Engagement may not remain at the same level – there is a dynamic and often overlapping relationship between them.

CONSULTATIVE PARTICIPATION

At this level of engagement, adults seek children's views to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experiences. Consultative participation is often initiated, led or managed by adults. It may or may not lead to the sharing or transferring of decision-making processes to children themselves, but its central concept is that children have expertise and perspectives that need to inform adult decision-making.

Consultation is an appropriate means of enabling children and young people to express views when managers and staff are undertaking research or analysis, planning strategies, developing annual plans or designing new programmes.

CONSULTATIONS WITH CHILDREN ON CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS PRINCIPLES: LATIN AMERICA, ASIA, AFRICA

Case study – consultative participation

From June to August 2011, more than 400 young people aged 7 to 17 participated in consultations to discuss the Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative. Save the Children, Plan International, UNICEF and other partner organisations supported the participation of children in nine countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal and Zambia.

A consultation package and facilitators' guide was prepared by Save the Children to support child and adolescent participation in reviewing the draft General Comment on State Obligations regarding children's rights and the business sector. The package included practical guidance for preparation and planning; information about the UNCRC, the general comment, and business; and consultation questions and activities.

In each of the nine countries, girls and boys explored: what business is; how business affects children's lives and rights; and the role of business in protecting children's rights. They also reviewed and submitted proposals for the draft principles that would set standards for child-friendly businesses everywhere. Each country prepared a report providing an overview of the preparations made to support children's meaningful participation, as well as an overview of children's realities and recommendations.

The children's views influenced the design of the *Children's Rights and Business Principles*, which was launched in November 2011 as the first comprehensive set of principles to guide companies on the actions they can take in the workplace, marketplace and community in order to respect and support children's rights.



Children in Myanmar carrying out a risk-mapping of their community

COLLABORATIVE PARTICIPATION

This level of engagement provides 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. Collaborative participation:

- is adult-initiated, although it can be child-initiated
- involves partnership with children
- empowers children to influence or challenge both process and outcomes
- allows for more self-directed action by children over a period of time.

Collaborative participation might involve children or young people working with adults to design and undertake research, or a child-rights situation analysis contributing to the development of country-strategic planning or an annual plan. They may also work together to develop programmes or projects on issues directly affecting children and young people.

Children's participation in programming planning and design is collaborative rather than consultative when it involves them more fully in decision-making processes. Collaborative participation provides opportunities for shared decision-making with adults, and for children to influence both process and outcomes of any given activity. The establishment of structures, such as children's advisory boards, can provide more

systematic and regular information-sharing, dialogue and collaborative action planning by Save the Children and children/young people's representatives.

CHILD-LED PARTICIPATION

At this level of engagement, children and young people are afforded the space and opportunity to initiate activities and advocate for themselves. It generally means that:

- children and young people themselves identify issues of concern
- adults serve as facilitators rather than leaders
- children and young people control the process.

Children can initiate action as individuals – for example, in seeking medical advice or utilising complaints mechanisms. They can also initiate action as a constituency by establishing and managing their own organisations for purposes such as awareness raising or peer education on child rights, health care or nutrition, or engaging in policy analysis or advocacy on issues affecting them. Children and young people may elect their own peers to represent them in governance processes affecting them.

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.

INCREASING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION THROUGH A CHILDREN'S ADVISORY BOARD: ZANZIBAR⁶

Case study – collaborative participation

In 2009, Save the Children in Zanzibar decided to become more child focused and to make more proactive efforts to put children back into the heart of everything it does. In January 2010, it worked in collaboration with community-based children's councils to establish a Children's Advisory Board, which includes eight girls and seven boys aged 12 to 17. Representation is split between Zanzibar's main islands: seven members are from Unguja, six are from Pemba and two are from the small islands. Of the board's membership, five children were elected to represent minority and vulnerable groups of children, including children with disabilities, those living with HIV and AIDS and those coming from remote areas, such as the smaller islands.

The initial set up and running of the Children's Advisory Board (CAB) included seven main elements, some specific for the start-up, but many that need continuous maintenance:

- staff training (both initial and ongoing) on children's participation and applying practice standards
- learning from the experience of others to set up ways for children to participate in accountability
- involving children at an early stage to plan and design the system
- electing children to the Board and ensuring they are representative of the community (children elected their peers, and there were additional efforts to involve children from marginalised groups)
- ensuring children's safe participation by applying practice standards and the child safeguarding policy
- working with partners, parents and communities to create a conducive environment for children to be heard. Save the Children is also starting parent groups – running parallel to the children's councils – and is starting to promote the connections between them.
- government relations – signing Memorandums of Understanding around the larger protection work and Save the Children sensitisation with the government to support children's participation.

"It is the link between the CAB and the Children's Councils that makes the CAB representative of and accountable to other children. Each member of the CAB

*is also a member of a Children's Council. Each of the Children's Council members represents ten districts and feeds back from the CAB to each of them. Children in those communities can raise issues in their Children's Council, and their representatives can then take them to Save the Children or to the government via the CAB."*⁷

Regular meetings between Save the Children and the CAB are held so that the Board can influence Save the Children and hold it to account. The meetings are always planned together and the Board decides when to meet and how it feeds back to Save the Children. At the meetings, Save the Children shares its plans and asks children to give their opinions and feedback. Information is shared regarding progress on things the children have suggested, with an explanation of what has and has not been implemented.

The meetings also give the children space to discuss issues that they choose themselves. Children also share updates with Save the Children about what they have been doing in their children's councils. Children have witnessed a number of changes in their local communities, resulting from the work of children's councils and the Children's Advisory Board. Examples include:

- children who were excluded from school have returned
- in some communities, pregnant girls can now go to school, whereas before they were too embarrassed
- child labourers have been leaving their jobs and going back to school
- some of the discrimination towards children with disabilities has ended; blind children have been given machines that help them to read and write Braille.

Challenges that continue to be faced include some negative attitudes towards children and lack of awareness of child rights in some communities, where sensitisation efforts need to be made. Ongoing dialogue is needed to manage expectations regarding children's roles, and to ensure feedback to children. However, it can be difficult for children's representatives to ensure feedback to wide numbers of children and young people, especially in remote areas.

CHILD-LED DATA COLLECTION ON CHILD RIGHTS SITUATION: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Case study – child-led participation

Child-led data collection (CLDC) is a methodology piloted, tested and finalised by Save the Children Sweden and its MANARA Child Rights Network of partners in the Middle East and north Africa.

CLDC methodology engages young researchers in gathering evidence of children's situations and child rights violations. The methodology is child-friendly and produces qualitative and quantitative evidence of everyday needs and priorities that can be used to inform change. Policies and programmes can use this evidence to focus on needs that children themselves have asserted and reported in detail.

CLDC involves research led by 15–18-year-old researchers who gather, analyse, report and advocate about the everyday needs and experiences of 8–18-year-olds across the Middle East and north Africa, with support from the members of the MANARA Network. The central concept behind CLDC is that children and young people are able, willing and entitled to research and campaign about needs and priorities in their lives.

In the CLDC pilot, teams of 26 young researchers in each of the four participating countries in the region (Lebanon, occupied Palestinian territory, Yemen and Morocco) interviewed children and

young people in their own neighbourhoods about their everyday lives, and how they would change these if they could. The interviews were subsequently analysed and used to develop surveys to measure the extent to which the needs and priorities of the sample interviewed were shared across a larger sample of children in each of these settings. Around 1,000 children were surveyed in each country. The qualitative and quantitative evidence was then combined, and each country's young research team generated their own findings report, and regional trends were studied.

The CLDC evidence base from the pilot includes evidence gathered from more than 4,000 children and young people in the region, and details their everyday experiences, needs and priorities. Advocacy is an intrinsic part of CLDC, given that the methodology focuses on driving evidence-based change.

Young researchers are supported to present and share their findings with those in a position to shape policies and define interventions in children's lives. For example, these child-led research processes can be used to influence and inform Save the Children's CRSA, country strategic plan, annual plan and programme design processes, as well as government policy and planning processes.



PHOTO: CLAIRE OKANE

A boy from Myanmar draws his daily risks

PLANNING CHECKLIST

Managers and programme staff can use this checklist in preparing for different types of children's participation in CRSAs, strategic planning, annual planning and/or the design of programmes.

Key considerations	Child rights situation analysis or other assessments	Development of the country strategic plan	Development of country annual plan	Design of programmes
Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Are girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) consulted in CRSA and/or other assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) consulted in the development of the country strategic plan? <input type="checkbox"/> Do children's views and priorities from CRSA influence the strategic plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) consulted in the development of annual plans? <input type="checkbox"/> Do children's views and ideas shared during monitoring and evaluation processes shape or influence the annual plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) consulted in design of programmes (eg, child protection, education, child rights governance, health, nutrition, WASH [water, sanitation and hygiene], etc)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are children consulted in the development of relevant indicators?
Collaborative participation	<input type="checkbox"/> Are partnerships involving children and young people's representatives (eg, from networks of child groups and/or children's advisory groups) supported to increase children's involvement in planning, implementing and analysing CRSAs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are children and young people's representatives (eg, from networks of child groups and/or children's advisory groups) invited and meaningfully involved in strategic planning processes to inform and influence the country strategic plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are children and young people's representatives (eg, from networks of child groups and/or children's advisory groups) invited and meaningfully involved in annual planning processes to inform and influence the country annual plan?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are children and young people's representatives (eg, from networks of child groups and/or children's advisory groups) meaningfully involved in the design of new programmes (plans, budgets, indicators) on issues affecting them? <input type="checkbox"/> Are collaborative design initiatives with younger children supported to inform and influence the design of ECCD centres/ initiatives?
Child-led participation	<input type="checkbox"/> Are child-led research/assessment initiatives supported on child rights issues affecting them? <input type="checkbox"/> Are children and young people actively involved in planning, information collection, analysis and reporting? <input type="checkbox"/> Do findings from child-led research inform the CRSA?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are findings from child-led research used to inform country strategic plans? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the country strategic plan include a strategic focus on support for child-led groups, research, action or advocacy initiatives?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are findings from child-led research used to inform annual plans? <input type="checkbox"/> Do the annual plans include support for child-led groups, research, action or advocacy initiatives?	<input type="checkbox"/> Are child-led projects supported, whereby girls and boys lead the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives affecting them? <input type="checkbox"/> Are findings from child-led research used to inform the design of programmes?

4 ENSURING QUALITY

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S MEANINGFUL AND ETHICAL PARTICIPATION

In 2005, Save the Children developed seven practice standards for our child participation activities. In 2011, we supported a broad consensus that child participation should, in fact, meet nine basic requirements. These were adopted into a General Comment on Article 12 of the UNCRC.

CHECKLIST

Below are some questions to help you assess whether you are meeting the nine basic requirements, and to identify gaps for improvement. These practice standards can and should be applied in planning, monitoring and evaluating participatory planning processes.

Requirement	Questions on key indicators
1. Participation is transparent and informative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do children have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate? Is information shared with children in child-friendly formats and languages they understand? Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained and understood?
2. Participation is voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is children's participation voluntary? Have children been given enough information and time to make decisions about whether or not they want to participate? Can children withdraw (stop participating) at any time they wish?
3. Participation is respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are children's own time commitments (eg, to study, work, play) respected and taken into consideration? Do the ways of working with children consider and build upon local cultural practices? Has support been gained from key adults in children's lives (eg, parents, carers, teachers) to ensure respect for children's participation?
4. Participation is relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the issues being discussed and addressed of real relevance to children's lives? Do children feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them?
5. Participation is child-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are child-friendly approaches and methods used? Do the ways of working build self-confidence among girls and boys of different ages and abilities? Are child-friendly meeting places used? Are such places accessible to children with disabilities?
6. Participation is inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds – including younger children, children with disabilities, children from different ethnic groups, etc – given opportunities to participate? Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory? Are children encouraged to address discrimination through their participation?
7. Participation is supported by training for adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are staff from Save the Children and NGO partners child-friendly or not? Do staff have the confidence to facilitate children's participation? Are staff able to effectively support children's participation in your community?
8. Participation is safe and sensitive to risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do children feel safe when they participate? Have risks been identified? Have ways to keep children safe been identified? Do children know where to go for help if they feel unsafe while participating in the project?
9. Participation is accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are children supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes? Do adults take children's views and suggestions seriously and act upon their suggestions? Are children given feedback from Save the Children about any requested support needs and follow-up?

5 CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

To create an enabling environment for meaningful and inclusive children's participation in the analysis, strategic planning and design phases of programming, it is crucial to identify challenges (individual, organisational, legal) to participation, and then to plan ways to overcome them. It is helpful for programme managers and partners to ask themselves 12 key questions prior to asking children and young people to participate. Furthermore, the nine basic requirements for children's participation (see page 15) can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate meaningful participation processes.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE ASKING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

1. What do we hope to achieve?
2. Where have we got to so far?
3. What will children and young people get out of it?
4. Are we prepared to resource it properly?
5. Why have we not done it before?
6. Are we prepared to involve children and young people from the start?
7. Are we being honest with the children and young people?
8. What are our expectations?
9. Are we prepared to give up some power?
10. Are we prepared to take some criticism?
11. Do we recognise this as a long-term commitment?
12. Are we prepared to build in changes long term, and not just have a one-off event?

As illustrated in the introduction (pages 1–3), there are significant human resource and planning implications to ensure space, opportunities, plans and budgets to support meaningful participation by children and young people (especially the most marginalised) in the analysis, planning and design of programmes.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND WAYS TO MINIMISE AND OVERCOME THEM

Anticipated challenges	Ways to minimise and overcome challenges
<p>Lack of management support for children’s participation in CRSA, country strategic planning, annual planning and/or programme designs, due to competing priorities and/or cultural attitudes towards children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify allies in the senior management team and/or regional or head offices who believe in the value of children’s participation and who can increase senior management team buy-in for participatory planning processes involving children in developing the CRSA, country strategic plan, annual plan or programmes design • Explain that children’s participation in programming is aligned to our vision, our child rights approach and our theory of change. These emphasise the importance of listening to children’s voices, especially the most marginalised children. Also, one of the global Save the Children International indicators is about children’s participation • Establish an internal working group on children’s participation involving different senior management team (SMT) representatives, sector staff, MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning) staff, human resources and administration staff, to create momentum and planning for child participatory planning processes • Encourage human resources department to include children’s participation in job descriptions and recruitment interviews, and to encourage children’s inclusion in peer review management processes • Ensure that a focus on facilitating and supporting meaningful children’s participation is integrated into CRSA terms of reference and/or country strategic planning processes • Identify and encourage opportunities for SMT members to engage with children and young people’s groups and initiatives, so that management recognises and values the capacities of children and young people
<p>Lack of preparation (lack of time, information, budgets, staff) in supporting children’s and young people’s participation in analysis, strategic planning or design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and commitment to process are key for meaningful children’s participation processes. Thus, be prepared. With SMT allies, encourage advance planning and key milestones that will support children’s participation in CRSA, country strategic planning, annual planning processes and programme design processes • Ensure that plans and budgets for children’s participation in planning are integrated into organisational planning and budgeting processes • Develop and disseminate child-friendly information about relevant planning processes, to encourage children and young people to participate • Support capacity-building of staff and partners on meaningful children’s participation, to increase staff and partners’ confidence in engaging children and young people in planning • Use the nine basic requirements as a checklist to plan for inclusive, safe and meaningful involvement of children, including application of child safeguarding policies

continued overleaf

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND WAYS TO MINIMISE AND OVERCOME THEM *continued*

Anticipated challenges	Ways to minimise and overcome challenges
<p>Reaching and involving the most marginalised children in analysis, strategic planning and programme design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of ongoing programming (child rights governance, child protection, education, etc), support community-based child-led groups and networks, with a particular focus on inclusion of the most marginalised children. Associations and movements of working children, for example, or other marginalised groups may be supported, at the same time as encouraging inclusive children's and young people's forums • Make additional efforts to reach and involve children from diverse backgrounds, especially the most marginalised: eg, disabled children, minority ethnic children, children in remote areas, out-of-school working children, children from urban slum areas, children affected by HIV • Encourage strategic partnerships between Save the Children and disabled people's organisations to increase reach and inclusion of children with disabilities • Consider children's evolving capacities, and make use of creative and participatory tools to enable girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds to participate • Through creative and mixed methods, children aged 2–6 years can also be consulted and involved in designing programmes on issues that are relevant to their daily lives (eg, the design of ECCD centres and/or ECCD activities) • Consult children and young people about their interest, and the relevance of their engagement, in strategic planning, annual planning processes and/or programme design. If they want to get involved, identify times for them to be involved that suit them (eg, to minimise disruption of school) • Sensitise parents, caregivers and community elders about the benefits of children's participation, and ensure you support them as needed
<p>Raised or unclear expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be transparent and honest. Ensure that you give everyone clear explanations about the influence children and young people may or may not have • Manage realistic expectations – make sure unrealistic expectations are not raised and don't make false promises to children and young people • Share timely feedback with children and young people. Explain what has/has not changed as a result of their participation
<p>Children's participation is not integrated effectively in proposals, planning and budgets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that plans and budgets for children's participation are integrated into country strategic plans, annual plans, thematic programme plans and/or sector programmes • Wherever possible, integrate advocacy, planning and budget support to establish sustainable structures and processes for children's participation, association and networks (in communities, schools, local governance, and/or in Save the Children governance). For example, create children's advisory boards/panels, children's parliaments or national or local networks of child groups. Collaborate with children's representatives in strategy and programme planning • Include indicators on the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation in proposals and logframes. Include budgets for participatory monitoring and evaluation

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIFFERENT STAFF MEMBERS

This section outlines key considerations for senior managers, human resources staff, administration, finance and programme staff (sector staff and MEAL staff) to embed meaningful children's participation in analysis, strategic planning and the design phase of programmes. It builds on our guide to mainstreaming child participation.⁸ Meaningful participation requires child-friendly organisational processes and procedures, as well as increased development and dissemination of child-friendly information, and accountability mechanisms that are accessible to children and young people.

If you are a **senior manager**:

- ✓ Has **sufficient time, human resources and budget been allocated** for meaningful participatory processes involving girls and boys (especially the most marginalised) and communities in **CRSA, strategic planning** and/or **annual planning processes**?
- ✓ Has **sufficient time, human resources and budgets for children's participation been incorporated into proposals and logframes**?
- ✓ Have children been able to inform and influence programme **indicators**?
- ✓ Are **indicators on the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation** incorporated into proposals and logframes?
- ✓ Are the **basic requirements in children's participation** used to plan and monitor the quality of the participation process (to ensure **safe, inclusive, voluntary and accountable participation**)?
- ✓ Is the **global indicator on children's participation** effectively applied in every programme, including opportunities to seek views from children and adults?
- ✓ Is supporting children's participation included in the **work plans** and **management reviews** of programme staff?
- ✓ Are there existing children's groups and networks involved in participatory processes to inform CRSAs, strategic planning and/or annual planning processes?

- ✓ Can **children's participation in governance structures** be supported, including children's advisory boards or committees, as an ongoing mechanism for children and young people to inform planning and to increase accountability to children?
- ✓ How will you **manage expectations**? Have you considered how much power children and young people can/will have throughout the process?
- ✓ Have **barriers and risks** associated with children's participation in analysis, planning or design been **assessed and risk mitigation initiatives undertaken**?
- ✓ Has **child-friendly information** relating to the CRSA, country strategic planning and annual plan been given to children and young people so that they can understand and influence future strategies and plans?

If you work in the **human resources department**:

- ✓ Does the organisation provide **induction and capacity-building** for all key managers and staff (including partner staff) on child rights programming and meaningful children's participation?
- ✓ Is support for children's participation included in **job descriptions** and recruitment process questions?
- ✓ Are managers, staff and partners familiar with Save the Children's **safeguarding policy and code of conduct**? Are mechanisms in place to ensure that the policy is systematically applied?

If you work in the **administration department**:

- ✓ Are there **flexi-time policies** to enable programme staff to work with children and young people on weekends (non-school days) or other times that suit the children and young people?
- ✓ Can organisational **information** that is relevant to children be prepared and disseminated in **child-friendly formats**?

If you work in the **finance department**:

- ✓ Have adequate **budgets** been included to support children's participation in strategic planning, analysis and/or design of programmes?
- ✓ Have you shared, in a timely manner, **information** on financial planning related to strategic planning, analysis or programme design with programme staff to enable children's participation and inputs?

If you are a **programme staff member (sector staff or MEAL)**:

- ✓ Have **sufficient time, human resources and budgets for children's participation been incorporated into proposals and logframes?**
 - ✓ Have children been able to inform and influence the **design of programme and project indicators?**
 - ✓ Has **information** regarding new programme opportunities been shared with children and young people in accessible ways to enable them to influence the design?
 - ✓ Are **adults** (parents/carers, community and religious elders, teachers, etc) **sensitised about the value of children's participation** so that they can support children's participation?
 - ✓ How will you **manage realistic expectations of children and communities?**
 - ✓ Will the approach be **consultative, collaborative, child-led, or a combination of these?**
 - ✓ Can **structures and processes for children's participation, association and networks** (in communities, schools, local governance) be systematically supported through ongoing programme work and/or collaboration with the authorities?
- ✓ Are sufficient efforts being made to **reach and meaningfully involve marginalised girls and boys**, including children with disabilities, children without appropriate care, children affected by HIV, children from minority groups, children in remote rural areas, children in the poorest urban areas?
 - ✓ Can you use **participatory tools and creative communication methods** to enable children and young people to participate in information collection, analysis, strategic planning, and design?
 - ✓ Can you make creative efforts made to consult and **involve younger children** under the age of seven years? How will you take account of **children's evolving capacities?**
 - ✓ How will children be given **feedback** regarding outcomes of their participation?
 - ✓ Are **complaint mechanisms and other accountability mechanisms accessible to children and young people?**

RESOURCES

Action for the Rights of Children, ARC Resource Pack: A capacity building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. Foundation Module on Children's Participation and Inclusion. www.arc-online.org

Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009) *General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard*. CRC/C/GC/12. www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ae562c52.html

Lansdown, G (2011) *Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation*. <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/4733.pdf>

Save the Children Sweden (1997) *Children in Focus – A manual for participatory research with children*. Stockholm: Radda Barnen, Jo Boyden and Judith Ennew. http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:3837

Save the Children and Early Years Network (2003) *Never Too Young: How young children can take responsibility and make decisions*. http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_2343.htm

Save the Children/Dynamix Ltd (2003) *Participation – Spice it Up!* <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/participation-%E2%80%94-spice-it>

Save the Children (2003) *So you want to consult children: A toolkit of good practice*. <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/so-you-want-consult-children-toolkit-good-practice>

Save the Children (2005) *Practice Standards in Children's Participation*. <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/practice-standards-children%E2%80%99s-participation>

Save the Children (2005) *The Spider Tool: A self-assessment and planning tool for child-led initiatives and organisations* (series of three publications: *Tool*, *Lessons Learnt*, and *Facilitators Guide*). Clare Feinstein and Claire O'Kane. <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/spider-tool-self-assessment-and-planning-tool-child-led-initiatives-and-organisations>

Save the Children Norway (2008) *Kit of Tools – for participatory research and evaluation with children, young people and adults*. Clare Feinstein and Claire O'Kane. http://tn.reddbarna.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=19028

Save the Children Norway (2008) *Ethical guidelines for ethical, meaningful and inclusive children's participation in participation practice*. Clare Feinstein and Claire O'Kane. http://tn.reddbarna.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=19028

Save the Children, Plan and War Child Holland (2009) *What is Children and Young People's Participation: An advocacy brief*. <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/what-children-and-young-peoples-participation-advocacy-brief-preparation-resolution-rights>

Save the Children (2010) *Putting Children at the Centre: A practical guide to children's participation*. <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/putting-children-centre-practical-guide-childrens-participation>

Save the Children (2010) *Speaking Out, Being Heard: Experiences of child participation and accountability to children from around the world*. <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/speaking-out-being-heard-experiences-child-participation-and-accountability-children-around>

UNICEF (2006) *Child and youth participation resource guide*. www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/index_child_adult.html

ENDNOTES

¹ Save the Children (2005) *Practice Standards in Children's Participation*

² Save the Children (2007) *Getting it Right for Children: A practitioner's guide to child rights programming*

³ In programmes that concern them and that are relevant to their lives

⁴ Cambodia Children and Young People's Movement for Child Rights and Child Advocate Network

⁵ See Lansdown, G (2011) *Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation*

⁶ Save the Children (2011) *Agents for Change: How children can be involved in accountability: A case study from Zanzibar*

⁷ Save the Children (2011) *Agents for Change: How children can be involved in accountability: A case study from Zanzibar*, page 11

⁸ Save the Children UK (September 2012) *A guide to mainstreaming child participation*

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ANALYSIS, PLANNING AND DESIGN OF PROGRAMMES

A guide for Save the Children staff

This guide has been developed to support managers and field staff in applying meaningful and safe participation in the analysis, planning and design phases of programming.

It includes practical guidance and tools to support staff to build their capacity and ensure that children's views and perceptions are included in planning processes.

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